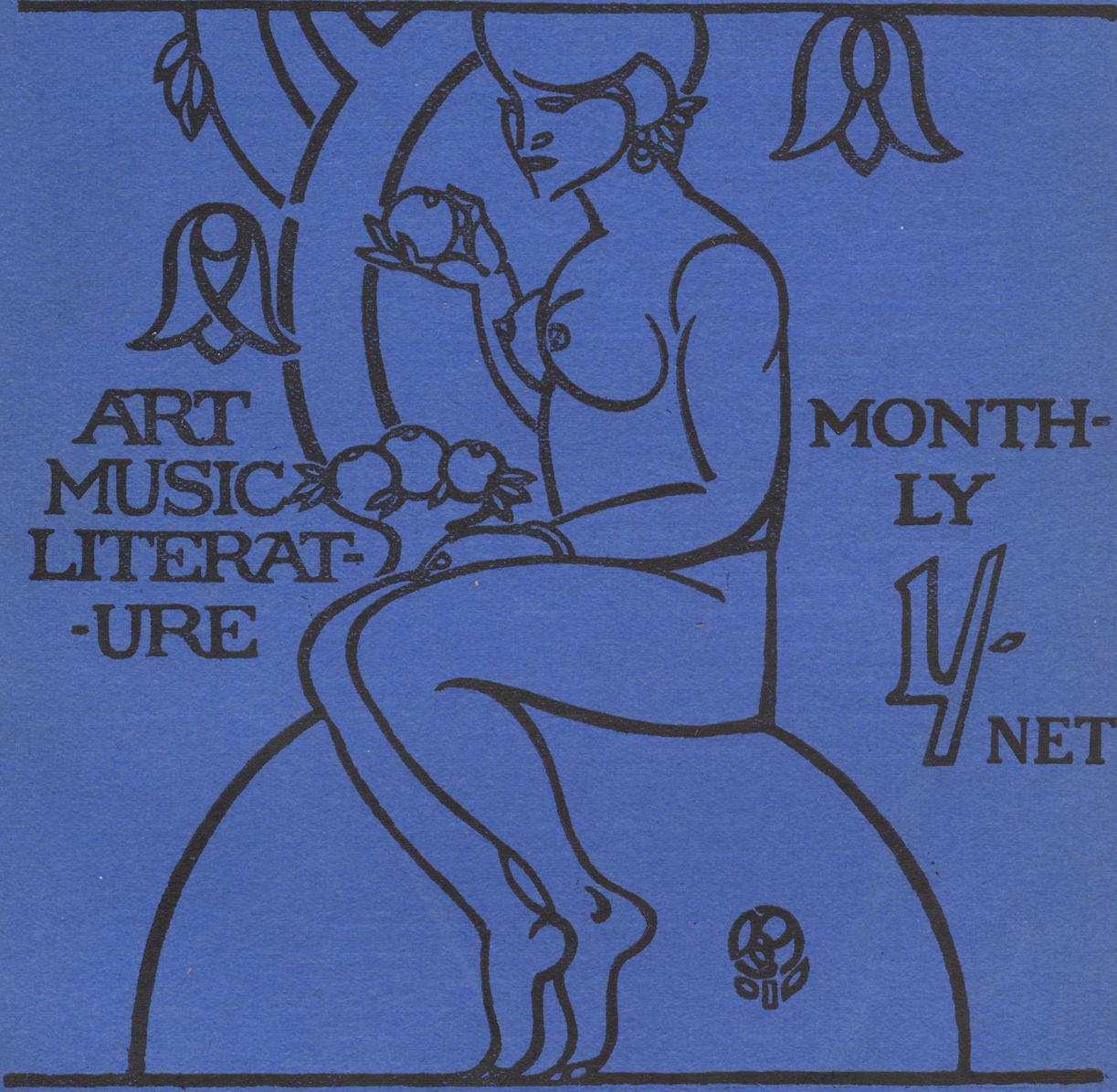


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Edited by JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY
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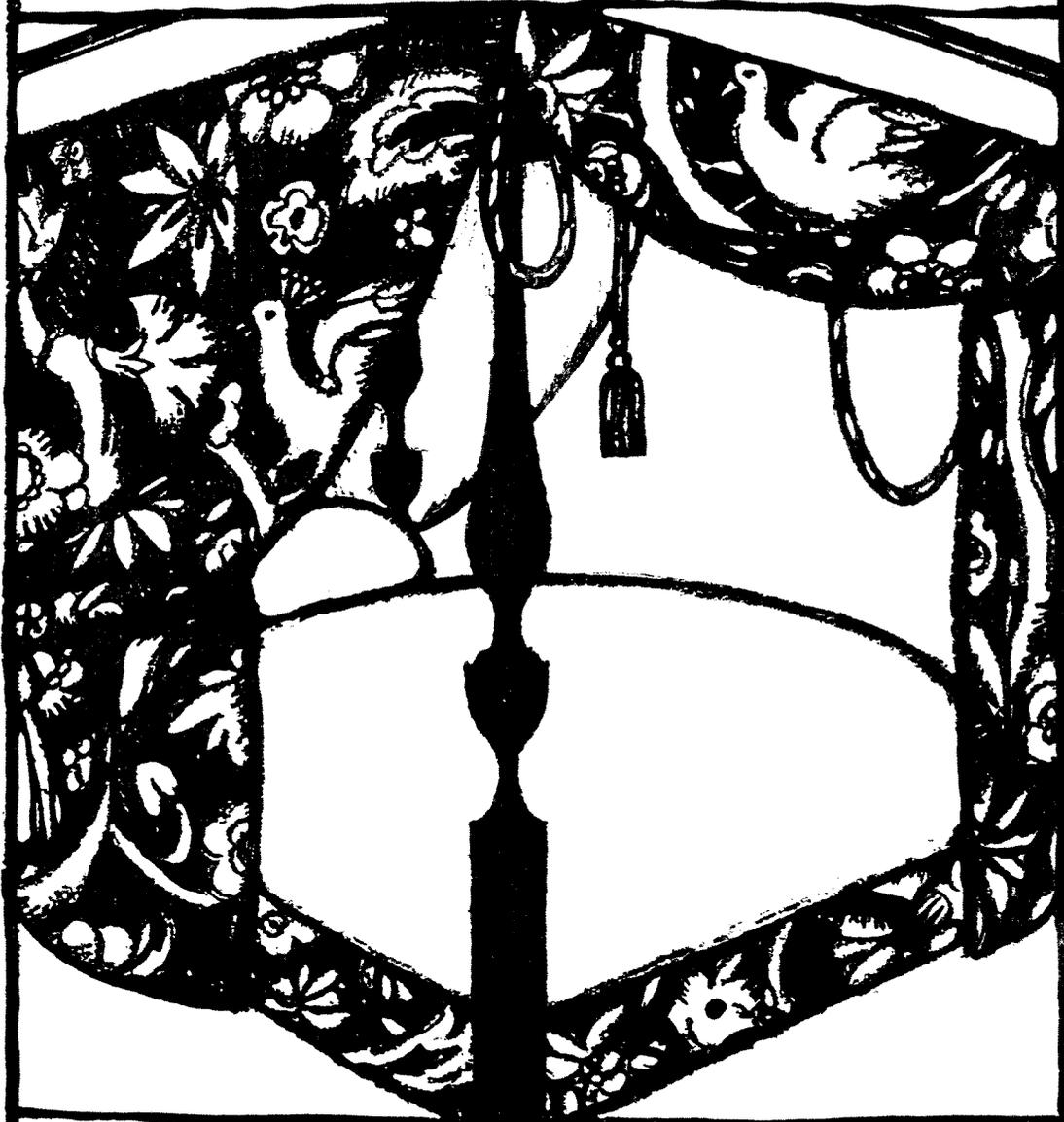
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THE CHANGELING

“ Ahoy, and Ahoy ! ”
’Twixt mocking and merry—
“ Ahoy and Ahoy, there,
Young man of the ferry ! ”

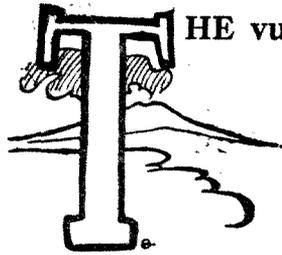
She stood on the steps
In the watery gloom—
That Changeling—“ Ahoy there ! ”
She called him to come.
He came on the green wave,
He came on the grey,
Where stooped that sweet lady
That still summer’s day.
He fell in a dream,
Of her beautiful face,
As she sat on the thwart
And smiled in her place.
No echo his oar woke,
Float silent did they
Past low-grazing cattle
In the sweet of the hay.
And still in a dream
At her beauty sat he,
A-drifting stern foremost
Down—down to the sea.

