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RHYTHM

ART
MUSIC
LITERAT-
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MONTH-
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AUGUST 1912

GERANIUMS

Stuck in a bottle on the window-sill,
In the cold gaslight burning gaily red
Against the luminous blue of London night,
These flowers are mine: while somewhere out of sight
In some black-throated alley's stench and heat,
Oblivious of the racket of the street,
A poor old weary woman lies in bed.

Broken with lust and drink, blear-eyed and ill,
Her battered bonnet nodding on her head,
From a dark arch she clutched my sleeve and said:
"I've sold no bunch to-day, nor touched a bite . . .
Son, buy six-pennorth; and 't will mean a bed."

So blazing gaily red
Against the luminous deeps
Of starless London night,
They burn for my delight:
While somewhere, snug in bed,
A worn old woman sleeps.

And yet to-morrow will these blooms be dead
With all their lively beauty; and to-morrow
May end the light lusts and the heavy sorrow
Of that old body with the nodding head.
The last oath muttered, the last pint drained deep,
She'll sink, as Cleopatra sank, to sleep;
Nor need to barter blossoms—for a bed.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON.

RICHARD MIDDLETON

AD MEMORIAM

It was in the autumn of 1907 that Edgar Jepson introduced me to Richard Middleton in the office of *Vanity Fair.* His thick black beard, furrowed forehead and heavy figure made him look ten years older than he was—a man of thirty-five I thought him. He had assisted Jepson in the editing of the paper while I was in America, and on my return he helped me for some little time. He was casual, cheerfully unpunctual, careless rather than critical in correcting other men's work, and these ordinary shortcomings were somewhat harassing. One day he remarked in the air, that if he could get paid for poetry he'd prefer writing to editing. I was a little surprised: I had not thought of him as a poet; but we soon came to an arrangement. His first verses surprised me; there was the singing quality in them, a happy ease of melody, a sureness and distinction of phrase which proved that he was indeed a poet. Better still, his verses did not echo his forerunners; no imitative cadence, no borrowed grace; whatever he sang, the song was his and his alone—a true poet. . . .

One day I asked a sub-editor why there had been no poetry of Middleton's in the last week's impression: had he sent nothing?

"Oh, yes," was the reply, "he sent in two or three poems as usual, but they were too free, I was afraid they'd shock Mrs Grundy, so I'm about to return them."

Needless to say that made me eager to read them: one was "The Bathing Boy." I published it promptly, and told Middleton what I thought, that it was finer than Herrick, nearly as beautiful indeed as "The Grecian Urn." After that my defences went down before him. I published whatever he sent me as soon as I received it, and when he told me he wanted to do some stories, I was more than curious to see what his prose would be like; a page of it convinced me: a little too rhythmic and rounded, it had its own charm and was curiously characteristic.

"The Bathing Boy" made me want to know him. I found him well-read in English, and of an astoundingly sure judgement in all matters of literature. This ripeness of mind excited my curiosity and I probed further. There was in him a curious mixture of widest comprehension with a child's acceptance of vice and suffering and abnormalities. I say a "child's" because it was purely curious and without any tinge of ethical judgement. Here is a self-revealing couplet:

"A human blossom glad for human eyes,
Made pagan by a child's serenity."

At twenty-five Middleton had come to his full growth and was extraordinarily ripe. In every respect a typical artist, he had no religious belief, death seemed to him the proper and only climax to the fleeting show, but he delighted in the pageantry of life, and the melody of words entranced him. This visible world and the passions of men and women were all his care.

Even on the practical side he was world-taught, if not world-wise; he had been educated at St. Paul's and then spent some years in an insurance office in the City: he had given up a large salary, he said, to write poetry. As I got to know and like him, I noticed that his head was massive, his blue eyes finely expressive, his characteristic attitude a dignified, somewhat disdainful acceptance of life's perverse iniquity.

"When I lived I sought no wings,
Schemed no heaven, planned no hell,
But, content with little things,
Made an earth, and it was well."

I am anxious not to say one word more than he deserved: I never heard a new thought from him: I cannot, therefore, call him a bringer of new light; at the same time, I scarcely ever found his judgement at fault: he could have said with Heine—"I stand on the topmost wave of all the culture of my time," and perhaps that is all we can ask of the poet. He was not taken by the popular idols; Tennyson, he thought, had only written half-a-dozen lyrics, and "Dowson, you know, left three"; he regarded Browning as the greatest poet since Shakespeare: "he has given us a greater body of high poetry," he would say, "than any other English poet, though he never reached the magic of Keats."

The least one can say of Middleton is that at twenty-five he stood as an equal among the foremost men of his time in knowledge of thought and of life, and was perhaps, the first of living singers in natural endowment. He was a love-poet, too, as the greatest have been, like Shakespeare and

Keats and Goethe and Dante, and it was this superb faculty that made me hope great things from him.

Here is a verse which justifies hope, I think:

"Love played with us beneath the laughing trees,
We praised him for his eyes and silver skin,
And for the little teeth that shone within
His ruddy lips; the bracken touched his knees,
Earth wrapped his body in her softest breeze,
And through the hours that held no count of sin
We kept his court, until above our din
Night westward drove her glittering argosies."

And this:

"Come, Death, and free me from these earthy walls
That heaven may hold our final festivals
The white stars trembling under!
I am too small to keep this passionate wonder
Within my human frame: I would be dead
That God may be our bed.

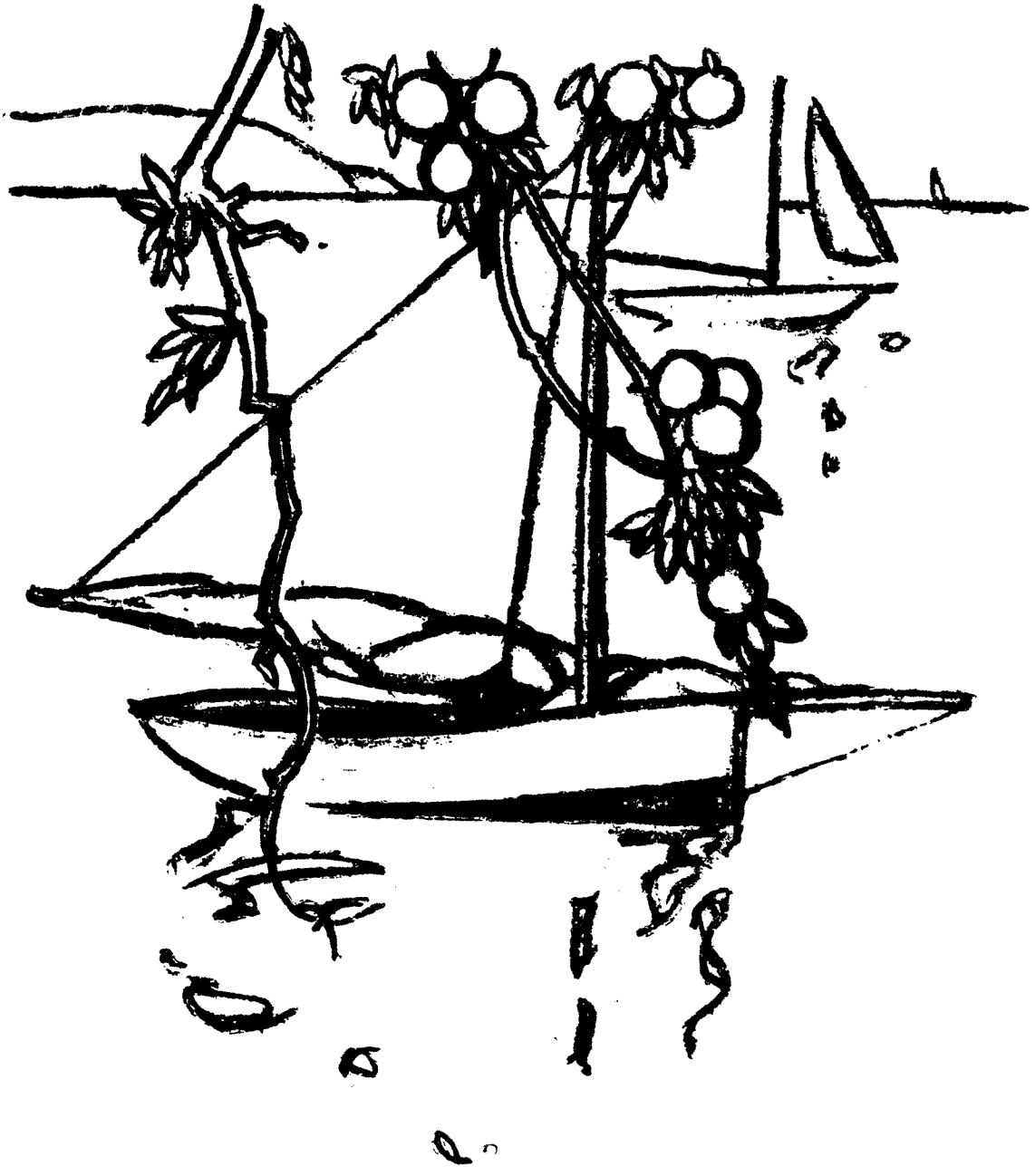
I feel her breath upon my eyes, her hair
Falls on me like a blessing, everywhere
I hear her warm blood leaping,
And life it seems is but a fitful sleeping,
And we but fretful shades that dreamed before,
That love, and are no more."

And though he can rise to this height of passionate utterance, the unique distinction of this book of Middleton's is that there is not a bad, hardly a weak poem in the whole volume: I know no book of which so much can be said. Middleton at twenty-seven had not only a wonderful lyrical gift: but the power of self-criticism of the masters.

Some critics have gone so far as to say that his prose was better than his verse; I do not agree with them; his prose was always the prose of a singer; but he was nevertheless a story-teller of undoubted talent. His tales of boys are among the best in the language.

His friend, Mr Savage, tells us that "in his last year Middleton wrote scarcely any poetry at all . . . he came to love young children and people who are simple and kindly and not too clever . . . certainly he would not have written any more poems like his 'Irene,'"—poems that is, of passion.

Well, I cannot go so far as that: I think had he lived he would have



J. D. FERGUSSON

written both prose and poetry in the future as in the past: he told me more than once that he wrote stories because he found them more saleable. "There is no demand for poetry," he would say, in wonder, laying stress on the word "demand," "no *demand* at all."

And here we come to the tragedy of Middleton's life as of a great many other lives. There is no "demand" in this world for high literary or artistic work of any kind. If it is nevertheless produced, it is produced in spite of the fact that no one wants it and very few appreciate it; it must be given therefore, and not sold, as love is given and friendship and pity and all high things. But in spite of all such arguments the tragedy remains, and the gloom of it darkens life.

Reading this volume of poems now in the light of what happened, it is easy to see the attraction which Death held for Richard Middleton, the abyss enticing him again and again. He had lived and loved, sung his songs and told his stories, and the public wouldn't listen or care. Well, he doesn't care much either: life is only a dream, and this dreamer's too refined to struggle, too proud to complain. A dozen poems show changing moods with the same changeless refrain:

"Too tired to mock or weep
The world that I have missed,
Love, in your heaven let me sleep
An hour or two, before I keep
My unperturbèd tryst."

Or this:

"And heaven's dimmest rafter
Shall tremble to our laughter,
While we leave our tears to your hopeless years,
Though there be nothing after;
And while your day uncloses
Its lorn and tattered roses,
We shall pluck the stars from your prison bars
And bind celestial posies."

Or this:

"Gladly the rigging sings,
But, oh! how glad are we,
Lords of the dreaming sea,
And of delicious things;
We are more rich than kings,
Or any men that be,
While down eternity
We beat with shadowy wings."

PABLO PICASSO

And this finally:

"No more than a dream that sings
In the streets of space;
Ah, would that my soul had wings,
Or a resting-place!"

As one turns the leaves one finds beauty everywhere, on every page joy in living and in love, and everywhere serenity, the sad serenity of acceptance, and now and again the high clear note that promised so much to those who knew and loved him, and how could one help loving him if one knew him?

"For all the rich and curious things
That I have found within my sleep,
Are naught beside this child that sings
Among the heather and the sheep;
And I, who with expectant eyes
Have fared across the star-lit foam,
See through my dreams a new sun rise
To conquer unachievèd skies,
And bring the dreamer home."

. . . . . .

"I have been free, and had all heaven and hell
For prison, until my piteous hands grew sore
Striking the voiceless walls: and now it is well
Even though I be a captive evermore.
My grateful song shall fill my hiding-place
To find Eternity hath so sweet a face."

Ah, the "piteous hands" and "voiceless walls!"

It is over a year now since Mr Savage called on me and told me that Richard Middleton was dead; that he had killed himself in Brussels; I stared at him unable to realize it, shocked out of thought, amazed and aching. I had never thought of Middleton as in distress or really poor: he had often spoken admiringly of his people, tenderly of a sister; used to say when he was hard up that he would have to go home, "retire into the country for my pocket's health," meeting poverty with good humour as it should be met. In 1910 I noticed that his tone was a little sharper, and busied myself for him with this editor and that, and was relieved to see his contributions appearing wherever I had any influence, notably in the *Academy* and the *English Review*. In the summer of 1911 he gave me his book of poems to get published, thinking I had more influence with publishers than I

possessed; I told him it would be published before the end of the year, and had good hopes in the matter. I could not conceal from him that there would be but little money in the venture, though I kept the fact to myself that the most willing publisher I could find wanted the cost of the book guaranteed. Had I been asked as to his circumstances, I should have said that Middleton was making his way slowly but surely in the esteem and affection of all good readers; that a certain number of persons already counted him as the most promising of living English poets. The blow fell as a shock: he would not wait for success: he had gone to death in hatred of living: the pity of it and the sadness!