Come you, then, call !
When the twilight apace
Brings shadow to brood
On the loveliest face ;
You shall hear o’er the water
Ring faint in the grey !
“ Ahoy, and ahoy there ! ”—
And tremble away ;
“ Ahoy, and ahoy ! ”
And tremble away.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

FROM A JAPANESE INK-SLAB

PART I.



THE vulgarisation of General Nogi has been going on for some time now almost recklessly ; I see that a new book on him is sent out from the printer every day. (It is not far from truth to say that quite many books on Nogi go, not to the people, but straight to the waste-basket.) In old Japan, when a really great personality passed away, we built a temple or shrine upon his grave and, saying nothing, let our silent prayer tell our hearts. It was from the American journalism that we have made, as in fact, a third-rate gossip and tittle-tattle of a shallow age out of our country ; is it too much to say that it is America also who encourages our spiritual corruption ? General Nogi's personality is too sacred, therefore unfortunate as a choice of a subject for popular treatment ; his final act made a class apart ; its greatness is in its rainbow sudden prophecy, not in the performance itself. Surely Reason would pass him by, but Poetry will take note of him. I deem him great, because he alone in the modern history of Japan made Life obey his will and Death's gold-armoured dignity shine in old splendour.

I always notice that when the Japanese expand and even impose ideas on others, it is the time when they have none of them ; and they keep quiet and content like the fully ripe chestnut snug in its burr when they have ideas. It is a half-filled wagon that makes a noise ; the fully flowing sky has only the words of silence.

Pray see how the tea loses its real taste when against the sunlight, and again, see how the Chinese ink turns to ashen grey under the same condition. That is because they have denied the protection of Solitude and betrayed it. Oh the great blessing of Solitude be upon me ; let me rise and fall, live and die with it. I am a singer of Silence, the ever-blossoming beauty of Solitude.

I think it is the most true way (let me say the most heroic way) to go through the pain of ugliness when you want to see and feel the real beauty. To see the world as it is and love it is common enough. Let me see the world first as it is not and hate it with the possible great hatred. And when I grow to see the world afterward as it is and feel

to love it, it is the time when I am turning natural and true. To fall means to rise, or falling is just the beginning of rising.

I often thought before, that the great enemy was doubt, but now I should like to say that to truly doubt is to truly believe. (So the enemy was my real friend.) And I should say that doubt is more human and far more living than belief. Indeed, pain is more real and true than joy. Let me say, though paradoxical ; Believe in Doubt, and doubt in Belief.

Nobody has told me how it was when I was born. But I have a clear, though faint enough memory of when my little sister was born : it was the hot summer night when the mist-purple canopy of the sky was studded with stars ; that dreamy sight I remember I saw through the mosquito net which slightly swung like a lantern hung under the eaves when cool breezes flow. I do not know how I had fallen in sleep or dream ; I was awakened at late midnight by a strange voice of a new-born baby who, I was told then by my elder brother, had come as another member of the family only a little while before. I cannot forget even to-day that my new sister's first cry, whether from pain or joy, which still echoes, I do think, on my heart, indeed continually during the last thirty years. It is not necessary to know how babies are born ; there is one's existence where his voice is. That is enough. Oh, that first fresh voice or cry of my little sister ! Let me have my own real Voice to prove my own existence ; oh, my voice like that I uttered at the first moment when I left my mother's body.

People do not deny or approve, strange enough, on seeing the flowers blooming and falling, on seeing the clouds coming and passing.

I used to fire my curiosity and desire of boyhood days with reading an old warrior's astonishing tales and legends ; one of my favourite heroes was Yoshitsune, who in his boy's time was taught mystery and fencing by a certain Tengu, a mountain elf of the Western hill from where a rainbow flashes and where the bright sun has his nightly bed. Oh, how I longed for an acquaintance with that wonderful elf with a long nose and wings, when the setting sun burned the Western sky and hills. It happened one evening that I was severely scolded by my father ; my rebellious little soul forced me at once to leave the house and turn my hurried step toward the Western hill where the sunset fire was burning to make me imagine a strange castle of beauty and

romance, and even hear a word or two of that kind elf there. My frightened dear mother pursued me and at last held my arm and took me back and again to be scolded by my stern father. But oh, the Western hill where the Tengu might live and teach me Life's mystery ; even to-day I feel to hear sometimes his tender call from the far-off rainbow and evening glow. And I often imagine what if my mother had not taken me back that evening, well, of almost thirty years ago. I might have found the elf then by the singular virtue and desire which are given only to a boy.

The heart of Wisdom is a sorrow and pain. It is a mistake if you think it to be a scalp-capped old scholar just stepped out from the library or classroom. Wisdom is a reformed criminal after all penalties paid ; it is a wrong or confession turned to a saint.

It is not true to say that we have become impatient because we are wiser than our forefathers. But I know I believe that the realisation of Life's endless change and the possibility of a never-ending rebirth even in the Buddhistic sense makes me a wind (what an impatience of the wind's soul !) crying in the wilderness.

Is there anything new under the sun ? Certainly there is. For instance, see how a bird flies. And how flowers smile.

I think that the moon, among the natural phenomena, appears as if perfectly hating even an accidental shaking of hands or all personal contacts, oh, what an aloofness in her shrinking from the worldly vulgarity. (The flowers, even the saintly lotus included, on the other hand, look always as if liking human friendship.) And what a feminine sensitiveness and adroitness in evading the others ; see how amiably she slips from the trees' salutation. The mountains and hills have no power to keep her with them ; the clouds are always baffled by her beautiful elusiveness. I am often mystified in taking my evening walk, by her hide-and-seek play ; she frightens me from my back when I thought she should be right before me. And when I sought her amid the leaves, she was found smiling between the ripples of water at my feet ! Oh, I wish to have her gift for the avoidance of things that I do not want to do ; what a personality in her having her own way.

Although Hokusai was a great artist (though he may not have been so great an artist as the pedestrian critics, mostly Europeans, think

he is) he was at last a victim of the vulgar subject of Fuji Mountain ; even his famous (famous in the West) Fuji in Lightning is a failure, because the picture has hardly anything except audacity in colour. When I turn over the pages of " One Hundred Views of Fuji," I always ask myself how much of the real mountain would be left if you took our Hokusai himself ; when he entered into true Nature he was indeed great ; but when he left Nature for art, he was often a mere artisan Hokusai. In one word, he was vulgar ; and not only in his art, also in his act and manner he cultivated his vulgarity. Worse still, he is much prized in the West for his vulgarism. I should like to know who among Japanese artists ever succeeded with Fuji Mountain ; I am glad that Hiroshige, unlike Hokusai, did not much draw that mountain. I hear one old artist, although I forget his name, who never painted Fuji in his life ; what a distinction for that artist.