I was told later of those four days in Brussels which he passed in his room, four days in which he forced himself to face the Arch-Fear and conquer it. At the beginning he wrote a card telling what he was about to do, taking farewell of his friend before the long journey, in high pagan fashion, and then in that last awful hour, with the bottle of chloroform before him, he wrote across the card: "A broken and a contrite spirit Thou wilt not despise." The awfulness of it, and the pity deeper than tears.

"So here's an end, I ask forgetfulness
Now that my little store of hours is spent,
And heart to laugh upon my punishment—
Dear God, what means a poet more or less?"

What it means—the moral of it—we all know: the Jews stoned the prophets, and persecuted those sent unto them, and their houses, we are told, are therefore left desolate. Some of us believe that this sentence endures for ever, that it is part of the nature of things, and that not one jot or one tittle of it shall pass away.

A short time ago John Davidson threw life up in disgust: he couldn't get a decent living in England, and he was a great poet; one of the immortals: now Richard Middleton shakes off the burden as too heavy. It were better to stone than to starve them, better hate than this ineffable callous contempt.

There is another side to this British disdain of high work. In the *Daily Mail* I read:

> "To-day is the birthday of the greatest of living Englishmen. Mr Chamberlain is, indeed, more than that—he is the most illustrious statesman now alive in the world; but it is as the pre-eminent Englishman that his fellow countrymen not in these islands alone, but in every province of the British Empire, will think of him."

Canning was a very famous Prime Minister, and the British authorities of the time would no doubt have smiled if they had been told that a little

surgeon's apprentice was a thousand times greater than Canning, and was destined to be ten thousand times more famous. Yet it was true: Canning to-day is almost forgotten, sinking rapidly into oblivion, while the name of Keats is growing more and more sacred: Keats already infinitely greater than Canning.

And in fifty or a hundred years from to-day the names of John Davidson and Richard Middleton will be much better known and perhaps more esteemed even by Members of Parliament than the names of Chamberlain or Asquith or Balfour. It is her best and greatest whom England persecutes: the second-best and third-best and fiftieth-best are lauded to the brazen skies.

When I think of the fame of Chatterton and the halo that now surrounds his name, and the condemnation which his neglect casts on his age, I am sure that in the time to come even Englishmen will condemn this twentieth century England because of the tragic fates of Davidson and Middleton; for Richard Middleton was a far greater poet and greater man than Chatterton, riper too, bringing achievement in his hands as well as promise.

"But what can we do?" I may be asked, and the true answer is not easy. We should cultivate reverence in us for what is really great and discard some of the reverence all are eager to express for what is not great, but often the reverse of great. But such understanding is a plant of slowest growth. In the meantime, we might begin to wonder whether we should spend not £1,200 a year in pittances to starving poets and artists and their widows and orphans, but £100,000 a year as a start: I would rather lose a Dreadnought than a Davidson or a Middleton.

England gives £1,200 a year as a perpetual pension to every Cabinet Minister, and that sum is considered enough to divide between all her unfortunate poets and writers and artists and their nearest and dearest. Now one John Davidson or one Richard Middleton is worth more—let the truth be said boldly for once!—one Richard Middleton is in himself rarer and in his work more valuable than all the Cabinet Ministers seen in England during his lifetime.

The Cabinet Minister has only to win in the limited competition of the House of Commons; he has only to surpass living rivals, the men of his own time; but the poet might be the first of his generation and yet deserve little: to win our admiration he has to measure himself with the greatest of all the past and hold his place among the Immortals.

If one set of Cabinet Ministers were blotted out to-morrow, who can doubt, knowing the high-minded patriotism of the parliamentary office-seeker, who can doubt that another set of Cabinet Ministers would be

forthcoming immediately? And it is just as certain that after a month or a year, the new set would be about as efficient or inefficient as their lamented predecessors. But thinkers and poets like Davidson and Middleton are not forthcoming in this profusion. If there is no "demand" for them in England, there is assuredly no "supply" in the usual sense of that overworked word.

What shall become then of a people who take the children's bread and give it unto dogs?

FRANK HARRIS.

THE TWO LIVES

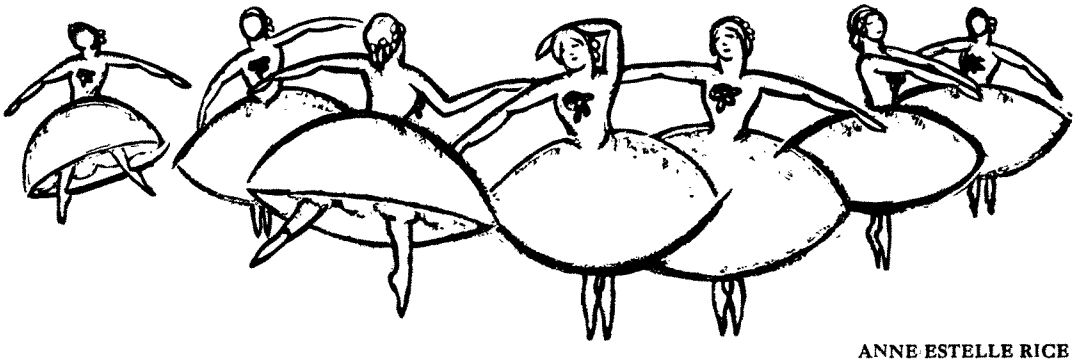
Now how could I, with gold to spare,
  Who know the harlot's arms, and wine,
Sit in this green field all alone,
  If Nature was not truly mine?

That Pleasure life wakes stale at morn,
  From heavy sleep that no rest brings;
This life of quiet joy makes fresh,
  And claps its wings at morn, and sings.

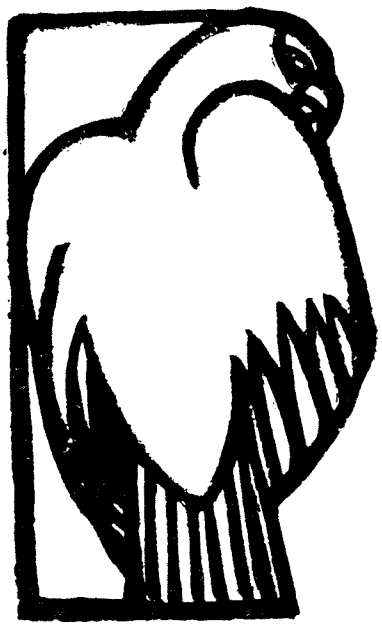
So here sit I, alone till noon,
  In one long dream of quiet bliss;
I hear the lark and share his joy,
  With no more winedrops than were his.

Such, Nature, is thy charm and power—
  Since I have made the Muse my wife—
To keep me from the harlot's arms,
  And save me from a drunkard's life.

WILLIAM H. DAVIES.



ANNE ESTELLE RICE



MILES DIXON

JOHN BAISBROWN
ELLEN BAISBROWN
MILES DIXON
JAN BAISBROWN
JANIE BAISBROWN

Act I. The Yard of Brimmerhead Farm at night.
Act II. The Kitchen of Brimmerhead Farm.
Twenty years elapse between the two Acts.

J. D. FERGUSSON

ACT I

The scene is the yard of a farm. A rough wall at the right is broken by a gateway leading into a field, across the brow of which the top of a church tower is seen and above this is the line of the fells. At the left is a little low house, two storied, with a third room built on to it, approached by a rough outside staircase. It is a wild night and very dark. In the window of the little room a light shines. The window is thrown open and the head of a woman is shewn for a moment before the light is extinguished. The window is shut and the key of the door is turned in the lock.

There is silence for some time and the white walls of the little house loom mistily through the darkness . . . Presently a man comes through the gateway floundering in the muck of the yard and gropes his way up the staircase. He tries the door and curses when he finds it locked. He knocks and knocks again. Then he comes down, strikes a match to look for pebbles on the ground and the light is for that moment shewn on his face. It is a dark, striking face with the eyes too close together, the lips a little too thin, the jaw a little too long and narrow and the nose not quite long enough. He gropes about and picks up some pebbles which he throws at the window of the little house, then waits. He stands muttering and cursing. He throws pebbles again at the window and looks round in the direction of the farmhouse. Over on the other side of the valley a light shines and then is gone. The clock in the church tower strikes one.

Miles One . . . (*He throws pebbles again and stands cursing. The window is pushed open and the woman appears*)

Ellen Why must you come on this wild night?

Miles 'Tis t' wild night that t' crazy man is craziest and t' thing that calls to 'im calls longest and loudest.

Ellen And you'll not be content?

Miles I'll never be content . . . To sleep cold and lonely out on t' fells, wet and cold under a wall or wet and cold in a ditch wi' t' scent o' yer 'air and t' touch o' ye in my mind for all t' warmth that I 'ave . . . By God . . . 'Twas a bad night for me when I furst coom to ye.

Ellen And a bad night for me that ever I was false to my man and give myself to a wild tramp the likes o' you . . .

Miles Ha' done. . . I've that to tell you that I cannot stand bawling and crying for t' folk in t' big 'ouse to 'ear.

Ellen 'Tis late and you'd best be going away . . . I left t' light for ye 'till I thought ye never was coming. T' beasts are asleep and t' childer are asleep and t' town folks int' house are asleep . . Ye'd best be goin' away.

Miles And where will I sleep?

Ellen Where ye've slept these years since the curse came on ye and there was never a 'ouse int' dale would let ye bide in it. . . Ye'd best be goin' for I must be early stirrin' and there's no knowin'. . .

Miles And where will I sleep, I say?

Ellen Where ye've slept these long years since yer ain kin turned from ye . . . wet and cold, as ye say, under a wall or wet and cold in a ditch, or crept to a byre for warmth or curled up in t' 'ay in a barn to steal away in t' dawn like t' wild lone thing that ye are. . . It were best ye'd drowned yerself in t' beck before ever ye coom creepin' round wi' yer light love words and yer talk o' stars and yer creepin' soft ways that brought me to t' madness that was in me. . .

Miles Let me in to ye.

Ellen Ye'd best be goin' for t' bad thing that ye are and t' light thing ye've made me be. . . Ye're t' waste o' t' world ye are and I'll never a word from ye. . .

Miles I've a mind to go from t' fells. I've a mind to sleep no more on t' fells but to go where there's lights an' warm 'ouses, where there's rich folk and gay folk and folk that 'ave never a care in t' world for t' strong 'ouses they live in and t' soft raiment they wear and t' pretty gems and t' gold things and their pockets full and full o' money and their cellars all filled wi' bags o' gold. . . . I've a mind to go where there's never a 'ill and love words is as easy as scything thistles and light as thistledown on t' air. I've a mind to leave ye for

t' drab that ye are and go where t' scent o' yer 'air will 'aunt me no more, and I'll clean forget t' touch o' ye, and clean forget t' bad day when I took ye and lost my peace and t' light 'eart that I 'ad. I've a mind to go as other men 'ave gone to make a fortin' and a great name, and not to stay where t' name o' me stinks and is a whispered thing, though there was never a 'armful thing that I did.

Ellen An' if ye will not make yer fortin', and if in all t' world yer name stinks and is whispered for an un'oly thing?

Miles Then I'll go to t' sea and swim out into it 'till I can swim no more . . and I'll stand wi' t'other dead men at bottom o' t' sea and talk to 'em o' t' rottenness o' women, for 'tis all o' that that dead men talk.

Ellen And 'tis o' t' cruelty and savagery and great beastliness o' men that dead women tell, and 'tis you'll be in t' mouths o' all on us for t' worst beast o' them all and for t' black 'ate that ye brought into t' 'earts o' us, that 'ad never a true word on your lips nor a true thought in your 'ead nor a true beat o' t' 'eart for a one of us. . . . An' what was given ye gladly ye spoiled in t' takin' . . . You to talk o' losin' your peace and t' lightness o' 'eart that ye 'ad! . . When ye come lightly and ye go lightly and 'tis all to ye like eatin' till ye be full or drinkin' till there's no thirst left in ye . . . and not one o' us is more to ye than another. . . .

Miles Ye lie an' ye lie an' ye know that ye lie for there's none but you. . .

Ellen 'Ere . . But ower t' fells there's this and that and t'other one an' always a new one comin' up t' road and you leapin' down t' fells to meet 'er.

Miles 'Tis another world ower t' fells and me another man that ye take no count on and never will know.

Ellen And that's t' badness in ye. . . Ye'd best be goin'.

Miles And if I go 'twill be never to come to ye again . . and me come down fro' t' fells to tell ye that I was goin' out into t' world away fro' t' fells and t' madness in 'em and to say would ye come wi' me to keep t' wind o' t' fells beatin' in my face and to keep t' sights and scents and sounds wi' me in all t' places where we may come. . . .

Ellen For t' likes o' you to leave my man and t' fine 'ouse 'e gives me and t' childer and go out wi' you, wi' never a stick nor stock between us, and never a 'ouse to live in and wander ower t' cold world. . . Fine under t' stars on summer nights. . . Oh ye'd best be goin' . .

Miles And you that put t' light in yer window for to tell me yer man was gone to t' town, ye're now for tellin' me to be gone?

Ellen 'Twas to tell ye that that I brought ye 'ere wi' t' light i' my window. . .

I've a mind to get back to t' woman that I was and forget that ever you coom slinkin' to destroy the good life that I 'ad.

Miles And ye'll not let me go so lightly wi' never a kiss o' yer lips an' never a touch o' yer 'ands.

Ellen Ye come lightly and lightly ye can go and I'll not 'ave a kiss o' yer lips and I'll forget that ever there was such a thing as you. . .

(*Miles has been standing immediately under the window and they have been up to now talking in low voices so as not to be heard in the house on the other side of the yard. Miles springs back now and raises his voice.*)

Miles Then I'll not go till all t' folk in t' dale know ye for t' woman that ye are, for t' rotten lying thing that ye are, an' 'tis you, when I'm striding ower t' world, 'll be out there on t' fells, sleepin' wet and cold under a wall or wet and cold in a ditch an alone . . an' me stridin' ower t' world. . . An' ye'll never forget. . .