Not only Boston Beans, also the Boston literature, seems developing lately in Japan ; the difference is that our Japanese cheap edition of Boston literature has no Emerson.

Why is there only one way to say Yes and No, while there might be in the West three hundred and sixty-five ways of cooking eggs ? We have here a hundred ways for bow-making ; but there is only one way to sit.

I passed one day by a certain country road covered with foliage and grasses where Jizo, the stone deity who, it is said, paternally protects the dead children in Hades, stood sad and lonely. When I passed by a second time, I observed that one arm of that divinity was gone ; at the third time, that was one month ago, I discovered that he was most pitifully headless. And when I passed by yesterday, he was seen no more ; by asking one little boy playing by the roadside where he, that armless headless god, had gone, I discovered his saddest fate that the father of the boy had moved away the god to use him as a stone weight for pickles. Oh, what a lot of the beloved deity !

I once read in an old Chinese book that there was in ancient time a poet who prophesied war when he heard a voice of the cuckoo at a certain bridge at midnight. Who, I like to know, can foretell the future of Western art by the voice of an English thrush ?

(To be continued.)

SKETCH

Evening, like a gentle sister
'Steals across the harbour, trimming
Her moon-lantern where the brimming
Seas and smouldering skies meet.

Gliding onward, trailing sweet
Lilac where her flitting feet
Skim the waves and fields of wheat
On the cliff . . .

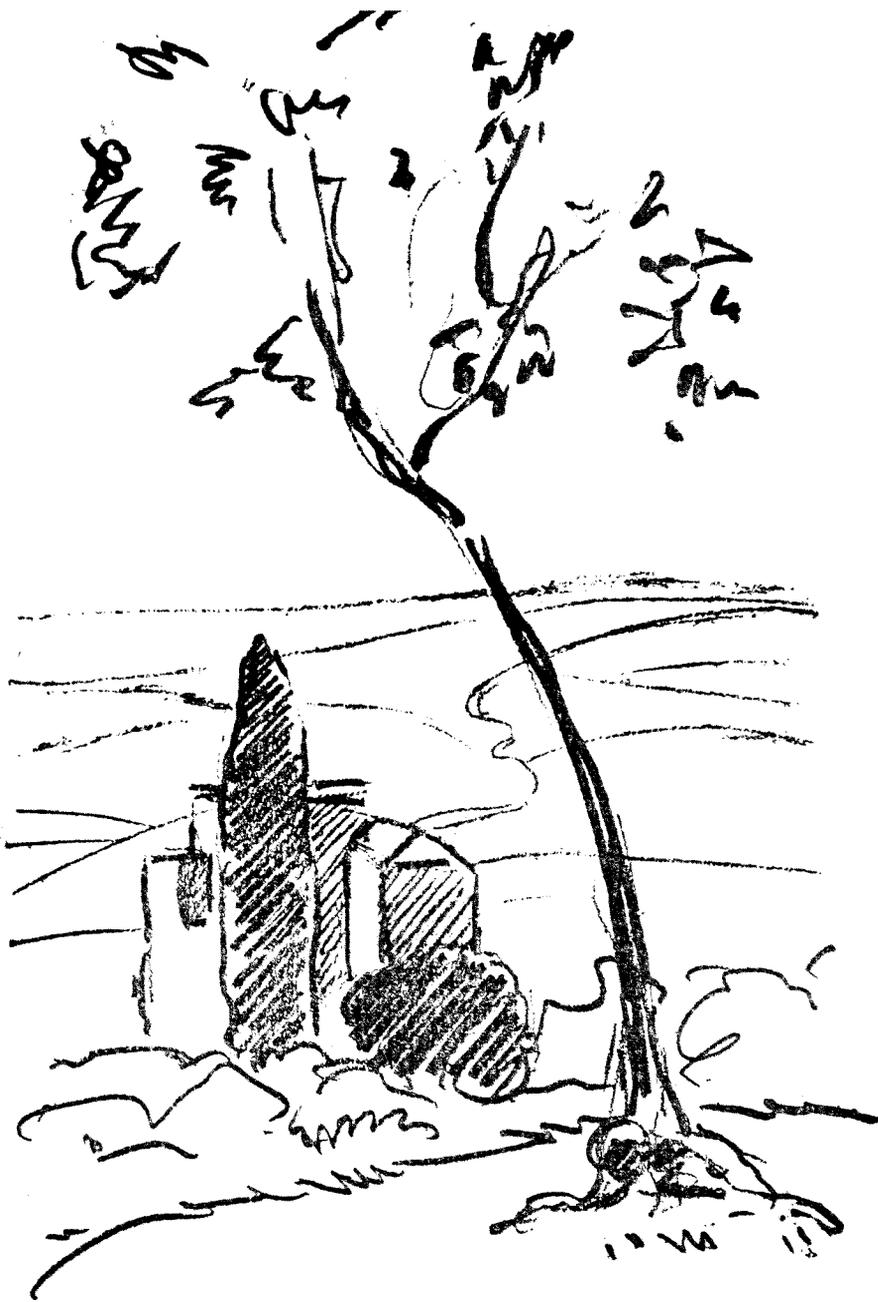
Now she is stooping
To the poppies that are trooping
Like the red-capped little people . . .

Higher than the hills and steeple
To the dream clouds she is heaping
Lilac, lilac, till the sleeping
Stars do waken there, and, peeping,
Creep out softly, like the day's end.

On the cliff path lovers wend
Laughing ways through Paradise . . .

By the moon's light in their eyes
Evening, like a gentle sister,
Knows they walk in Paradise.

THOMAS MOULT.



Brutsky - Fresco



A DAY IN POTTER'S LIFE



The dawn was past, the sun had grown glorious ; but Potter knew nothing about it. He lay on his little iron bedstead, with one arm pressed tightly over his face, and the bedclothes twisted into the shape of his restless body. One foot showed beneath the blanket, and upon this a fly was walking with that peculiar relish which flies obviously feel for the human form. The room itself was a small one, with dingy walls, and a text, and the lithograph of an all-khaki soldier with a bloody head ; and on the mantelpiece, beneath the mirror (truly the mirror of Mrs. Cavatt, in that it coquetted fantastically with truth), there was an alarm clock. Linoleum covered the floor ; a wooden wash-stand, with the carefully grained paint almost disappeared, stood in the corner of the room rather ashamed of itself. Thus was the room furnished, and here Potter slept out his nights in vague rebellious dreams of the office and old Fudge, dreams that made his body wriggle all the bedclothes round itself and away from the wall. The alarm-clock, after staring steadily through the darkness for many hours, gradually drew near to seven o'clock, and at last rent the air with a frightful and prolonged screech.

“ Oh, damn the alarm ! ” Potter, in a panic, pulled the bedclothes over his head, while the thrilling voice of the bell rang itself relentlessly into a whirring dry echo. It was rotten . . . rotten ! He yawned it until the word sounded like “ rah-rah-hn.” There was a deep pause before his mind developed the instinctive grievance with which he awoke each morning. . . . Have to get up, morning after morning, week in, week out. . . . Every man's hand 'gainst you. . . . Morning after morning. Morn—when you'd gone to sleep at last . . . like a slave, day in, day out. . . . For stinking, filthy wages, like a slave. . . . Every man's hand ag—kh—gaince you. . . .

There was a silence. It was unbroken for ten minutes.

“ Hullo, hullo ! ” Potter sprang up, rubbing his eyes. That bally alarm not gone off ? Again ! Thing was no good ; it failed morning after morning. He could swear he set it. Did he set it ? He'd stood in front of that clock at twenty-three minutes to eleven, and he'd set it to wake him at seven. It was twelve past. Only showed you what

those cheap clocks were like . . . not a bitter good. One and lence ha'penny that clock had cost him. Now the question was . . . had it gone off? Potter drew his knees up, and hugged them, looking vacantly ahead. Got to go down there . . . all day sitting on a stool with those deathly books. . . . Coo, old Fudge waddn't half a driver! Day in, day out, sweating . . .

He put back his bedclothes, and sat on the edge of the bed. Bit chilly, the oilcloth! Then he sent the holland blind whizzing up, while the tassel whirled in the air. The daylight revealed more clearly the yellow sad room, and a stain on the all-khaki soldier, and the wording of the text, which really was an incitement to violent deeds to such a one as Potter. It said, straight at Potter, that though his sins were as scarlet . . . and Potter's sins never rose above a dirty grey. Avoiding the text, which made him uncomfortable, Potter looked in the mirror, meeting his own eyes staring like shiny gooseberries from a face which seemed, in the cheap glass, to run hideously in all directions. While he looked, Potter thought of nothing; he had seen his pink ears, and his shapeless mouth and nose, too often to feel more than a non-descript sense of recognition, such as a dog must feel in similar circumstances. It was always the same face, white and a little puffy, except after what he called at the office a "thick night" (meaning a third glass of whisky), when he had a dark shadow beneath his eyes, and no time for any breakfast. He never thought anything when he looked at himself, though he often let his eyes travel over the grotesque portrait in the mirror, when he was tying his tie, or trying to dodge the bumps in the glass in order to get a straight parting. But then Potter was not in the habit of thinking much, as might be seen from his eyes, which somehow were always under thought, a little ruminative. He liked to know what was going on "in the papers," and he would ask the same question of a political opponent—at the office, for example—with a pitiless insistence; but he was not quite first-hand in argument, because people had a way of putting points that seemed to him absurd. And that made him splutter at their stupidity. Let them stick to the point, he would reiterate . . . make the foreigner pay. . . . Could they deny? . . . Presently he remembered that it was not his day for shaving; that saved a clear seven minutes. His toilet was quickly made . . . watch . . . tickets . . . money—finally he sniffed at the smell of his breakfast bacon.

When Potter arrived in what was called the "dahnin-room," Mrs. Cavatt's girl, Mercy, had laid the table—apparently with her thumbs,

because everything was crooked. That annoyed Potter, who was a stickler for precision. The knife and fork ought to be parallel; the teaspoon ought to be at the right side of the cup. Mercy was a slovenly cat . . . tell where she'd been reared. She always superintended Potter's breakfast, because Mr. Cavatt was always up and out to his work at six in the morning, and Mrs. Cavatt—Madam—accordingly lay in bed until late. Potter always breakfasted with the family on Sunday mornings, and listened to Madam's talk about her rich relatives, and was quite as cowed as Mr. Cavatt; he was "rather glad not to meet the old girl week-days," he had thought. When he was married, he'd . . . Coo, on twenty-five bob a week! He tried to laugh. Well, what he meant to say, other fellows got married . . . where was that sugar? Mercy always forgot it . . . she was a . . . A bumping against the door heralded Mrs. Cavatt's maid-of-all-work. She bore the customary bowl of coarse yellow sugar, and somehow the sight of it, coming close upon his discovery that the bowl was absent, stung Potter into weary indignation.

"Look here, Mercy," he expostulated, jerking his head, "why do I always have this bally sorf sugar?"

Mercy stood before him bony and practical, with a dirty face and dirty hands, and hunched-up falling hair, with deliberate languor in her manner. She was the picture of a slattern; he knew she was "Charity," just as she was always aware of it; nobody, seeing her, could be in any doubt; somebody had christened her "Mercy" with ironic stupidity.

"Corse that's all you get!"

"But, a . . . but a . . . Sundays, we always have cubes!" he protested, almost with a whine. Mercy continued to look at him with complete indifference, as though he aroused no feeling in her at all. But she had caught Mrs. Cavatt's manner.

"All right . . . Ask Madam! See what she'll tell you."

It was impossible. Potter would no more have thought seriously of asking Madam than he would have thought of giving notice at the office; it was one of those things he dreamed about—telling-off old Fudge and Madam. He had dreamed about it ever since he had known either. At the back of his mind there was always the thought of some upheaval of his fortunes which might enable him to say, "Please sir . . . will you get somebody else to do my work. I got a better job." Sometimes he was disposed to omit the "please sir": it wouldn't be a bad idea—mark you!—to wait until old Fudge was



KETTLAND FROM BRACKENBER MOOR

C. J. HOLMES

grouching one day, and then to spurt it out at him. He wouldn't like that, eh? But he'd . . . only thing about that was that he might be nasty about giving a reference. What he meant—it was no good having a row, and if he sauced Fudge, Fudge would simply say he was lazy, or he wouldn't send an answer; and the other people, the new people, would smell a rat. Then he, Potter, having quarrelled with his bread-and-butter and missed his cake, would be on the rocks, and out of a job. No use talking silly reckless talk . . . be a spree if ever he could. . . . Deep in his heart, Potter recognised the simple desire as an ideal. He always thought wistfully of "the other people," where you got off at five, and on Saturdays at one. Where they paid you decently, too, and treated you like a human being, not as if you was a slave—like a gentleman.

"What would she tell me?" he asked, after a long pause . . . daringly.

In the train, to which he descended by the longest Tube lift in England, Potter sat for a couple of stations opposite a black shiny window in which he could see himself looking quite—well, smart. The guard's indistinct shouting, and the ringing of each starting-bell, seemed so familiar that he never noticed them. Once in the Tube he became deaf, and knew only by instinct when they reached Tottenham Court Road station. He liked to look at himself in the window, until the seats filled up, and this morning he noticed—to the point of rectification—that his tie was crooked. Then he turned to his paper. There was, on the first page, a blurred photograph of some people in a divorce case; he turned on, skimming the headlines. "Bridesmaids carry kittens. Pretty Bridal Ceremony. Peer weds" . . . "£5,000 for a buttonhole" . . . "'Liars and Knaves.' Vigorous attack on the Government." . . . Hullo, what was the matter with Alfonso? The man sitting next to him had a newspaper which supported the Government; Potter felt that it was like a magnet; he didn't want to look at it; made him go hot all over. He wondered why such fools existed. . . . Disarmament, and all that rot. What they couldn't tell him was, where would England be now if it wasn't for . . . At the second station there was a terrible swamp of people; they trod past him, and stumbled stolidly in at both doors. A girl was wedged in among the men, and stood, because there was no vacant seat. Potter scowled and read his paper. It was a smoking carriage; if they wanted to sit down, there was non-smokers each end . . . Another fellow

opposite, Potter noticed, got up and offered his place. Why on earth should a man do that sort of thing? Course, she took the seat at once. . . . She'd known It made him a little cynical. . . . Want to be treated like men . . . expect to get it both ways . . . Gettin' into a smokin'-carriage, the only place men could go to be alone. . . . He stole a glance between the newly risen young man and the next man. She was a pretty girl! Round face, she'd got, and large eyes; he could not tell that her movements were very slightly self-conscious. He looked at her black cotton gloves, which were very neat, at the dirty library book she was carrying, at her large black hat with roses in it. Then he gradually came back to her face, and found that the girl had raised her eyes from her book and was looking across at him as though she understood all that was in his mind. It was that girl he had seen before, going home in the evenings; but never to notice much what she looked like. He wondered what she was thinking; he often wondered about that; they just looked at you with the lower half of their eyes. Took it all in! Potter never could understand, although he pretended he did. He pretended sometimes to be rather bored with all his understanding. He resumed his reading, "Shopgirl Heiress. Romance in Real Life." He didn't believe half what they said about that sort of thing; bet they knew all the time. Something about Marconigrams caught his eye, and he was interested in everything that related to "wireless" or "bird-men." He discussed these things with a certain mechanical understanding; he had seen Grahame White fly, and he could give somebody else's reasons for preferring a monoplane to a biplane. Indeed, he had tried to make a model, with wood, and tin, and elastic; but it had been a failure. He had talked about it to the office for a time, and Mant had been sarcastic about this as he was about everything else; then, abruptly, the subject had dropped. Mercy had swept up the rubbish.