Ellen Go. (*She shuts the window*)

Miles Huh! . . . Ye trull . . . And you when yer man's in t' town to set light to draw t' likes o' me to beat like a moth again t' panes o' yer window and would draw me into t' flames 'till my wings be scorched and me fall broken to t' ground . . I'll come to ye . . .

(*He runs up the stairs and tries the latch but finds it fast. He shakes the door furiously . . . His tone changes.*)

J. D. FERGUSSON

Miles 'Tis foolishness that I said . . . D' ye 'ear? 'Tis foolishness an' all that cooms fro' sittin' alone on t' fells wi' t' thoughts in me windin' about and about, and never a thought but comes back to you and t' wonder o' you.

(*He listens*)

For there was never t' like o' you since t' world began, and you t' lovely mate for me, that, for all that my name stinks and is a whispered thing, am a larger man and a freer man and a braver man and a properer man than any that goes sellin' theirselves for t' little livin' they need, an' toilin' and moilin' like slaves for' t' small livin' that is all that t' masters 'll give 'em up yon in t' quarry and down yon in t' fields . .

(*He listens*)

D' ye 'ear? 'Tis foolishness that I said and all that cooms to a man fro' t' great misery o' lovin' a woman that 'e canna take and show to t' world for t' wonderful mate that she is . . . 'Tis foolishness that I said for t' black jealousy that comes ower me in t' long hours when I sit out yon and think o' you livin' along o' t' fools that 'ave never an eye for t' sights o' t' world and never an ear for t' sounds . . . and so thick and muddy as they are can keep and 'old ye when ye should be wi' me, lovin' me and t' world so's ye can 'ardly bear it. . .

(*He listens again*)

Ay! Ye 'ear me, ye 'ear me, and fear makes ye as still as a mouse . . . 'Tis a lonely life I live, but better to live like that, kin and comrade wi' t' stars, and t' fells, and t' runnin' streams, than among men that are slaves an' starved and lonely each one of 'em for t' fear that is in them . . . And 'tis t' 'ardness o' thinkin' o' you, so wonderful as you be, livin' wi' t' slaves and t' small things when there's no treasure in t' world that ye might not come by if ye'd come to t' wild 'awks life wi' me. . . An' you t' most soft and lovely thing int' world. . . You're beautiful and live wi' men that 'ave never an eye among 'em to see ye . . . Grubbin' tunnellin' moles thay be . . . Batblind . . . And there's only me to see t' wonder o' ye.

(*John Baisbrown appears in the gateway, sees Miles and stands stock still*)

Open to me . . . I can 'ear ye . . and you 'ungry for every word that comes fro' my lips. . . 'Tis known that I canna give ye a fine 'ouse and never a fine dress, but I can take a great 'ill in t' 'ollow o' my 'and and give it you, and I can reach up and pluck a star out o' 'eaven for to shine in yer 'air, and I can give ye a river to sing to ye as never man nor woman can sing o' t' wonder o' t' world . . .

and I can give ye sights to see and sounds to 'ear that else 'ld be 'idden from ye all yer days. . . Let me come to ye. . . 'Tis dark and never a moon and 'ardly a star, but I can make t' night so light as ever t' crawling men make dark the day . . .

(*The key turns in the door, Miles clicks the latch and thrusts the door open when John, without moving, speaks*)

John Is it you, Miles Dixon?

(*Miles snaps the door to and turns. He stands with never a word, peering through the darkness*)

John Is it you, Miles Dixon? and is it so ye come crawlin' in t' dead o' night like a rat for to suck the eggs o' my 'ens?

Miles Is it you, John Baisbrown?

John Come down 'ere an' let me set my fingers to yer throat an' choke t' rotten life out o' ye. . . Or will ye wait while I turn my back and skip an' run away to yer 'ole in t' fells and never let me set eyes on ye more. . .

Miles And you, John Baisbrown? . . . Is it you standin' there in t' dark so's I can see only t' great ugly shape of ye?

John Ay.

Miles You and me and 'er was schooled together, John Baisbrown, an' d'ye mind 'ow I beat t' bloody nose on ye till ye ran 'owlin'; and d'ye mind 'ow I was ever t' first and ye come lumberin' be'ind.

(*Baisbrown moves heavily forward*)

John Will ye come down, ye gowk, or will I knock ye down?

Miles Ye'll stand there and we'll talk peaceable 'ere in t' dark, you standin' there in t' muck an' me wi' my feet at t' height o' yer 'ead.

John Come down.

Miles Ye'll stand there and ye'll learn o' t' way o' a man wi' a woman what ye shut ye're eyes to an' took for a sinful thing or ye'd never be standin' now you in t' muck and me wi' my feet at t' height o' yer 'ead . . . and 'er a cowering be'ind t' door for to 'ear what we say and to 'ear what ye do to me . . What will ye do, John Baisbrown?

John For every word that ye say I'll break a bone in your body, and for t' while that ye keep me standin' 'ere in t' muck an' cold o' t' yard I'll pitch ye to 'ouse wi' t' swine in whose likeness you're made.

Miles And what will ye do to t' woman?

John There's you to be broken first and there's no other thought in me.

Miles I canna see ye right, but is yer great fingers twitchin' to be at my throat, and is yer breast 'ot in yer, and yer mouth dry and a catch in yer throat? . . I've more words than ye can reckon, and I've a

mind that ye should learn t' way of a man wi' a woman, and 'er listenin' be'ind t' crack o' t' door o' a woman's way wi' a man . . for 'tis that ye learn out on t' fells when ye're that strong ye can step fro' one 'ill-top to another and devil a care for t' dale beneath, and ye look down and see a maggotty lot o' little black things scrattin' t' earth and breakin' t' earth and thinkin' theirselves mighty fine, and a maggotty lot o' little black things that creep about wi' their eyes down to t' earth, scared and feared, feared o' t' sun and t' wind and t' rain and most feared o' theirselves and their kind, like it's you's feared on me now, ye maggotty little black thing that I look down on wi' my feet at t' height o' yer 'ead, as I looked down on ye from t' top o' t' fells and seed ye scrattin' t' earth and breakin' t' earth for t' lovely thing that ye'll never find there . . . for while ye run fro' sun and wind an' rain ye never will find it . . . 'Tis a four-fold thing and there's no fear in it . . . And you's afeard.

John You've talked enough and too much.

Miles And when ye've broke the bones i' my body what will ye do to t' woman?

John 'Twill be enough for her to know what I does to you.

Miles Ye're not so blind . . and ye're not so far fro' bein' a man and ye're not so far fro' lovin' t' woman that ye know t' way to 'urt 'er . . .

John It's you that 'ave come between me and 'er and et's you that I'll break in my 'ands like a carrot.

Miles 'Tis a fine lad to be broke in two by a strong man as thinks there's law on his side. . . But for all that you're a poor fool, John Baisbrown, for ye never 'ave been together, you and 'er that's cowerin' be'ind t' door, else not me nor any other thing could ha' come between ye, and so 'tis you that is t' bad man and t' wicked man to take t' woman and come between 'er and t' brave things o' world. And 'twas a foolish thing, for 'tis what never a man can do to come between a woman and t' brave things o' t' world; you's not t' first man to try it and you's surely not t' last man to fail. . and by many and many you's not t' first to set yourself above a woman, and by many and many more you's not t' last man to find out t' fraud o' yerself. . . There's more words that I 'ave for ye, but 'appen that's enough to stick i' yer gizzard.

John Come down 'ere.

Miles And you wi' a great stick in yer 'and. I'll not.

(*John throws his stick away*)

John Now will ye come?

Miles And if I come down will ye keep yer 'ands to yerself? . . For I've a mind to climb to Ill Bell and see t' dawn comin' up through t' mists and to stand wi' t' cold wind blawin' through and through me and blawin' all t' dirtiness o' you and t' likes o' you out o' me.

John Heh! And will ye take t' woman wi ye to be blawn through and through and t' dirtiness blawn oot o' 'er?

Miles I'll not. For she's that weak wi' bearin' wi' you I'd 'ave to carry 'er likely, and there's no wind fro' t' four quarters could blaw t' dirtiness o' you and t' likes o' you oot o' 'er.

John 'Tis moonspun madness ye 'ave in yer 'ead, and to 'it ye would be like smashing yer fist in a babby's face . . . Ye can go.

(*Miles runs lightly down the stairs*)

Miles And if I go, what will ye do to t' woman now that she'll not 'ear what ye've done to me?

John She'll 'ave what she's always 'ad and no more.

(*Miles suddenly strikes a match and holds it up to John's face until it burns his fingers when he drops it with an oath*)

Miles 'Tis a face like a great 'am wi' little black buttons in it for eyes. 'Tis a man's face and belongs to what in this world, God save us, is called a man . . . We'll both be dead in t' wink of an eye and t' world none the wiser for t' two of us, and she there listenin' be'ind t' door, if she be livin', well quit o' t' two of us.

(*A light appears in the woman's window*)

Whoosht!

(*The door is opened slowly and Ellen appears holding a lantern high over her head. She has dressed herself hastily in bodice and skirt and has her hair loose. She stands looking down at the two men*)

Miles She's beautiful . . . T' dawn comin' up through t' mists.

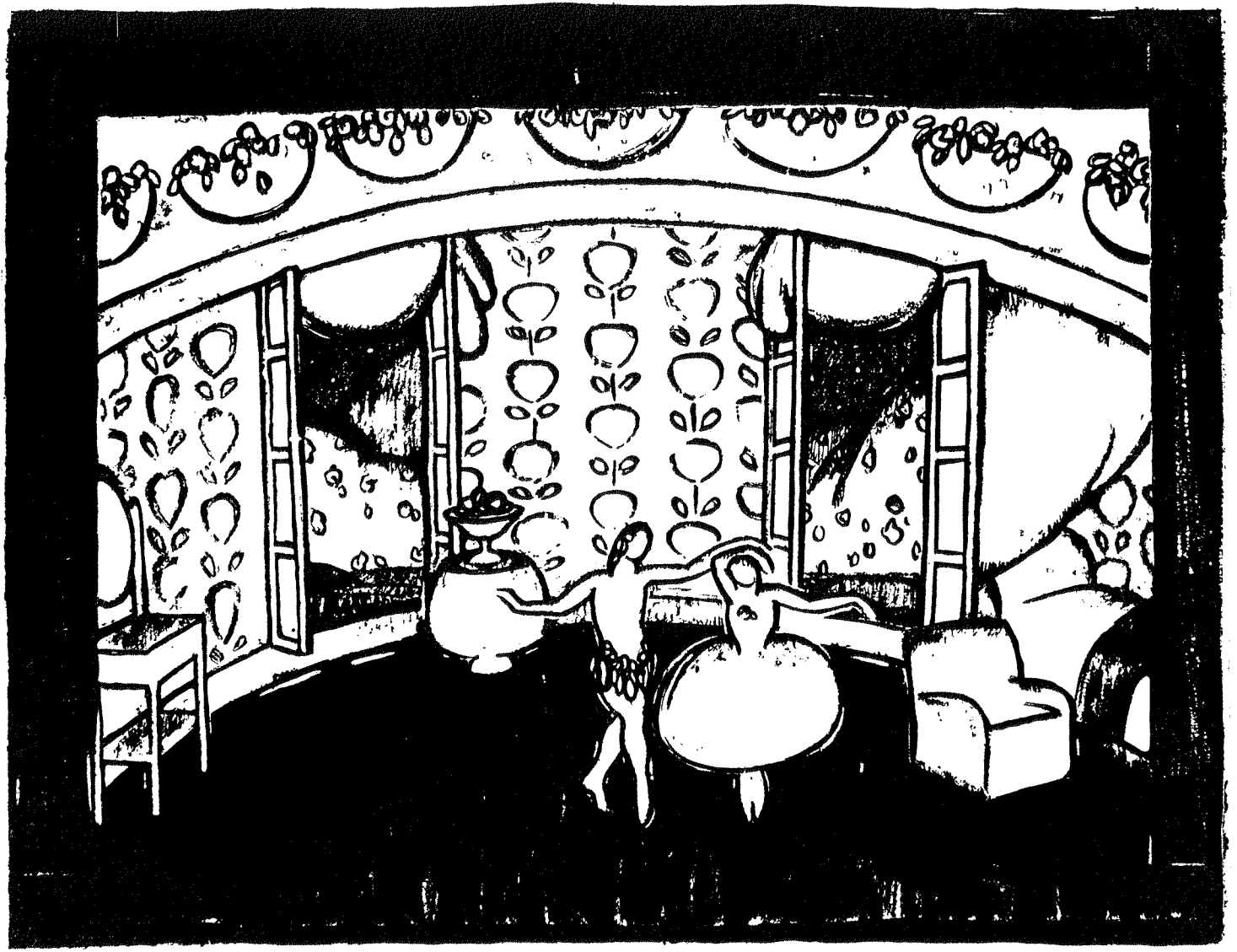
Ellen Is it you John, standing there wi' that waste o' t' world?

John Are ye come for to go out to live in t' wide cold world an' to 'ave done wi' takin' 'im to my bed?

Ellen I 'ave prayed for this night, John, an' every night that 'e's come to me and me turned soft in my bones and weak to let 'im come, I've prayed for you to come and set 'ands on 'im and break t' rotten life in 'im. . . An' I've prayed for strength to tell ye so's ye might keep 'im away. . . An' now that ye've come will ye let 'im go, and are you that's a man and strong as soft wi' 'im as me that's a woman?

Miles Ye lie and ye lie and ye know that ye lie!

Ellen Take 'im for that, John, take 'im and do as ye said, and for every word that 'e's said to ye break a bone in 'is body, and for those that 'e's said to me take 'im and whip t' life out o' 'im.