Tottenham Court Road. The girl was getting out, too. They were near each other in the lift; she was a pretty girl; he could see her breathing gently. She did not look at him again; yet he thought she knew he was there. Be rather a lark to speak to her . . . he wondered if she'd answer. Oh well, it was three minutes' walk to the office; and it was three minutes to nine; and the girl went a different way; and he was afraid. He didn't even follow her with his eyes.

Mant was the only one to arrive before Potter at the office that morning. He stood over by the window of the large first floor room,

between the two high long desks which accommodated two on each side—eight in all. Potter glanced over at Mant, and round the office, with half-closed eyes, pretending to be like old Fudge and seeing everything. That calendar had not been altered; Mrs. Slack always forgot it. Some of the mud had been washed away from the floorcloth, but the corners of the room were mercifully dark, and they went undisturbed from one week to another. Potter did not much like Mant; he was a sarcastic devil, and as he was about twenty-eight (six years older than Potter) and didn't mind swanking, old Fudge treated him different to the others. He thought himself bally smart, because he could do double entry. Anybody could do it if they wanted. It always made Potter writhe when Mant laughed or said anything he could not understand.

"Hello, the peerless Potter!" Mant said, lazily cleaning his fingernails. "Pretty fit, old sport?"

"Hullo, Mant . . . Mornin'," said Potter. "Calendar's not altered."

"Ah . . . our good Mrs. Slack . . . Always thoughtful of you, dear Potter."

Potter looked with a malevolent expression at Mant's sandy face and pale eyes, and his indescribable air of lazy contempt.

"Well, it's time she thought a bit more about her work," he said, clenching his teeth. "Give me the fair sick, it does . . . morning after morning . . ."

"'Day in, day out' . . . Finish it, Potter, there's a sport."

"Think you're bally smart. It's her work, man."

"Petty thing like that? How long does it take you to alter? You're dotty about the calendar."

Potter became splendidly argumentative.

"S'posin' I was to write a letter, and mistake the date, and a question cropped up some time. . . . Might mean a law case," he said, at great speed.

"Fool!" cried Mant. "Little pettifogging mind like yours is eaten up with trifles."

"Cawh!" ejaculated Potter. Mant was a sarcastic devil. Sometimes he thought afterwards of splendid retorts, like "Ah, that's what you think . . ."

The principals came, one by one, stalking through the office as they arrived. Some of them nodded to Mant, but all ignored the



DRAWING

CHARLES WINZER

others. Mr. Rudge, known as old Fudge, looked sharply round, like a despot counting heads.

"Where's Tadd?" he demanded. Tadd was late. That meant another row. They always listened to rows with a furtive joy, pricking up their ears and grinning even while they appeared to be totting up figures with rapid pens. If by chance there was a retort, there was a quiver of excitement all through the office; and once, when Mant had been rowed and had proved his case, to Fudge's public acknowledgment it had been hard for them to settle down again. They had all said, "Good for you, Mant" when Fudge had gone; and had kept their eyes alert for Fudge's return, as though they had been schoolboys. But nobody expected Tadd to do more than lie in this case, because it was merely a question of lateness. Tadd presently sneaked in, took his rowing with humbled head, and went to his place. He and Potter were rather pals: they told each other they wouldn't stand it much longer, and thus, in whispers, warmed each other's self-esteem. It was as though they stood back to back against the world's conspiracy to ignore them. Tadd was Potter's only friend. He lived two stations nearer town on the same Tube, and they went to the same Tarratonga depot for lunch, playing abortive games of draughts together. Tadd used to take the cheques to the bank during the morning—a jaunt Potter always envied, because when he did it in the summer Tadd was away, and although he could have a couple of smokes, there and back, any dawdling meant that he would have to stay late to finish the extra work. In the ordinary way, Potter arranged to have just enough work to carry him through the day. Some of his subterfuges, such as doing the same thing twice over, were ingenious; but he did not know that old Fudge knew them all. Fudge had said confidentially to Mant, "If he's only got a label to address, it takes Potter all the afternoon. He's a slack devil." Well, the way Potter looked at it was: "If they treated you better, you wouldn't mind doing a bit extra. Treat you as if you was a doormat with 'Welcome' on it!"

Tadd came over to him during the morning, under pretence of looking up an account.

"I say . . . get out slippy to lunch. Got something to tell you."

Potter wondered what it could be: he kept looking at the clock for half-past twelve. Eleven . . . five past . . . twelve past . . . fourteen past . . . Clock must have stopped. What on earth could Tadd have to tell him? Seventeen past. Mant brought over one of his invoices at quarter-to-twelve.

“ Referred back to committee,” he said facetiously. “ Should be three pound fourteen, dear Potter.”

“ Damn,” Potter said. He tried the figures over and over again. If he could only make them different to Mant ! Mant approached him again, finding Potter irritated with his powerlessness and stupid with his irritation.

“ Can’t you do it, old chap ? ” Mant asked, sympathetically—too sympathetically for truth. “ ’Fraid you’re not feeling very fit.”

“ Go to hell ! ” Potter said, because he knew Mant would tell Fudge all about it as one of the sneaking jokes they sniggered over. He was wondering about Tadd’s news. He’d seen Tadd at six-thirty last night, and Tadd hadn’t had a word to say then, except that the Spurs had signed on another Scotchman as centre-half. What had happened since then ? Had Tadd told off his landlady ?

“ Potter, my pet, you can’t seriously mean that nineteen shillings and fourteen shillings make twenty-seven bob,” Mant said, in his gentle voice.

At last it was twelve-thirty, and he could go to the Tarratonga and hear about it. Tadd always went out half-an-hour before him, so he was smoking already, while Potter took what May called “ Welsh-rabbit.” There was a haze already in the smoke-room of the Tarratonga : the be-spectacled May’s lack of physical charm was hardly noticed because of the haze and the elaborate laughter with which she accepted innuendo.

Tadd said :

“ May’s got a new mash ! ” and they all looked at a monkey-faced man in the corner of the room. The monkey-faced man had a joke, it seemed, for he and May always grinned when they saw each other, and May’s high gurgle of laughter was music in his ears.

“ Yes, well what is it you want to tell me ? ” Potter demanded, all fire to know now, since he had been kept in a state of excitement all the morning. Tadd lowered his voice in order to make his news the more impressive.

“ You know I was late,” he said. “ ’Smornin’.” Potter rattled his feet ; the whole office had listened to Fudge’s reproof. “ Well, I got a girl.” Potter stared, fascinated. “ Champion bitter goods. Met her last night, on the Spaniards Road. Well, I saw her in the train ’smornin’. She’s at a place somewhere in Oxford Street. I walked down with her. Waddn’t half a swank ; told her I didn’t care how late I was. She liked that. I’m going to meet her ’sevenin’. . . .

I said I'd be the same place to-night. She said she was goin' to bring her friend—I said I'd bring you . . .”

“Me!” cried Potter.

“You can talk to the other one, you fool!”

“Good Lord!” From a haze the smoke-room became suddenly a blur.

“Don't forget. Spaniards Road at seven-thirty. I said you'd come.”

Potter, to have a girl—he was filled with desperate excitement. A girl! For a moment or two he was speechless.

“Here, half a mo. Ever seen this other girl?”

“A . . . Molly says she's pretty.”

Potter's heart swooned. He swallowed rapidly.

“No, but tell us . . .”

“I don't know her. Never seen her.” Tadd was a little irritable with excitement and a sense that Potter lacked savoir faire.

“How'd you get to know . . . your one?”