SPECTRE DE LA ROSE

ANNE ESTELLE RICE

Miles She's t' fit mate for you John Baisbrown, you wi' the lies o' yer deeds, and 'er wi' the lies on 'er lips. And when I'm gone—for I'm goin' out into t' world to make a fortin' and a great name where there's rich folk and gay folk and folk that 'ave never a care in t' world—when I'm gone ye'll sit and sit and watch each other wi' strange eyes and ye'll wonder and wonder what there is of truth in each other, and never a moment will she forget and never a moment will ye be rid o' t' thing that was between ye before ever I come,—t' wall o' lies; and ye'll sit and sit until ye're dead and ye'll both be glad when it comes for t' long, long thing ye've made o' yer lives. . . T' life I live is fit for t' likes o' me, and t' life you live is fit for t' likes o' you . . . I've a mind to climb to Ill Bell to see t' dawn comin' up through t' mists and fro' there I'll leap to t' world and go stridin' over it 'till I be weary and then I'll swim out to sea until I can swim no more . . . And God blast t' souls o' t' two of ye.

(*The clock in the church tower strikes again*)

Miles 'Alf past one.

(*He turns and goes off through the gate at a run. Ellen takes up her lantern and goes into her room. She leaves the door open and John moves towards the stairs*)

CURTAIN (of Act I)

GILBERT CANNAN.

MIDSUMMER NOON

I can hear the light laughter of little waves leaping,
And the deep joyous laughter of great waves that boom,
And above them the white gulls are gladsomely sweeping,
And the children are splashing where white surf is creeping,
And over the hills there's a town and a tomb
And a dear friend sleeping.

I can see on the sky-line a ship that is peeping
With happy white sails through the sun-golden gloom,
And here in the sea wind are merry men reaping
The gold of the meadows, and no-one is weeping. . . .
And over the hills there's a town and a tomb
And a dear friend sleeping.

THOMAS MOULT.

THE LITTLE BOY

It was the Christmas week of a bitterly cold year. He was nearly six years old, and his head just touched the top of the standard when he went to fetch water in a big jug that he could hardly carry, for the pipes indoors were all frozen. The water as it slopped over the side of his jug on to the pavement froze grey as he watched it. The cold lasted for three weeks, and one night when Mother Thompson, the old woman who looked after him, lit the little green penny lamp in the room where he slept, it cracked suddenly just like a musical box he once heard play "Linger longer, Lucy." In those days he was always very unhappy, for the old woman was very cruel to him. All the day long he had to work on the floor with a great packer's needle, binding the ends of cheap rugs till he grew numb and dizzy and he thought his fingers would break. One day an old man with a white beard and a note-book came to the door and looked at him. He said he was over age; and after that he used to go to the Board School most of the day. When playtime came he hid in the dark corners of the arches so that no one should see him; and afterwards he ran home very fast, for the children frightened him. Besides, Mother Thompson would beat him if he was late for sewing the carpets. He seemed always very tired in those days. He was always very frightened. He walked, when he was sent on errands, only down the straight roads. Corners were terrible, and he had to run round them very fast for he always was afraid of some one coming to catch hold of him and beat him.

There were three corners on the way to the butcher's, though the shop was not far away; and he was always out of breath when he got there and when he reached home. One day in that cold Christmas week he walked round all the corners on his way home.

He had been sent for some meat, and the butcher had wrapped it up in a coloured page of a Christmas paper. It was a wonderful page. Red and yellow and green devils with pitchforks danced all over it. He walked very slowly home, unwrapping it so that he could read it all, until at last when he came to the green tubs in the doorway he was holding the meat in one hand and the paper in another, still reading. The old woman beat him with a leather strap.

But he kept the coloured paper under a floor board, where he slept on a dirty piece of matting; and he read it all that day when the old woman was out of sight. He did not understand it, but it was full of red and green and yellow devils.

That night he went to bed very happy. It was better than his cotton reels, and Mother Thompson had broken his only other treasure, a tiny gun, that was given him by an aunt who once came to see him. That night he was not frightened of the dark, when he blew out his piece of candle and went to sleep.

It was the first night that he did not cry quietly for Lily his doll. He had to cry very softly when he did cry, for *she* slept on the landing three stairs below. It used to make his throat sore, he tried so hard to stop. That night it did not hurt him to swallow, and he went to sleep quickly.

He had a terrible dream. It was the worst he had ever had. The red, green and yellow devils were tormenting him and killing him. He woke up in the dark and the dark was full of them. He felt his way to the door. His heart was trying to break through his body, and his mouth was all dry. He crept down the three stairs on to the landing, and he felt about for the old woman's door. He knew that he would be beaten if he woke her, but he knew that there were green and yellow and red things behind him, and he could not stop. Somehow as he groped in the dark on the landing he missed the door and fell down the stairs. His heart raced as he cowered on the mat at the stairfoot, for fear that she had heard him, and he lay there in the dark shivering and sick with fright until he was sure that she had not heard the noise. He had a wild idea that he could creep into her bed without waking her, and he commenced to walk up the stairs close to the banisters for that made them creak less.

He could not walk at all. He had twisted his leg as he fell down the stairs and it hurt him terribly. He crawled very slowly up to the landing again and found the door; pulled himself up on one leg to the handle and turned it as softly as he could. He did not wake her; so he crept on towards her bed. It was no use trying to get in without waking her, and yet he dared not rouse her. But he knew the red and green and yellow things were behind. So he stroked her face as it lay sideways on the pillow, because he thought she would not be angry with him if he waked her by stroking. His fingers trembled with cold and fear so that she woke very quickly.

"Please may I come in your bed?" His voice was choking with terror. He felt her eyes were angry in the dark. "They'll kill me."

She hit him suddenly full in the face with the back of her hand, and

his twisted leg was under him as he fell. He moaned for a moment on the floor. Then he was terribly afraid, and he clawed his way up the side of the bed, clinging on to the valance. She hit him backward again. "You little devil, I'll tear your eyes out." He scrambled to the door. He did not even feel his leg until he tried to crawl down the stairs again. He dared not go back to his room. It was full of devils. He held his bad leg stiff and let himself down backwards, bumping slowly from stair to stair. His leg was agony to him. He thought he could see it in front of him like a white hot packing needle. He knew that he must get to the cellar and hide from the devils and the old woman; and he wondered if he would die before he could get the cellar door shut. He managed to get it open by standing on one leg. As he swung it to the dusty rag-bag that hung behind it nearly knocked him down the cellar stairs. He clutched hold of it to save himself, and pulled the door open again. He slammed it and latched it in terror and crept down still more steps. He was only safe in the hole behind the cellar stairs. He curled up there and knew that he was going to die. He felt the mice and one big rat nosing about him. He could not scream. He fell asleep.

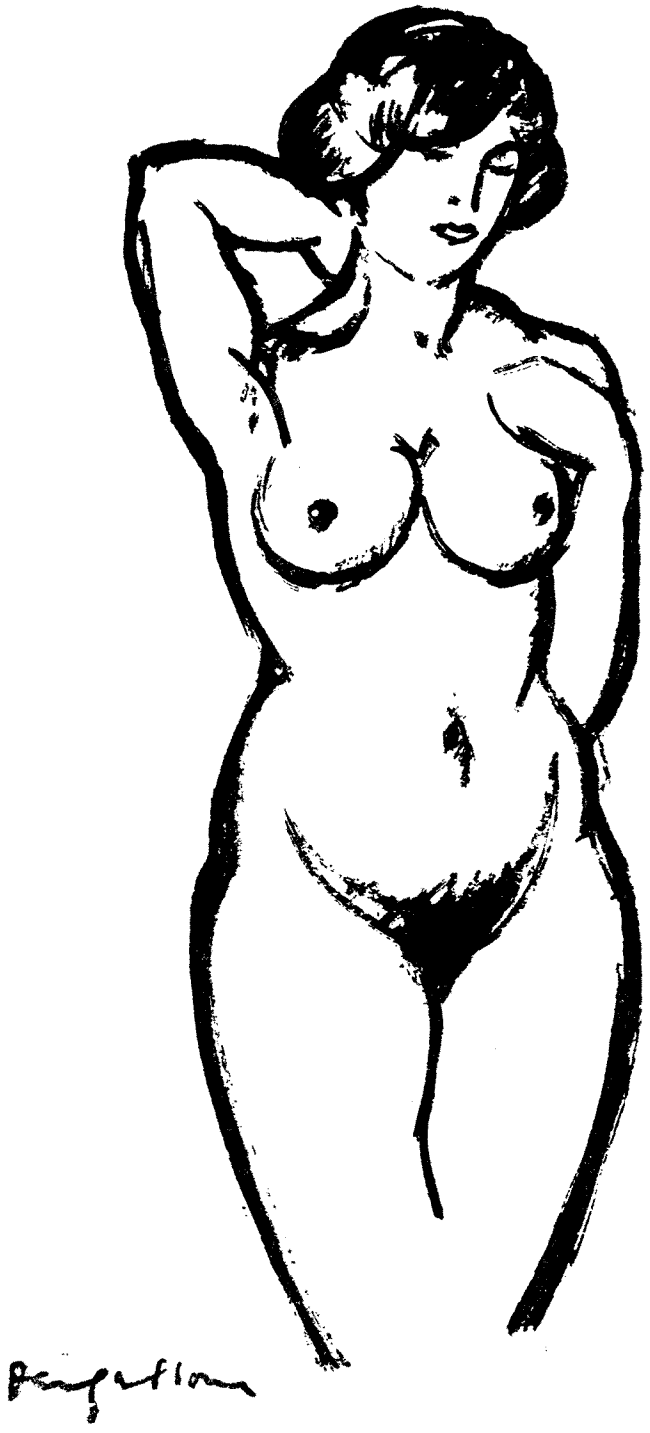
JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY.

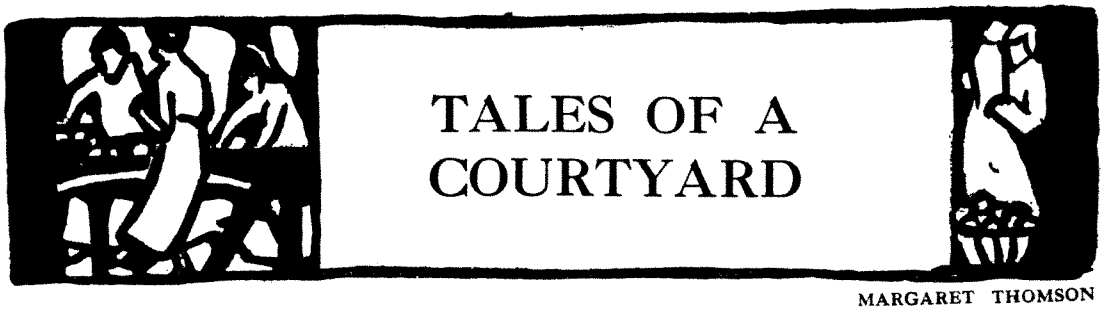
AN ADVENTURE OF SEUMAS BEG

BEHIND THE HILL

I met a little man dressed all in green,
  Who stopped and asked me was my mother out,
So I said yes—he told me if I'd seen
  The palace where he lived I'd sing and shout
From morning until night, and that he had
  A crock of gold hid underneath a tree
Which I might have—I wanted money bad
  To buy a sword with and I thought that he
Would keep his solemn word, so, off we went:
  He said he had five pounds hid in the crock,
And owned the palace too and paid no rent
  To anyone, and that you had to knock
Five hundred times—I said, "who reckoned up?"
  And he said, "you're insulting and a pup."

JAMES STEPHENS.





TALES OF A COURTYARD

MARGARET THOMSON

I.—EARLY SPRING.

We seem to have been up since early morning. We seem to have been astir and busy like people preparing for something pleasant—a feast or a wedding party. As the postman stumbled down our stairs this morning he bawled to the servant girl: "That chestnut tree is a mass of buds this morning. I tell you, it's a mass." We heard him. We opened the windows. He must have told the other three houses for windows flew up and heads came through to stare at the chestnut tree with the sticky buds shining in the sun as though coated with honey. The chestnut tree grows in the middle of the court. There is a stone bench round it where the children chatter and scuffle by day and where the old people sit in the evening time, very quiet and close, counting the stars shining through the leaves as though the chestnut tree were their own fruit tree growing in a moonshiny orchard. On dark, warm nights the boys and girls meet there. They are quieter than the old people. We leaned far out of the windows. We shouted and laughed. "Good morning—yes, the postman spoke the truth." "Yes, indeed the sun is shining, praise the Lord." "Now the warm days won't be long." "That tree will be green before we can take off our coats." "Oh, my soul, what a winter it has been!" Only the old people were silent. They stood at the windows, nodding to one another, and sipping the air. Each moment the sun grew warmer. It fell on our starved hair and lips and hands like kisses. It made us drunk with joy. "It's going to be a fine year: the spring has started early. That's a sign." "One has a chance when the sun shines." "We'll be sitting outside within a week." "I must alter Marya's cotton pelisse." "As for me I never cough in the summer." "You know that's a very fine tree, even as trees go." We talked like rich people; we preened ourselves like birds. Suddenly some one shouted. "Hoo! I say, look at the students' window." The Russian students had a room in the top floor of the biggest house. Three of them shared it—two men and a girl. They were scarcely

ever seen, except behind the window, pacing up and down and talking with great gestures, or at dusk half running across the court. They were desperately poor. We had not seen them all through the winter. To-day their window was closed. A coat hung across it. The sleeves of the coat must have been pinned to the walls. It looked very strange as though trying to shield the room from our view. It made us angry. "Now that's a disgraceful room," bawled a woman. "Pretty goings on there must be inside there." "We don't want to see their filthiness." "Nice thing for a girl to live with two fellows and no curtain on the window." "Garr! who's seen them lately?" And a child yelled, laughing, "perhaps they're all dead." The high little squeaking voice silenced and frightened us suddenly quiet. After all why shouldn't they be dead. Nobody went near them. And the window closed down and the coat stretched across it wasn't natural on a day like this. You never knew what students might do. The girl always looked funny, too. A wind blew into the court shaking the boughs of the chestnut tree. The long shadow of it quivered on the stones. And then while we gloomed and wondered the door of the biggest house opened. The Russian girl came out. She wore a black jersey and a skirt up to the knees. She blinked and peered at the light like a little animal. When she saw the people leaning from the windows she drew back—just for a moment, then she set her lips and walked out of the shadow. She looked at nobody. She kept her dark eyes fixed on the chestnut tree and the shining buds. And at the sight of her we leaned out, laughed, shook and screamed with laughter, holding our sides. Dead—were they! God in Heaven, that was good! The swine—they'd take some killing. "Look at her. There she goes!" And we jeered and pointed at the swollen distorted body of the girl moving through the sunlight.