“Oh, she just said ‘ahem,’ and I said ‘Good-evenin’,” Tadd said. “We soon got talkin'. She's a milliner. She ain't a . . . a tart, you know. Well, look here, I mus' git back.”

That he, Potter, was to meet a girl, struck him as the wildest thing. He'd hardly ever spoken to one, except May, at the Tarratonga, and she—well, looking critically at May, with her spectacles and her grin—he couldn't have walked with her. That laugh was enough to poison you. After a period of fidgeting at the Tarratonga, he returned to the office, to fidget there. As he sat at his work, Potter longed to go over to Tadd and put some questions. For example, what on earth could he say to a girl? What did they talk about? He was so excited that he fell into a dream. Girls—why, he couldn't even talk to a barmaid until he had had that third, fatal, whisky, and then it was too late. Mant was grinning at him contemptuously, and once drew Fudge's attention with a side jerk of the head. Fudge also watched, wrinkling up his nose.

“Haven't you got anything to do, Potter?” Fudge called out, in his bitter voice.

“Yessir.” Potter put his hands among papers, and shuffled them busily, in pathetic disguise.

“Then do it, and don't moon about. D'you hear?”

Yet how could he do anything, for remembering the girls he had

seen, the girls whose eyes he had tried to catch, the girls whose eyes he had tried to avoid? Potter had still that sort of despairing, wondering, contemptuous admiration of girls which had arisen in his schoolboy mind. As a schoolboy, he had heard all about girls, he had made jokes about them as all the other boys did; but like their jokes his had been stale obscenity badly remembered from other jokes. He had never known a girl; they were a tantalising possibility, setting his mind in a skir of anxious desire. At the office, girls were not mentioned except as the origin of jokes which the other fellows found in sporting papers; and thus they were a little flyblown as a sex. Individual girls, who transcended these jokes, were, however, as great a mystery to Potter as ever, eating daintily, walking prettily, talking in little high voices—soft, delicate, delightful; but never real. The dusty, unappetising girls he saw wearing thick clothes all the year round only enabled him to enjoy the jokes moderately; elaborately dressed trim-looking women made him self-conscious as a rabbit; such a girl as the one in the train, or the one he was to meet, was something as incomprehensible as “the eternal feminine.”

“Look here, Potter,” said old Fudge, sharply, standing at Potter’s elbow. “Either you do your work, or you do the other thing. Know what I mean?”

“Yessir,” Potter muttered, returning to his book and pen with a paralysed energy.

“I’m glad of that. But understand, if I have any more of it . . .” Mr. Fudge walked away. Potter thought; slave-drivin’ . . . day in, day out . . . Thought you’d sold yourself because they gave you twenty-five bob a week. He wouldn’t stand it much longer . . . It would be grand to say to old Fudge . . . Tell him off . . . Fudge and Madam. If he only could! They didn’t understand you were a man. . . . His thoughts were confused; the one word “girl” alone was clear in his mind.

And then the evening came, and the Spaniards Road grew dark and full of the soft strangeness of evening. Down the roads bordering the Heath lamps twinkled—little sprayed dots of light in the gently moving leaves. People with undistinguishable faces commenced to walk up and down, saunteringly, with their voices artificially hushed if they loved one another confessedly, and artificially brilliant if they had not reached the point of a declared affection. Potter heard shrieking laughter, and “Leave off!”—saw raised hats, and once

heard the whirr of petticoats as a girl pretended to run into the road from her eager swain, one of a party. He grinned a little to himself. From the straggling procession of a few, the crowd grew into a steady stream, so that Potter became each moment more afraid that he had missed or would miss Tadd and the girls in the darkness and the press. He snapped his fingers and jerked his feet at the delay, and said "Oh, well . . ." as though he could persuade himself that it did not matter whether they came or stopped at home. He'd just as soon walk about by himself . . . a girl was an awful drag . . . have to give them sweets . . . Good Lord! he hadn't thought about that! Suppose she was greedy! Twenty-five bob a week was not much to marry on, but it was even less adequate to support pretentiousness or a courtship. He did not know that many of them nowadays paid for themselves; his ideas were still mediæval.

Damn old Tadd! He was a fool ever to have come. Didn't want to know any girl. Mark you! Once you knew them, you never got rid of them! What he meant, you knew them for always. Had to take your hat off to them . . . had to give up your seat to them . . . give them inside . . . and to keep on talking . . . talking. Perhaps this one was a Suffera-geet! He'd got one-and-eightpence in his pocket, and four strip-tickets; a watch that was nearly, but not quite, pawnable, a tie-pin that had cost two-and-three; a ring that Mant had offered to buy for fourpence-ha'penny. That was all. He'd got no money at home, no people to help him out, no anything at all to fall back upon. It was . . . "O God!" groaned Potter, "let's get out of this!" But he took only three steps.

In five minutes, Tadd arrived, and Potter felt flushed and embarrassed to see two girls with his friend. They both had enormous hats and trim waist-banded figures; but he could not, in the darkness and his flurry, see their faces.

"Hullo, here's Potter," Tadd said. "How are you, old man?"

"Nicely, thanks; how's self?" Potter said, mechanically. He shook hands with the girls, not looking at them, just hearing that they both said, "Quite well, thank you." Tadd's girl said "Pleased to meet you," and they stood in silence. Tadd felt a moment's shame at Potter's failure to shine, and said "Yes" once or twice, ruminatively. Then he said, "Yes, that's old Potter, Molly. Told you 'bout him, didn't I?"

"Oh yes, I've heard a lot about you, Mr. Potter," Molly said, briefly. "Now you two, you talk to each other . . . It's my friend,

Hetty Summers.” And with that she started to walk again, by Tadd’s side, leaving Potter, with a furiously beating heart and a red confused face, standing sheepishly in front of the second girl. Even while he cursed Tadd for leaving them in the lurch, the girl swung into step beside him and they followed the others.

“ Nice evening, isn’t it ? ” she said.

“ A-yes . . . oh yes, beautiful,” Potter said. “ Yes, beautiful evening. I-a-I like an evening like this ; it’s so . . . ”

“ Fine,” suggested the girl.

“ Yes,” said Potter. There was again silence. Potter’s fingers writhed together. He thought his companion’s eyes strayed to passing young men, and that she must think him an awful fool. Yet even that suspicion did not suggest anything to say. Fortunately Hetty, true to her sex, was conversationally better equipped.

“ You know, I’ve often seen you in the train,” she said, beginning afresh. Potter took a hasty glance, and met her eyes. It was the girl he had seen in the train.

“ O—oh,” he said. “ Didn’t you—a—’smornin’ . . . ” The recognition made them intimate, as nothing else could have done so quickly.

“ Yes. You know, I was so . . . That fellow that gave me his seat . . . I didn’t like . . . I’d much rather stand . . . ”

“ Oh no,” Potter said. “ I—a . . . You couldn’t a stood . . . —I a . . . ”

“ Well, I know you would . . . ” the girl guessed, brilliantly. “ But you were reading your paper . . . ”

“ Eh ? ” said Potter. “ Oh yes. Yes, I was readin’ my paper. You know, I think . . . I think they oughter have more carriages in the morning.”

“ It’s awfully crowded,” she agreed ; “ I didn’t know it was a smoking carriage. I never go down in a smoking carriage. Sometimes—coming home—I do ; but then there’s sometimes more room at night. If you’re early.”

“ I’ve seen you in the evenin’s,” Potter said. “ Not in the mornin’s.”

“ ’Cept this morning. . . . I always think you look tired in the evening. I’m afraid you work too hard. . . . Course I know you have to, if you’re busy.” She was motherly, but hesitating.

“ Oh, I don’t know. Course, it is very hard. People seem to think you’re a slave—day in, day out—what I mean, they keep you at it

because there's such a lot to do. Our manager, old Fudge . . . he—a—don't like me much—course, the boss does, but Fudge don't, because the guvnor does. See?" Hetty said "N-hn." "I had a row with 'im 'sarf'noon—didn't half tell him off, too."

"Did you," ejaculated Hetty, delightedly. "I wish I could. I can never think what to say . . . She's so sarcastic."

"Oh, can't you?" said Potter, rather splendidly. "We got a chap at our place—very sarcastic. I don't take much notice of him, though. I let him see I don't care."

"It must be fine. I get so wild, you know. I can't think what to say. That's what I always think; a man's so independent. Not like a girl." She named her kind with distaste.

Potter laughed richly.

"Oh, but the girl—she, a—she manages the man," he told her.

"Does she?" asked the girl, very softly.

Potter felt the strangest thrill stealing through him at the inquiry. It rose and rose until his heart beat fast and his breath was choked.

"Oh yes," he gasped, confidentially. "These Suffera-gets . . . You're not a . . .?"

"Oh no," she said, in a rush. "Hate them, losing their . . . getting so . . ."

"Unwomanly," Potter suggested.

"Yes. . . . When I see the pavements chalked, I get so wild," the girl said. "Makes me . . . Oh, where's Molly and . . . and your friend?"

Potter looked; they were nowhere to be seen.

"Lorst 'em," he said, simply. "Well, I don't mind. D'you?" He hardly heard her answer, but it made him jerk his head like a cockerel. "Such a lotter people."

"'Tis a crush, isn't it?"

"Gets quahter, beyond the Spaniards," he suggested, thrilling. They pushed slowly through the crowd in the direction of the Spaniards. It thickened, and dwindled, as the parade ceased. "That's better," he remarked, as they escaped. They were walking quite wide apart, and he intentionally moved closer. His companion's sleeve now kept brushing his, and he flushed at each contact. A girl was such a tender thing, so made to accept the help and the will of the man nearest and dearest to her. "Very nice here. . . . Oo, you can breathe here." He took several deep breaths, and Hetty laughed delightfully, to his great comfort and their better acquaintance.

In a few minutes they passed a seat, upon which they both could not help observing that two people were sentimentally sitting. Potter glanced aside at Hetty, and they both laughed a little, with a self-conscious thickness.

“Yes, it’s much nicer down here,” he said, earnestly. “Don’t you think so?”

“It’s quieter.”

“I’m awfully glad you came to-night,” he burst out. He could not have kept it back another second.

“So am I,” murmured Hetty.

They walked along quietly, without speaking, and the wind pressed the leaves together, gently rustling, and when they looked up at the sky they could see the pale stars shining. Down the road there were only slowly loitering couples like themselves, and an occasional street lamp shedding a dim radiance. And Potter’s heart felt as though it was bursting. He was not like himself, but like a great fountain of sighs.

“Yes, I’m awfully glad you came,” he kept on saying, and Hetty felt her mouth running into uncontrollable little smiles. There did not seem anything further to add. They both understood that Potter was moved, and they both took an innocent pleasure in his condition. Hetty was nerving herself to tremendous avowal, far more difficult than her earlier agreement. When it came, it was explicit.

“Yes, I’m very glad too,” she said, in the darkness.

Instinctively, they turned and walked slowly back along the Spaniards Road, and as they joined the crowd and lost the sense of aloneness and intimacy which the silence and the stars had engendered, Potter explained why a monoplane was in his opinion better than a biplane. His talk stumbled as often as their arms touched, as Hetty recognised; but although she also was confused, her head was cooler, her experience greater, and her confusion was lost in the sense of his. She, living with her friend Molly, longed for some such regard as this quite as strongly as Potter longed for sympathy; she wanted to be important to one person even as he desired to be considered personally valuable. Just as she instinctively expressed sympathy, and drew confidences, so Potter exaggerated his claims to heroic qualities and grew masculinely protective. He tried to explain to her the kind of man he most admired.

“What I say,” Potter said, “is that men—men like Bewmont and Vedrines and Grahame White—are doin’ their proper work. That is, they’re bein’ brave.”

"And I s'pose you think girls aren't brave," said Hetty, without temper.

"Oh—I don't say that. But mark you! Their place is in the home. That's where these Suffera-gets are wrong. Their place is to help men. I mean, to keep 'em up. See what I mean?"

She accepted it. The opinion was almost that which she held herself. It was near enough; and she was not accustomed to leading or holding out against the opinions of others.

"But don't you think," she said, "that bravery's not just flying?"

"That's what I always think," Potter agreed. "There's all sorts of bravery." He desperately wanted her to find room for himself in such a category.

"There's working hard, and not complaining."

"Exackly."

"And girls"—still she urged it, for her own reason—"girls are just as good that—you know—help that kind of bravery."

Potter did not understand for a moment what she meant. He was thinking he had never been so happy before. He thought sentimentally of his "thick nights" and other things, and they grew stale. Then it came to him, and he plunged through the generalisations with which they had been playing round their own relation.

"I know what you mean," he said. "There's something Mant—that's the sarcastic feller, you know—he's always recitin' about 'Woman in our hours of ease.' Something about 'A ministering angel thou.' At least, I think it's 'thou.' Well, you're like that."

They were right along past the White Stone Pond at the top of Hampstead Heath, and again the crush had grown less troublesome. But neither saw the moon on the water, or the black trees against the warmer sky; they were self-engrossed, terrible in their ignorance of the world.

"Oh no, I'm not," she protested. "Wish I was."

"Yes you are. I can tell. Why, even just this evenin' with me—Oh, I can tell. Why, think I can't tell? You must think I'm a fool!"

"Well, I don't know. I wish I was brave. Only I'm silly."

"Silly!" Potter seethed with loyal objections. "Hn!"

"I've never had anybody to tell me anything," she said, very quietly, sober with the curious new emotion which had raised her above her own daily nature. "My mother never liked me. She wanted a boy. I was just miserable all the time. Then she died. I've never had anybody, 'cept Molly . . ."

Potter could not say anything. His mind seemed to try to understand something that was beyond it. He jerked his head and grumbled to himself.

“Silly, indeed!” And in a minute. “Well, I like that. Silly!”

They were past the fire station at the bottom of Heath Street.

“That’s my road over there,” Hetty said, suddenly. Potter suddenly awoke.

“Oh, I didn’t know you were a landlord!” he cried, brilliantly.

“Wish I was.” They stood still, quite close to one another, and Potter’s eyes were fire.

“No, but really . . .” he said. “When shall I see you again? Soon.”

“D’you want to?” Hetty asked, archly, with tears in her eyes. And at his step nearer, she cried, “Saturday?”

“I—a—I—a . . . What time? We’ll go to Tott’ridge to tea. I say, I don’t . . . Tadd didn’t say—a——”

“Hetty,” she said.