II.—THE FOLLOWING AFTER.

That's enough—that's enough! he shouted. He sprang from his seat, pulled his coat from the door peg and began dragging it on. For a moment she was so amazed and terrified that she could not speak. Then she stuttered "where are you g-going to, Mark?" "Gar-r!" he cried, throwing up his arms. "I'm going to end the whole bloody business." He turned to her. She saw his face, grey and quivering. With the effort not to cry his face looked distorted; he stood grimacing at her. "Mark! Mark, come here! Mark—listen!" He was gone. She heard his steps clatter down the stone stairs. She heard the outer door rattle and burst open and slam to. She ran to the window and saw him crossing the court in the falling snow—running, with head bent, and making wide foolish gestures as he ran. It

was not until he was out of sight that the whole world changed. It died the moment he disappeared. Yes, that was the court, with the three white houses, and the white chestnut tree and the ground white and thick under the snow. And behind her the clock on the shelf was ticking and the fire bars clinking in a dead room. All—gone, all gone, all—gone! ticked the clock. Her heart beat to it, but faster. She began walking round the room on tiptoe keeping time to the ticking of the clock and then keeping time to her heart until suddenly she brushed against his indoor jacket hanging on the door peg. She flung her arms round it. She buried her face in it. Long dry sobs dragged from deep in her body, shaking and tearing. "Darling! darling, darling!" she sobbed, walking to and fro. And then she stood upright and tossed her head. "I cannot bear this. I must go and find him." She flung a shawl over her head and ran from the room.

It was cold outside: the air smelled of ice. And the snow shook over, blinding, persistent. Lamps were lighted in the road. On either side the road seemed to wind away for ever, white with yellow pools. She had never seen a road like that before. The crazy thought jagged in her brain —it's like a white sauce with spots of melted butter. Some one laughed —very close beside her—down her own throat. Terrified, she started to

CLARENCE KING

run and she did not stop running until she came to the bridge where she and Mark used to linger on their way home, leaning over the parapet and watching the fairy fishes in the water—the long, wavering lights. To-night the river was dark. It was dead. So were the fairy fish. She dug her nails against the stone parapet and called out "Mark, Mark!" and again the long dry sobs dragged from deep in her body, shaking and tearing. Suddenly she saw some one walking towards her from the other side of the bridge. With swift, light steps he came. It was Mark. He did not speak to her—but he smiled upon her and beckoned her to follow. She followed him down a long street and past great houses, and through a frozen park, up and down, in and out of doorways, through little squares, past high walls and towering buildings—often she longed to cry to him to stop, but her mouth and chin were frozen and she could not catch up to him however hard she tried—she just could not touch him and beg him to wait a moment. On and on. She saw him raise his head and she looked up and saw that the sky was light. They were crossing a little court. They passed through a door up some stairs into a room. The room was touched with the pink light of morning. Mark lay on the bed—straight and still. She was so tired that for a moment she thought it was the sunrise staining the pillow so red.

III.—BY MOONLIGHT.

Feodor was passionately fond of poetry. He had written some pieces himself from time to time and he was resolved to write a great many more. "Just wait a bit," he would say, "Just wait until I get enough money to go off into the country with nothing to do but lie in a field all day, or sail in a little boat on a river and sleep in a haystack as snug as a bee in a hive. I'll come back with enough poems to last you a lifetime. Once I get the money." . . . But it seemed quite impossible that Feodor should ever have any money at all. Each day, from nine o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock in the evening, he stood outside a large drapery establishment and swung the door to the right for customers to enter and swung the door to the left for customers to pass out. He was tall and dark. He wore a bright blue coat with red trimmings and a cap of black patent leather. Sometimes the same ladies would go in and out of the shop several times in the day. But they made no impression on Feodor. In the evenings he walked by the river or strolled through the town until it was late. Then he went home to his tiny room at the top of the house and lay down on his bed, staring at the ceiling until he fell asleep.

J. D. FERGUSSON

One summer night he came out of the street into the courtyard. The moon was shining and the tops of the houses shone like silver. The houses themselves, half in light, half in shadow, looked as though they were draped in velvet. White like marble shone the courtyard and the chestnut tree stood like an immense bird with green wings in the pool of its own shadow. Feodor breathed deeply with delight. He walked over to the chestnut tree and sat down on the little stone bench, folding his arms. He was not alone there. An old man with white hair sat at the other end of the bench, crouched forward, his hands held between his knees. Feodor glanced at him once and then forgot about him. He began composing a poem. A feeling of divine happiness possessed him; his heart seemed to expand as he breathed. Suddenly he saw the old man fumble in a pocket. He brought out something wrapped in a linen handkerchief and laid it on his knees. With infinite care he slowly parted the folds of the handkerchief and Feodor saw a book bound in parchment and tied with purple silk ribbons. He moved a little nearer the old man, who untied the ribbons and spread the book open. The pages were printed with large, black letters. Each page had a blue letter at the top embroidered in gold and by the bright moonlight it was quite easy to read what was written. Feodor moved nearer still. Then he saw that each page was a

poem. He leaned over the old man's shoulder and read for himself poems such as he had never dreamed of—poems that sounded in his ears like bells ringing in some splendid tower—like waves beating on warm sands —like dark rivers falling down forest-clad mountains. The old man suddenly put his hand over the page and turned to Feodor. His lips and his eyes smiled but his face drenched in the white light of moon looked unreal, like a face gleaming through water. "So you like poetry, young man," he said, in a gentle, sad voice. Feodor nodded twice without replying. Still smiling the old man looked him up and down. "Strange," he muttered, "Strange." He took up his book and he began to read aloud. Without moving, scarcely breathing, his eyes dark and shining, Feodor listened to the old man. A long time passed until the last poem was read and the old man closed the book and tied again the faded silk ribbons and laid it on the bench beside him. Silence fell between the two. Feodor slowly came to consciousness of his surroundings, and with this consciousness to the realization of his own poverty and helplessness and of his own longing for a different life—of his craving to go away from the city—far away—into that country place with fields and rivers and big yellow haystacks. "And soon it will all be too late," he thought, "soon I shall be sitting on this bench—an old man with white hair—but with no book of poems—with empty hands I'll be sitting here, and all will be over." He began to breathe sharply and painfully as though he had been running a very long way, and tears gushed into his eyes and flowed down his trembling face. The old man paid no attention. He sat smoothing the book under his hand as though it were a little animal, and talking to the book as though it were a little child. "My own, my treasure, core of my heart, I will not part with thee. They think I am a fool because I am old, but all my years I have longed for thee and thou art mine for ever. Sell us this, they say, sell us this and you shall be a rich man for a year. Bah! I spit in their faces. No one shall buy thee. Thou art my all in all until the end." It was like a knife—the quick thought stabbing him. The book is valuable. Now's your chance. He recoiled in horror. No, there were things a fellow did not do—steal from an old man was one. But what can the old man do with it. He must be nearly a hundred years old. An old brain is too feeble to feel a loss. How can I get it? Ha! that's the question. One can't fight an old man. . . . Perhaps if I told him—if I explained he might give it to me—no, I'm mad to think that. Yet he must have taken a fancy to me. Why did he start reading aloud? The memory of the poems and of the old man's voice made it impossible again for him to think of taking the book. Ask him for it—that's what he'd do. He turned to the

old man. "You say your book is valuable," he said politely. "That's interesting." The old man's head was sunk on his breast. He was asleep. Soft as a cat Feodor seized the book and crept away from the chestnut tree—across the court—up to his tiny room.

"I have done the right thing—that's certain. To-morrow I shall sell it, and to-morrow evening I shall be gone from here for ever." He put the book under his pillow and went to bed.

Feodor could not sleep. Hours passed—slowly passed. His bed was hard as a dry field. And the darkness moved as he moved, breathed to his breath, watched him with a swarm of narrow eyes. Finally he got up, lit a candle and taking the book crept downstairs with it. "If the old man is not there I shall keep the book—I shall have to keep the book—but if he is there I shall put it back again or give it to him." He was perfectly confident that the old man would not be there. He'd have gone hours ago. But this was a good idea of his, otherwise he'd never have rested in peace again. He slipped the bolt of the door and as the door opened he saw in the deep shadow the old man still there—under the tree. Feodor went back to his room—threw the book into a corner and fell fast asleep.

Maria Schulz ran down the passage. Her face was red, her hair tumbled. "What's the matter," shouted Feodor. "There's an old man," said Maria. "The police are in the courtyard now. An old man—found on the bench this morning, dead and cold as a stone."

KATHERINE MANSFIELD.

L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE ANNE ESTELLE RICE

SCHÉHÉRAZADE ANNE ESTELLE RICE

LES BALLETS RUSSES.

"Le Théâtre ne relève que du Théâtre." The theatre is not a moral enterprise, nor a literary manifestation, nor an exposition of realism (as ordinarily understood). The theatre is a place of action. It is the union of the theatrical arts to create a work of art, the equilibrium of the artistic elements acting and reacting on each other to maintain in a production all the qualities indispensable to a perfect representation of a dominant idea. Collaboration and the maintenance of a few fundamental principles will make the art of the theatre a comparatively simple affair, and help to free it from the absurd confusion which has rendered it so complicated. There is a real need for the material art of the theatre, and the greatest problem on either side of the footlights is to arrive at a point where the perspective manifests itself in proper relation to the three walls and the audience. To obtain this relation a properly constructed theatre would undoubtedly be obliged to sacrifice a number of seats, and the modern theatrical edifice would entail the problems of placing seats, arranging the orchestra out of sight, pre-eminently the problem of dealing with the acoustics. If the intention is to create a work of art, no money, artistic energy or pains should be spared. Even if we accept the architectural structure of the present-day theatre, much can be done to give the illusion of perspective by adhering strictly to simplicity of line and proportions. The relation of lines, shapes, masses, colours, and movement, the quality of line and colour, create the life and make the stage a living force, instead of a maquette of stupidly painted scenery.

The first step in the improvement of staging was of course a natural reaction to extreme simplicity, even to the poverty-stricken idea of no scenery, corresponding to the idea that no picture is better than a bad one; then simplicity of what we may call an artistic or æsthetic kind, playing

for safety, with safely simple shapes and subdued and limited colours; in short, the Whistlerian idea of painting applied to the stage. Naturally enough, since Whistler was at that time and still remains, the paramount influence, with æsthetic people, especially in Britain and America, people interested in art movements were as glad to see this on the stage as to see Whistler's paintings. While this was giving complete satisfaction to Britain and America, in France Van Gogh, Gauguin and the rest were creating what is now vaguely labelled post-impressionism. They, instead of being content to limit line and colour, fought to give with line and colour the fullest possible expression of their ideas, fearlessly, without regard to the risk of making æsthetic people shudder. Line and colour became important things in themselves and in relation to each other to express the painter's mood, and were used with an unlimited range of simplicity or complexity, strength or delicacy. No line or colour was too strong for these strong men.* That was twenty-five years ago, and since then the movement has spread over the world.

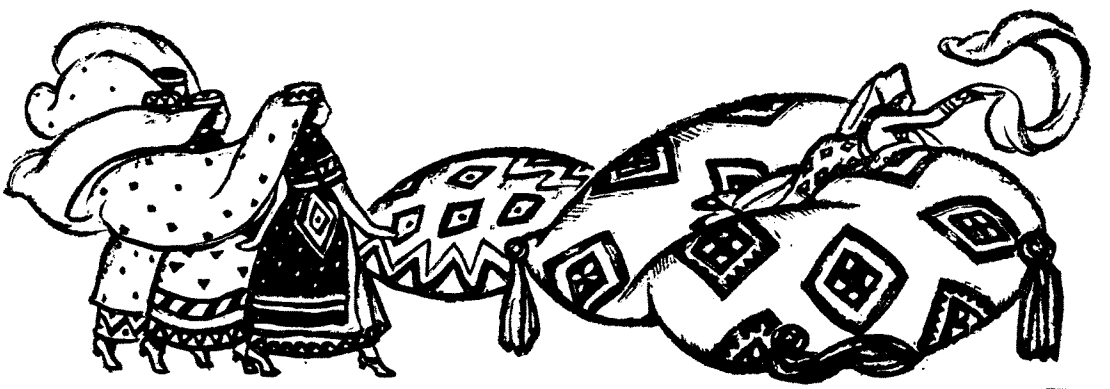
The greatest innovator of the pictorial art of modern stagecraft is M. Léon Bakst. A member of the Salon d'Automne, to which Society, together with the Indépendants, is due the credit of encouraging artists in this movement, regardless of nationality, Bakst has given to the stage the tremendous fullness of expression in line and colour, which makes the Whistlerian idea hopelessly empty and inadequate. Bakst takes all colours, every nuance of each colour from its extreme brilliancy downwards, and all directions of line and compositions of line, harmonizes everything; and by his simple but fully expressive effect, convinces the spectator of the artist's belief in his power to create, as opposed to the apologetic grovelling of the æsthetic before nature. A painter in line, a painter in movement, a painter in forms, he knows the value of line to give energy and force, the value of a dominant colour and shape, the value of daring juxtapositions to create life and movement in masses of colour, where costumes, drapery and decorations reverberate to sound, action, and light. The modern tendency in all forms of art is towards "la recherche des lignes," which in their quality and direction must be "les lignes vivantes," or the result is banal and sterile. The genial and dominant idea of the Russian Ballets is based upon *line*. They have given a practical and artistic realization of what can be done with a fusion of theatrical elements, most successfully where the scenic decorator, costumier, musician, "maître du ballet" and poet, by their harmonizing qualities, have created a scheme of one palette. The public, intoxicated with their splendour,

* See Letters of Vincent Van Gogh by Michael Sadler, *Rhythm*, Vol. I, No. 2.

little realizes the sensibility, logic, thoroughness and patience necessary to produce these marvellous representations. The Russian ballets are elemental to the last degree, full of the visions of Asia, a tropical heat, not of stillness, but of new life born every instant, where realism and fantasy combine and multiply into a fluidity of moving reds, blues, oranges, greens, purples, triangles, squares, circles, serpentine and zigzag shapes. It is in "Cléopâtre" and "Schéhérazade," extreme in character, where there is extreme use of characteristic line—"Cléopâtre" evoking the vision of an Egypt bathed in gorgeous splendours of bacchanalian dances, vibrating blues, reds, greens, yellows, lines of severity and voluptuousness, angles relieved by curves, a night beginning with passionate love and ending with cruelty. Apart from the historical consideration of the angular feature in "Cléopâtre" (which does reveal the Egyptian temperament), direction of line produces a susceptibility to varying sensations. M. Léon Bakst and M. Fokine "maître du ballet," in their composition of line effects, maintain a dominant note—the angle.

"Schéhérazade" obviously expresses a circle, the sensuous note. In this Arabian Nights' orgy of voluptuous fullness, where designs, drapery, arms, legs, bodies, groups have a circular movement, the luxuriant overhanging emerald green curtain, the undulating movement of the dancers, the immense trousers of the supple almées, the full rich flowing music of Rimsky Korsakow—harem and spectator are caught up in a maddening whirl of sound, colour and curve to the point of exhaustion.

"Le Dieu Bleu," pictorially, is a monumental animated painting, an artistic conception of supreme balance, where lighting, colour, lines; masses and composition of ballet manifest their relation to each other in a joyous splendour of orientalism. M. Jean Cocteau, in collaboration with M. Madrazo inspired the theme for the ballet and in this fabulously beauti-



THAMAR ANNE ESTELLE RICE

SCHÉHÉRAZADE ANNE ESTELLE RICE

ful Indian fête, Bakst's Asiatic orchestration of colour overpowers the rather Whistlerian palette of M. Reynaldo Hahn, whose curious, caressing harmonies do not give spontaneous action, but rather stop the action of the ballet. Lighting, which can utterly destroy a representation when all the other elements are of equal strength, in "Le Dieu Bleu" and in "Pétrouchka," adds a strong decorative value, following the main lines, without destroying the literary interpretation.

In Thamar, on account of extreme perplexity of cross lighting, the essential effect is lost and the eye is tired by the very evident multitude of details.

For a combination of theatrical qualities, it is in "Pétrouchka" that a triumphant harmony is reached. The music of M. I. Stravinski, the decorations and costumes of M. A. Benois, the choreography of M. Fokine, have combined to make in these four burlesque scenes a marvellous unity. "Pétrouchka" is introduced by an overture drop curtain of a "vieux charlatan" majestically seated on a throne of clouds in a starry intense blue space. The value of overture and entr'-acte curtains is that they prepare and continue the illusion for the spectator from start to finish. The first and fourth scenes represent a "fête foraine," collective in movement, but always retaining a central action, and here there is a corresponding setting. The "vieux charlatan" and his puppets move and have their being in an old-world Toyland of sound, where action is an alliance of reality and fantasy, of natural movements and gestures mechanically characteristic. In the third and fourth scenes where the human interest is of great importance, the action is centralized by a simple accessory, a background of enormous screens; and before this extremely simple setting an eternal drama in pantomime is enacted.

"Le Spectre de la Rose" furnishes a splendid example of corresponding shapes, and Karsavina's ballet skirt is repeated in the table cover, the draperies of the bed and windows, the bowl of fruit and the wallpaper designs. The stage itself is semi-circular. Bakst has fittingly costumed the "spectre" of the rose in a strong contrasting colour; and it is in this rôle that Nijinsky reaches an unsurpassed souplesse and agility, a poetic rhythm of action, a perfect reflection of the lyrical nature of the whole.

Inspired by the prelude of "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" of M. Claude Debussy, Nijinsky has given to choreography a new value which corresponds to certain modern tendencies in other forms of expression, by introducing into each movement a definite design, arbitrary in relation to the preceding one, but complete in itself, and harmonious in the whole. Archaic in action, "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" presents a bas-relief, and emphasizes its archaic nature by a single background panel, which being realistically painted fails to form a unity with the rest.

ANNE ESTELLE RICE.

OBSERVATIONS AND OPINIONS

I.—MACHINES.

Is there so small a range
In the present strength of manhood that the high
Imagination cannot freely fly
As she was wont of old?—John Keats.

FERGUSSON

There is in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* a passage relating how the machines in that remarkable country came to life and were destroyed by the wise counsel of the chief citizens. In England, and apparently in all other civilized countries, life is dominated by machines. The privileged few are stokers, the rest of us are fuel. If man is the noblest product of creation this is an intolerable state of things. If, on the other hand, man is a misguided, upstart brute then, probably, he thoroughly deserves it. I should be inclined to accept—miserably enough—the last opinion were it not for the fact that we are every day bringing into the world millions of entrancing children, and when I think that those wonderful beings are to become either stokers or fuel for the machines then I am possessed

by a spirit of revolt and, for want of any other outlet, I take pen in hand and write. My aim is to stir other human beings to revolt against the materialization, the stultification and the vulgarization of life, but very quickly I discover that my only means of circulating my call to arms is by machinery. A magazine is a machine: a publisher's office is a machine: very often editors and publishers are machines, though they wear trousers and dine in the best restaurants. A human being likes vitality: a machine likes mechanism. A machine further detests anything like a call to arms which may disturb its smooth running. A magazine in Edinburgh tried to roll Keats out flat as a shadow. When he died, having no imagination, it fancied that it had killed him. Keats however had stored his imagination, his vital essence, away in a book, and the machine it was that died. He is one of the glorious small company of men who have escaped the tyranny of the machines.

Personally I have every intention of escaping and of rescuing as many persons male and female as I possibly can. Life is far too good and far too precious a thing to be smudged with mechanical morality, and fenced about with mechanical lies, and wasted on mechanical acquaintanceships when there are splendid friendships and lovely loves in which the imagination can find warm comradeship and adventure, lose and find itself, and obtain life, which may or may not be everlasting. That is not my affair, nor any man's. I know not whence I came nor whither I shall go. I cannot know, but I can see no reason in that why I should waste time in crying about it. Still less do I see why I should waste time in mourning for all the sorrow that is in the world. It is surely my immediate business not to add to the sum of it, and the most effective way of seeing to that is by having as little discrepancy as possible between theory and practice. When theory is contradicted by practice then theory must go.

The machines are always making theories, and endeavouring to force life to fit in with them. That is why machines never produce anything. Those who accept the theories of the machines are privileged to be stokers and they are rewarded with money and a queer mis-directed thing called success, which means, if it means anything, that all the other stokers talk about you a great deal and wonder how much money the machines have given you and how long you are going to keep it.

I know several stokers in London and there is a horrible sameness about their lives. They keep restaurants and their wives are hostesses. They always have their tables laid for lunch and they stand listening at their doors and presently when they hear the other stokers making a great noise they pop out and find a successful person passing.

"Come inside," they say.

And the successful person, already grossly overfed, but in a mortal terror of offending anybody, accepts the invitation and goes inside. Hardly have they sat down at table than there comes a fresh uproar from the stokers and his host bobs up, pops out of his door and brings in a new successful person. Fearful of admiring either too much, the host and hostess end by admiring neither and are only moved from their quandary by a further uproar and a new arrival.

And so it goes on, in hundreds of quite innocent looking houses.

If you wish to study the fuel go to the Embankment, to the suburbs, to North London, and the East, and the South, to the roads out of London, to the horrible cities in the North of England. But everywhere you will be proud to see free men, men with brave eyes and health in their souls, here a few and there a few, men who know that life lies beyond good and evil, beyond mechanical right and wrong, that vowed love is a sham, and that in all the world there is nothing braver or more lovely than human life set free by courage. It is such men who are truly living the life of this world and honestly doing its work. They seek no reward, they laugh at success; failure is a joke to them; human approbation or disapproval a whimsical thing, and all they ask is love.

When the machines do eventually come to life and gobble up the stokers as well as the fuel it is such men who will destroy them. At present they cannot, because the stokers are too many.

GILBERT CANNAN.

J. D. FERGUSSON

LETTRE DE FRANCE

II. ESQUISSE DE LA POÉSIE FRANÇAISE ACTUELLE.

En 1832, dans la préface d'*Albertus*, Théophile Gautier écrivait en parlant de lui-même: "*Cependant, si éloigné qu'il soit des choses de la vie, il sait que le vent ne souffle pas à la poésie . . .*" Il est permis de se demander s'il penserait aujourd'hui d'une autre manière et l'on sait que les poètes de tous les temps ont déploré, et assez justement, l'hostilité ou l'indifférence du public envers leurs ouvrages. Toujours, les écrivains se reportent par la pensée à des époques antérieures qui prennent à leurs yeux l'aspect de paradis à littérateurs, car d'un état social ce qui subsiste seulement ce sont les œuvres de l'esprit, et les civilisations disparues nous donnent l'aimable illusion de ne s'être souciées que de lettres, d'arts et de sciences: c'est ainsi que si nous songeons au siècle de Louis XIV nous ne voyons que dés écrivains, des artistes, des savants, des politiques et des amateurs et nous ne pensons pas qu'il y avait alors une foule grouillante qui vendait du drap au Marais, à Bourges ou à Bayonne, qui buvait du vin blanc, le dimanche, sous les treilles ou rentrait le foin, les soirs de Juin, dans les prairies provinciales et se préoccupait assez peu des tragédies de Jean Racine et ne savait même pas que Descartes eût disserté de la Méthode.

Ce phénomène historique n'est nullement fait pour servir les écrivains qui respirent encore; la foule, avec un sourire narquois, leur montre leurs aînés qui règnent sur les siècles de jadis ou de naguère. "*Quelle étrange manie,*" dit M. Baliveau à Damès, le jeune poète, dans *la Métromanie* de Piron,

"*Quelle étrange manie! Hé, dis-moi, misérable!*
A de si grands esprits te crois-tu comparable?"

M. Clément Vautel, de la sorte, a pu l'autre jour dans *le Matin* reprocher à MM. Jammes, Paul Fort et Verhaeren de n'être pas aussi imposants que Victor Hugo, Lamartine et Musset; mais c'est mal faire que de mettre en balance des hommes encore occupés à composer leur œuvre

avec des poètes chargés d'un siècle de gloire et de comparer Victor Hugo tel qu'on le voit en 1912 à M. Francis Jammes tel qu'il apparait dans la même année. Quand Victor Hugo avait l'âge de MM. Jammes et Fort il était loin d'être universellement admiré; on le traitait assez volontiers de *vandale* et de *fou furieux* et l'on opposait à son soleil levant ces pauvres lampions qu'étaient Raynouard, Lemercier et Etienne,* car il s'est trouvé dans tous les temps des critiques pour préférer Pradon à Racine et Jean Aicard à Paul Verlaine. Que l'on veuille bien attendre cent ans et l'on reprendra le parallèle. Mais les jeunes poètes peuvent aujourd'hui répondre avec leur frère de *la Métromanie:*

"Ces maîtres même avaient les leurs en débutant,
Et tout le monde alors put leur en dire autant."

Si on laisse dans le tourbillon de leur vaine renommée et de l'encens populaire ou mondain qui les environne MM. Rostand et Richepin qui intéressent plutôt le chapitre de la publicité ou des accessoires de théâtre que celui des lettres, il apparait nettement que la situation poètique est actuellement dominée par les représentants de ce lyrisme qui a ses sources dans les livres de Charles Baudelaire, de Paul Verlaine, de Stéphane Mallarmé et de Tristan Corbière. Il n'est pas un poème de valeur à notre époque qui ne se ressente de l'atmosphére qu' ont criée Rimbaud, Laforgue, Samain, Moréas, Rodenbach, Guérin parmi les morts et, parmi les vivants, MM. Francis Jammes, Paul Fort, Henri de Régnier, Emile Verhaeren, Stuart Merrill, Vielé-Griffin, Gustav Kahn et le Maurice Maeterlinck des *Serres Chaudes.* Ceux-là sont tenus pour des maîtres et leur influence directe ou indirecte est profonde. Ils ont rejeté à l'infini, aussi bien pour le fonds que pour la forme, les limites de la liberté poètique; ils ont apporté, ou du moins développé, affiné, aiguisé et rendu parfois comme maladif le sens du mystère en face de la vie et de la destinée.

Derrière ces écrivains parvenus à la gloire, bataillent les troupes des jeunes poètes.

M. Gabriel Vicaire écrivait,† parlant de la poésie et des poètes en 1893 *"Jamais pareille confusion ne s'était vue, ce qui n'est pas pour déplaire à ceux que ne trouble pas outre-mesure le sentiment de l'ordre et de la règle,"* et sur ce point il semble que depuis dix-neuf ans rien n'ait changé. Il n'y a plus

* Cf. Albert de Bersaucourt. *Les Pamphlets contre Victor Hugo.*

† *Revue Hebdomadaire-février,* 1893.

d'écoles; il y a beaucoup de manifestes et de doctrines, mais si un poète a trois disciples, il faut crier au miracle et les théoriciens même sont les premiers à ne suivre pas leurs propres théories.

Pourtant, si l'on observe scrupuleusement leurs inclinations, les poètes, malgré leur impatience de tout frein, peuvent être rangés en quelques groupes parmi lesquels le groupe de l'Abbaye et le groupe néo-classique attirent d'abord l'àttention aussi bien par leur valeur que par le bruit qu'ils mènent.

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Ce qui caractérise le groupe de l'Abbaye, c'est son absolue liberté. Ses protagonistes, MM. Romains, Duhamel, Arcos, Vildrac et Chennevière, encore qu'influencés par Walt Whitman et Verhaeren, ont résolument mis sous leurs semelles toute tradition, toute loi, toute autorité et par conséquent toute mesure. Leur poésie est libre aussi bien dans sa pensée que dans son aspect.

Quelle est donc, outre la liberté, la qualité commune de ces esprits? C'est que le même spectacle les captive et c'est la vie sociale. *La présence humaine*, comme dit M. Duhamel qui est le critique, le Sainte-Beuve ou le Du Bellay du groupe, mais la présence humaine à l'état pur, considérée en soi, la simple contiguité des individus à la fois dans le temps et dans l'espace avec ses conséquences, voilà l'objet de leurs mèditations et de leur art. Pour eux, comme pour le vieux Grec, l'homme est un être qui vit en société. Ils n'écrivent pourtant pas des chapitres de économie politique; ils composent des poèmes, c'est-à-dire qu'ils expriment, comme les poètes de tous les temps, leurs sentiments ou leurs passions par le moyen d'images; mais leur lyrisme sociologique, plus voluntaire que spontané, en général trop viril pour être tendre, à la fois barbare et scientifique, apocalyptique et systématique, tantôt largement lucide et tantôt obscur et bégayant et, à certaines pages, étranglé d'une angoisse profonde qui n'est pas sans beauté, donne l'impression d'une force sourde et redoutable, constitue une forme rude et pesante et assez nouvelle de la poésie et qui est comme l'aboutissement de l'œuvre de M. Verhaeren.

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Les néo-classiques, eux, sont calmes et mesurés. Leur table est encombrée de règles exactes et de balances minutieuses. Ce sont hommes de goût et l'on sait qu' être homme de goût consiste à plaire non seulement à soi-même mais à certains morts révérés, à Jean Racine, par example, et quelquefois à l'abbé Delille. Ce sont des hommes d'ordre qui veulent rester dans ce qu'ils appellent la tradition française: pour ce faire, il

chantent sous la bannière de Jean Papadiamantopoulous-Moréas, qui fut sujet hellène, pasticheur assez heureux qui usa son porte-plume et sa vie à traduire les pensées des autres dans la forme d'autrui.

On pourrait leur objecter, peut-être, que la tradition n'exige qas que les poètes se transforment en copistes des chefs d'œuvre nationaux, que c'est aussi une tradition en France—et ailleurs—que d'innover; que La Fontaine, esprit classique s'il en est, a crié:

"Il nous faut du nouveau n'en fût-il plus au monde!"

et que Villon, Ronsard, Corneille, Racine, Rousseau et Hugo, dans l'histoire de lettres, font plutôt figure de révolutionnaires que d'élèves dociles des maîtres passés. A quoi nos poètes répondraient qu'ils innovent prudemment.

Leur langue, dont l'élégante sécheresse et la précision mécanique ne sont pas sans analogie avec la creuse perfection des vers de Voltaire, ne dédaigne pas d'exprimer par moments une manière de chaude sensualité dont on pourrait trouver l'origine dans les poèmes d'André Chénier. Mais-ce sont des écrivains très raisonnables, très sages, trop discrets pour oser se donner licence d'être profondément originaux.

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En deça des néo-classiques bavardent les innombrables élèves de M. Dorchain, poètes sans existence propre qui voient le monde à travers les lunettes du romantisme, recommencent inlassablement les œuvres anthumes et posthumes de Victor Hugo, Vigny, Lamartine et Musset, n'ont pas encore lu Verlaine et ne soupçonnent pas que M. Jammes existe.

Au delà des poètes de l'Abbaye, c'est le futurisme éclatant, bariolé, illuminé d'éclairs de M. Marinetti qui rêve, au moins en théorie, d'anéantir le passé et de brûler les musées et les bibliothèques.

Mais, entre l'Abbaye et le Néo-classicisme, au centre du tableau, se trouvent ceux que j'appellerai *les Fantaisistes* (MM. Carco, Pellerin, Vèrane, etc. . . .) et *les Indépendants* sans programme commun (MM. Frêne, Puy, Deubel, Salmon, Mandin, Spire, Lavaud, Périn, etc. . . .) qui édifient le monument poètique de l'époque et dont je ne définirai pas aujourd'hui le lyrisme me promettant de consacrer mes prochaines lettres à la critique de leurs ouvrages.

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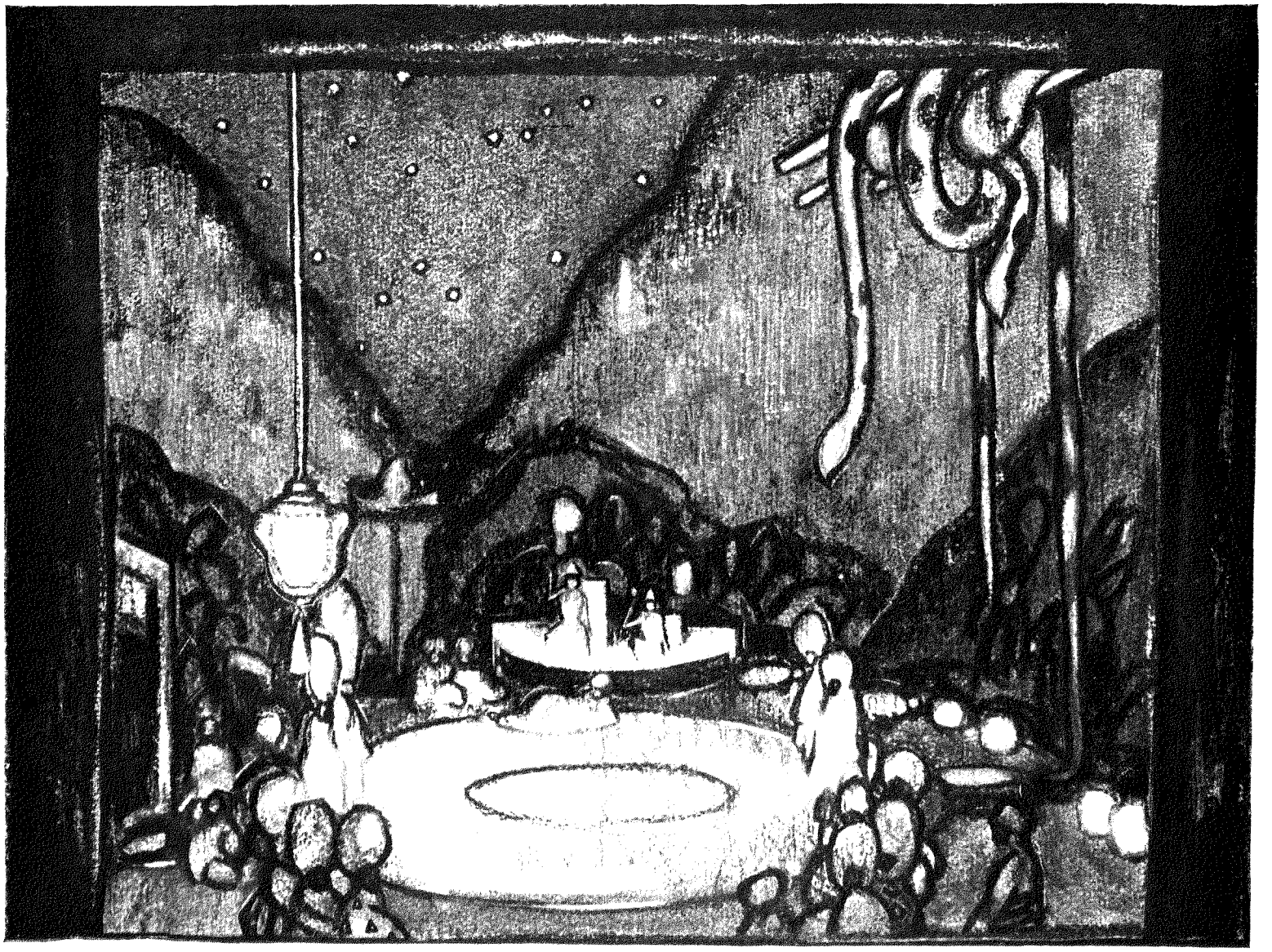
Si nous jetons un rapide coup d'œil sur la France actuelle, nous voyons que la poésie politique n'existe plus; il ne convient pas de s'en étonner si ce n'est qu'en des époques profondément troublées que purent éclore *les Invectives* de Claudien,* *les Discours* de Ronsard, *les Tragiques* d'Agrippa

* Le protégé de Stilicon et non pas notre excellent collaborateur M. Claudien.



LE DIEU BLEU

ANNE ESTELLE RICE

d'Aubigné et *les Châtiments* de Victor Hugo. La poésie didactique et la poésie épique sont depuis longtemps défuntes ou plutôt il faudrait dire qu'elles n'ont jamais vécu chez nous. La poésie moralisatrice et pédagogique est morte elle aussi comme une pauvre chandelle depuis que Nietzsche a soufflé et personne aujourd'hui n'oserait plus écrire l' *Ode sur l'Amour-Propre* comme Lamotte-Houdar ni même *la Conscience* comme Victor Hugo.

La poésie actuelle est une poésie lyrique ; son mode essentiel est l'expression du *moi.* Je sais bien que les poètes, même qui semblent le plus détacher de leur propre personne, n'ont jamais parlé que d'eux-mêmes; que les personnages de *Phèdre* ne sont que les divers aspects de l'âme racinienne et que les poèmes qui composent *Emaux et Camées* sont si peu distincts de Gautier qu'ils représentent la partie la plus intime du ciseleur, je veux dire sa pensée. Mais les poètes, jusqu' au siècle dernier, mettaient une certaine pudeur à dévoiler leurs sentiments particuliers; "*le moi est haïssable*" disait Pascal, ils ne se laissaient deviner qu' à travers des fictions et sous des termes généraux. Pourtant, de loin en loin et comme par éclairs, la poésie personnelle s'était laissé entrevoir. François Villon s'était hardiment mis en scène, et plus tard les indépendants du XVII[e] siècle, Théophile et Saint-Amand. Puis Jean-Jacques Rousseau ébranla toute la littérature; après lui, le romantisme brisa les chaînes du *moi,* le symbolisme lui donna des ailes; aujourd'hui il règne en maître absolu. Dans les livres, le mot le plus employé est le mot *je.*

Chacun parle de soi, et c'est très bien ainsi; car si chacun le fait originalement, chacun nous livre une conception neuve des choses. Chacun parle *directement* de soi ; on exprime un sentiment nu sans l'envelopper d'une anecdote ou d'un récit comme faisaient jadis Lamartine et naguère Coppeé. On n'écrit plus, non plus, de sonnets sur Cléopâtre ou sur les troubadours et rares sont les mains qui ouvrent encore la porte de ces magasins de décors que l'on nomme l'antiquité ou le Moyen-Age.

Chacun juge par soi et la révolution cartésienne pénètre ainsi dans la poésie deux siècles après son entrée dans les sciences. M. Carco voit l'univers comme il l'entend. M. Vaudoyer écrit des vers réguliers parce que tel est son bon plaisir. M. Arcos écrit des vers libres parce que cela lui plaît. Plus de règles. Dès lors, plus de critique.

Non, plus de critique qui distribue des bons-points et des *satisfecit,* mais une critique qui s'efforce de comprendre l'art de chaque poète et de démêler ce qu'il apporte d'émouvant et de nouveau.

TRISTAN DERÈME.

JACK & JILL ATTEND THE THEATRE

THE WELL OF THE SAINTS. J. M. Synge. Court Theatre. June.

Jill Eh ! Glory be to God and here we are, Jack. And isn't it a grand thing for a woman to be sitting on a velvet seat, and she with her man beside her in a boiled shirt and all.

Jack Whist ! woman, when I tell ye—they'll be after pulling up the curtain, and it's myself will be destroyed entirely if you do be talking in the one ear, and the music do be sounding in the other, and the actors speaking like the saints of God with fine beautiful voices on them, or like the little cherubs of heaven, maybe, and they warm with the milk of Mary.

Jill (*Astonished*) What will the women be after Jack ? the way they do be sitting with their necks and their chests on them as naked as a bucket of peeled potatoes. I'm thinking the women of England are strange creatures, and they hiding their little bits of heads under a great fullness of hair, and bits of ribbons, and bits of feathers or a square of auld net, maybe, the way the birds of the air might be nesting on the top of them, and they not noticing surely.

Jack Do you be looking at the men, Jill ? I'm after thinking they do be spending the long day sitting in their offices and combing their hair with a fine tooth comb, and it dipped in oil the way it lays as flat on their heads as the grass of the field when you've been lying on it in the hollow night, maybe dreaming of Helen of Troy, or maybe fornicating with——

Audience : Sh ! Sh !

Jill Whist yourself ! For we're not heeding you at all. Let you be looking on the stage now, Jack. It's a fine Irish place you'll be seeing this night. (*Curtain rises.*) Oh ! God help me ! that's a bit of a green tree, and it rising out of the boards of the floor. It's a miracle, surely. And what will the old people be doing the way they do be sitting on a little bench ?

Jack There's a man coming. He's after speaking with them.

Jill And three girls. They do be walking like yellow hens and they fearful of the grain we'll be throwing them. (*Loud laughter of audience.*)

Jack Do you hear that yourself ? Ah now, I'm a distracted man. It's the joke I missed entirely.

Jill It will be the auld man with the woman's skirt on him.

(*Curtain falls.*)

Programme girl : Tea, coffee, chocolates, ices, lemonade.

Jill Would you be having us getting our deaths, sitting out with first a hot stomach, and then a cold stomach on us ? Get away now with your bit of an apron, that's not big enough for a decent woman to wipe her nose into, and the cap on your head like the holder to a tea kettle.

Jack Ask her if she's after knowing of the name of the tune that they're playing, for it's a wonderful, beautiful tune, and my two feet dancing to it like the buds of May in a breeze.

Jill I'll not be asking her anything. You've no need to look at her waist Jack Tiger, an it's a poor thing surely for a woman to be so small in the middle of her body, the way she might swallow a fish bone, and cut herself into two halves entirely.

(*Curtain rises.*)

Jack Now, if that isn't the same auld man, and he cutting an auld thorn, and the young man cursing and swearing at his holy years.

Jill D'you see, his auld woman is after passing him, and she not noticing him at all. It's a fine—sad play, I'm thinking.

Jack Let you keep watching. There's the girl coming, and she with a pail in her hands. Eh ! now what will be happening ! They're having a power of talk I'm thinking, and they all getting in one place, and raising their voices.

Jill I'm thinking there'll be blood shed, Jack Tiger. God protect us, they're going away again. It's a disappointed woman I am.

(*Loud laughter of audience.*)

Jack Did you hear that yourself ? Now can you tell me what they're laughing at—and you with nothing but your woman's wits to save you from the powers of hell.

Jill It will be the auld man, and him walking like a pint of whisky.

(*Curtain falls.*)

Jack Well, a play's a queer thing for upsetting a man. It's a queer thing—I'd live to this night to be yawning at the likes of it, but if it's yawning I am for a short while, I'll soon be sleeping myself.

Jill Put on your coat, Jack Tiger. You can be standing up then, and having a great stretch of your muscles, and the people not knowing at all. It's fine care I'll be taking that you'll not put me to shame.

Jack Whist, woman! Your head's been near dropping down the last half of an hour. (*Curtain rises.*) Now, the Lord have mercy on us both if it isn't all beginning again from where it began before, surely?

Jill Where will the auld man be? Ah! here he comes. They do be sitting together again. Do you mark that —they're all coming back again. There'll be blood shed this time, surely.

Jack There's little use expecting, with the auld one with the woman's skirt, preaching at them and praying. Have you got your hat on, woman? The auld ones are going, and we'll be going too.

Jill The saints of God preserve us! Have you got the outside key of our door, Jack Tiger?

Jack Don't be making game of me—an it's a hard thing for a man with his eyes the only part of him that's not asleep, to be asked foolish questions. You've got it yourself.

Jill I'll be letting you know that I haven't, Jack Tiger!
The audience: Sh! Sh!

Jill Oh! it's the last time I'll be seeing a play at all.
(*Loud laughter of the audience.*)

Jack The curse of black night upon you, woman!—And you making me miss the last joke with your foolish talk about the key!

Jill Keep off myself, Jack Tiger! It's roaring crying I'll be, and the next minute not ended.
(*The curtain falls.*)

THE TWO TIGERS.

REVIEWS

MARY BROOME. By Allan Monkhouse. Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd. 1s. 6d. (Cloth 2s.)

The modern stage admits fantasy but refuses to tolerate poesy. The realist for whom realism is exploded becomes, if he is a practical man who wishes to see his play acted, a fantastic, and amuses himself and his audience with intellectual skirmishing. Mr Monkhouse's play is fantastic, though it has the great merit of directness in the handling of its situation. Its story is that of the seduction of a servant-girl by a semi-artist, and then enforced marriage upon the insistence of a rigidly conventional parent. The first act is almost excellent. The thing that has happened is stated simply and dramatically and with splendid force. It does not matter whether it is credible or not, it is made credible in the play's atmosphere. It is accepted painlessly. The situation is weakened a little by the clumsy drawing of the stern father, but already the mother from her first word is a real person, one in whom the reader and the spectator must be interested. The characters fall into two camps—as people do in life—the more or less real and the unreal, the semi-dead. Mary Broome, the mother, and Leonard, the semi-artist, are leagued against the father, the brother and sister. To the theatrical mind there is no direct conflict—*ergo* no *drama*—in the rest of the play. With an intellectual skirmisher like Leonard Timbrell, there could be no direct conflict, since he analyses to dust his own power of action, or eats like acid into that of others, and yet this fatality of character is productive of rebellion in the souls of all around him and even in his own soul. The trouble is how to express this in terms of theatrical action. On the whole Mr Monkhouse succeeds, but in particular scenes he fails. In the second act he produces an effect as distressing as that which Mr Shaw created in the hypnotic scene in "Getting Married," he does not bring about an upheaval of the depths dramatically, but suddenly forces them to the surface, so that they appear to be something altogether separate from the ordinary phenomena of life. No doubt the man who in a typhoon gets a glimpse of the depths of the sea is overbalanced by what he sees, but the artist recounting it should not overbalance the mind of his hearers. It seems to be at any rate, one function of art to reconcile illusory experience with the general consciousness or instinct for truth.

The third act is weak, the weakest of the four. The interest is slackened and broken into by the irruption of curiously conventional types of the theatre, destroying the hitherto well maintained atmosphere in which Leonard's unpleasant conduct at the end would have been credible. Almost it kills interest in the last act, in many ways the best of the play. It returns to the simplicity and directness of the first and one is delighted to see Mary leaving Leonard.

"Mary Broome" was one of the most interesting of the plays presented by Miss Horniman's Company at the Coronet. It has a quality, rare enough in the theatre, a quality of sweetness in irony that is hardly to be found in English outside the pages of Mr Henry James. That quality of course has its yoke-fellow defect in a too refined curiosity which leads to over writing, so that actors, especially repertory-actors, are given a task of almost insurmountable difficulty. An actor can speak any amount of nonsense with a superb ease, but intelligent analysis troubles him. It holds up the action, clogs the smooth-running of the play, and should, wherever possible, be deleted. It is to be hoped that Mr Monkhouse is writing another play. G.C.

ELSIE LINDTNER. By Karin Michaelis. John Lane. 3s. 6d. net.

To write a sequel to a book, is as dangerous an experiment as to marry after a love passion. There is a quality of spontaneity and of adventure in the book and the passion, and a sequel or a marriage is a deliberate thing—a thing making for steady permanence—a "settling down." The glamour is gone—the glamour, light and delicate as dew upon trembling grasses—and the even brightness of day succeeds the light of morning. The which most sober reflection in no wise deters us in the hour of temptation—and in the case of Karin Michaelis, the provocation must have been very great indeed. Elsie Lindtner is a sequel to the "Dangerous Age." I have always found it difficult to understand why the "Dangerous Age" appealed to England only in so far as it dealt with the problem of the woman of forty-five as a medical case. Perhaps it is because English "literature" of to-day is so plagued with furtive writers, writing of their mean sexual desires in a furtive spirit, and with a high stomached public wallowing in this "literature" for the sake of what dirt they may find in it, and marking their prize with a blue pencil, and crying it bold. The simple statements of physical facts in the "Dangerous Age" they seized with avidity, and it was a pretty sight to see the enlightened male youth of Chelsea looking upon their robust English mothers with a sympathetic eye. But I think that Karin Michaelis merits other and far different treatment. In the "Dangerous Age" she has created a personality—Elsie Lindtner—a strange, passionate creature, weeping and laughing, sometimes reviewing her life, and the lives of her friends with unimpassioned truthfulness, sometimes leaning to a future of romantic happiness with the blind trust of a young girl—jealous and proud of her body—fighting continually her desire for, and dependance on, man—and always, in the depths of her heart, feeling lonely. Every woman knows that the world is full of Elsie Lindtners, but Karin Michaelis has the courage of her knowledge.

In this, her latest book, she deals with the last years of Elsie's life. Elsie has forsaken her "white villa"—her dream house. She has renounced utterly her solitude, to travel round the world. With her acceptance of the fact that she is no longer young and desirable, her small personality ebbs slowly from her. She seeks the distractions of middle-aged women—and finally, she offers up herself as sacrifice for a little New York gutter child. All her life she has railed against maternity, but the boy once in her keeping, she is more absorbed in him, and far more adoring than the normal mother—and that is the irony of nearly every feminist.

K.M.

LA BOHÊME ET MON COEUR. Poèmes, Par Francis Carco. 1912.

For those who are interested in the younger generation of French writers, the publication of M. Francis Carco's tiny book "Instincts" almost a year ago was an event. In that book of sketches (now out of print) M. Carco proved himself the possessor of an unusual mastery of words which enabled him to attain his effect unerringly. Certainly it is easy to see genius in a scrap; and scraps are easy to write. But from a certain kind of sketches comes a certainty that the writer has the vision and the faculty for experience that is necessary for high artistic achievement. In his new book of poems "La Bohême et mon Coeur" M. Carco marks another stage in his progress. He is a poet of vision. Often there is something seen which strikes as unexpected and bizarre, but on reflection is felt to come from a perfect fidelity to experience. In these Montmartrois poems there is no sickening sentimentality. M. Carco remembers the things that are unforgettable, all that is finally true of Montmartre.

Aussi, va t' en. Le jour éteindra les lumières;
Les fleurs se fâneront, mais longtemps restera
Aux plis lourds retombés et muets des portières
Le geste que tu fis en élevant les bras.

It is difficult to find a parallel figure to M. Carco. Perhaps he is most akin to Jean Arthur Rimbaud, although

he has not as yet reached Rimbaud's occasional lyrical perfection (nor does he become, as Rimbaud, completely unintelligible). He has a great deal of the exquisite vagabond spirit of "J'irai bien loin, comme un Bohémien" in,

Des saules et des peupliers
  Bordent la rive.
Entends, contre les vieux piliers
  Du pont, l'eau vive!
Elle chante, comme une voix
  Jase et s'amuse,
Et puis s' écrase sur le bois
  Frais de l' écluse.
Le moulin tourne . . . Il fait si bon
  Quand tout vous laisse
S' abandonner, doux, vagabond,
  Dans l' herbe épaisse.

M. Carco is soon to publish a book of stories "Au coin des rues," and a novel "Jésus-la-Caille." We await them both with the liveliest expectation. J.M.M.

THROUGH THE IVORY GATE. By Reginald Farrer. Frank Palmer. 6s.

This book is all about a sentimentalist with a touch of genius who falls in love with a bewitching mask. The mask for her part takes a trifling, unconscious pleasure in tantalizing him to death. He stuffs her out with the whole of his own personality, morbid and normal, and gets nothing out in return. Result: He spoils himself for other women, cottons to two or three vices, and finally commits suicide by taking laudanum when three parts drunk, with as full an appreciation of the humour of the situation as his debauched condition will allow him to realize. The earlier part of the story is told mainly in clever psychological conversations, entertaining enough as fancies, but not very true or important. There are also statements such as this: "It was a dark-blue voice, a voice like sapphire velvet, or, a moonless night with stars"—which has the stamp of objective truth, but seems rather irrelevant. Later, the conversations peter out; the author tires a little and falls back on psychological narrative which moves forward with an impatient acceleration to the end of the book. The climax is orgiastic rather than dramatic. Yet the cleverness is undeniable and omnipresent. Sometimes the tone is high and dry and dignified, at others emotionalistic and wallowing. On the whole, a book which might titillate readers of *Rhythm* on their holidays. For the rest, it should prove a potent instrument of self-torture among maiden aunts, and in suburbs, universities, and other abodes of sexuality unduly deferred. F.G.

SONGS OF THE OPEN AIR. By George A. Green. Elkin Mathews. 2s. 6d. net.

GERMAN LYRICS AND BALLADS. By Daisy Broicher. Elkin Mathews. 1s. net.

"Long, long ago with Maidie,
  I roamed the mountain wide;
O it was a joy to be a boy,
  With Maidie at my side!
The woods were green and shady,
  The sun was all aglow:
I would I were with Maidie
  In the long, long ago."

sings Mr Green; and we can only echo his wish.

Miss Broicher's aim is ambitious. In her introduction she tells us that "She (the translator) is conscious that in the artistic structure, in the rhythm and cadence, the specific life of the poem and the soul of the poet are shown forth—she has therefore striven to give above all a rhythmic, artistic rendering of these poems as form, rather than a paraphrase or metrical imitation of their ideas and motives." Success would have meant no less a thing than the transmutation of German poems into English poems. But Miss Broicher has failed. There is not a poem in her book. W.W.G.

MATTER, FORM AND STYLE. By Hardress O'Grady. John Murray. 2s. 6d. net.

From experience a school textbook on the art of writing is suspect. They are in general so dully mechanical that they only produce repulsion in the student, and disgust in the artist who happens to come upon them. No one can be taught to be a literary artist; but most people can be taught a certain measure of convincing self-expression. They can be taught that scrupulous fidelity to their own experience, which makes a letter interesting. In brief, they can be taught literary honesty, if they cannot attain to artistic truth. No textbook that has ever fallen into our hands has ever, even professedly, had this aim. "Matter, Form and Style" is a notable exception. It would need an educational expert to decide whether the method of the book is of proven adequacy. To us it appears wholly convincing; and if the writer really succeeds in impressing his fundamental principles upon the rising generation, he will have done education a genuine service. Rightly Mr O'Grady insists on the paramount importance of subject-matter. "No man can write honestly about subjects of which he has no experience. . . . The subject must be alive to the writer, it must be important to him, for otherwise it will not live and become important to the reader." Emphatically, this is "something more than a mere textbook." If every would-be literary artist, as well as every school boy, learnt that lesson, it would be well with us. J.M.M.

BOOKS RECEIVED

All Manner of Folk. Holbrook Jackson. Grant Richards, 3s. 6d. net. (review September); English Literature, 1880—1905. J. M. Kennedy, Stephen Swift, 7s. 6d. net (review September); Wayfarers. Lenore Van der Veer, 1s. net. Putnams (review September); Les Bandeaux d' Or; L' Ile Sonnante; Poetry Review; Verzeichnis der Künstlergruppe Brücke; L' Effort Libre; T.P.'s Magazine; Wisla, Kraków; La Clarté.

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