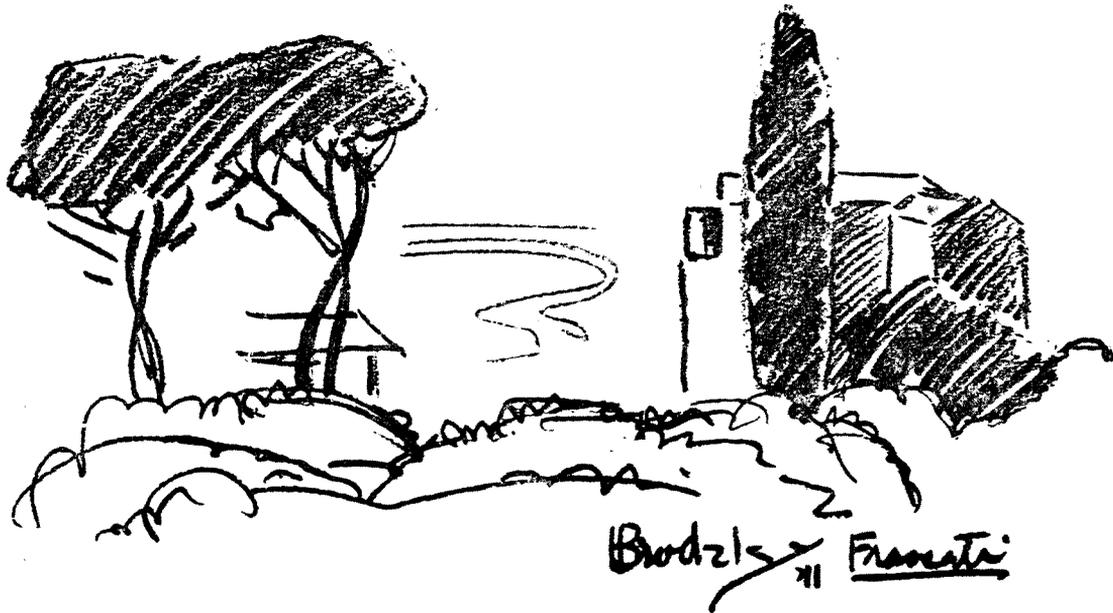
“Saturday here, at three?”

“Goodbye. . . . Yes, goodbye.” She held her hand out, and Potter was shaking like a lover. He stood and watched her walk along the road, and waved his hand in reply to her. Then he walked home, blazing. She was there, she was near him, always and forever. His little girl.

Potter sat once more upon the edge of his bed, and a candle was flickering just in front of the mirror. And Potter was saying the name “Hetty” over and over again; and then “twenty-five bob a week, O God!” He put out the candle, and got into bed, and lay there quite quietly until something seemed to make his heart beat great convulsive beats in his throat, and he began to whimper.

FRANK SWINNERTON.





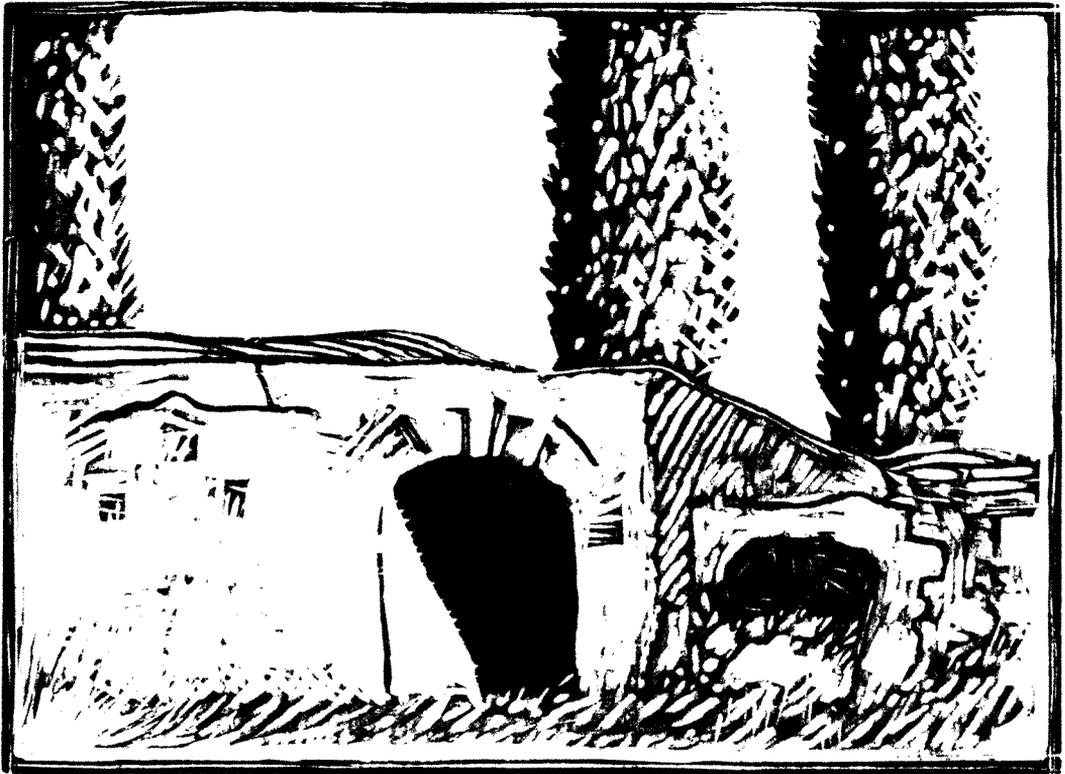
THE PEACE OF GOD

She gave him all her heart that day ;
The spring that fed the well
Found utterance through the plastic clay
As by some secret spell.
Up to the brim the water rose,
And bubbling still it overflows
The ardent dale, till every vein
Of happy earth has drunk again,
And yet again, its store.
Then, for the land could hold no more,
It raised the lovely water o'er
Its head, as one in ancient days
Oblation in a bowl might raise ;
And swift there grew a wondrous lake
Which mirrored in its beauteous face
So deep a calm, it seemed to take
The peace of heaven for its grace,
The sun's joy for delight :
The passing cloud to be its guise :
Its gems the stars of cloudless skies :

RHYTHM

Its soft compassion from the night
That feels the moon's caress.
And when the days of storm and stress
Its surface chafed with rain and wind,
The boatmen of that water knew
That howsoe'er the tempest blew,
Right in the middle they would find
A calm of such tranquility,
'Twas said the hand of God must be
Laid on that span of water.
I do not know ; but this I say,
She gave him all her heart that day,
And in this miracle God may
Be owning His own daughter.

MAX PLOWMAN.



ORIGINAL WOODCUT

HORACE BRODSKY



ANNE ESTELLE RICE

IN THE CAMPAGNA

The ploughman fell dead at the end of the first furrow. The field is all unploughed. Who will finish the work—God or the devil?

□

If you asked the stream why it sang, it would answer: "The cruel stones cut me as knives cut, and I sing so that I shall not cry."

□

When the shepherd boy pipes, the reeds listen. They say: "He has our soul, and he sings as the water sings when it kisses our feet."

You draw the wire curtain at night to keep the fever away. But when the moon shines, do you see the long fingers of a rotting corpse on the netting or does your lover, with his dark eyes, look at you through the curtain ?

□

When you think of fever do you fear to die ; do you fear to be alone hidden in the earth ? Yet Beppo will not follow you where the fever catches you, as you run to meet him in the little wood whilst the others are sleeping.

□

Though the sun is a god, I like the stars better. If you fall into a deep pit in the daytime they smile at you—and the sun is hidden.

□

As the buffaloes plough the ground, you ask : “ Did God make them from the black earth, and me, who am white, from the sands of the sea ? ”

□

Sing if you will. Here men once sang to now forgotten gods. You do not know what you sing. It is they who sing through you.

□

If you must kill him, Mario, do it quickly and bury him. He deserves to die, but you must not lose the sunshine and your love.

□

The little bird drank from the trough of the black pig. She is still a bird.

□

When you were dying you said : “ Madonna mia, who will care for my child ! ” And the Madonna by the roadside dropped the wooden image that she held and took your child into her arms.

□

The wind blew the seed of a garden flower on to the field. It grew, and the wild flowers envied the colour of its petals.

They did not know that they were ragged and ill grown.

□

When the wild flowers are round us and the air smells of mint and of the sea, we hold each other's hands. But in the market-place you stand with the men, and I cannot listen to the gossip of the women.

□

They said to her : “ Do not cry, Natalina ; love is a plague—it will pass.”

It has passed. Natalina is buried.

If God said to you, "You can return to the earth," what would you be?

I would be a flower asleep on the smooth waters of a lake. But if God said, "It must be to action that you return," I should say: "Make me the wheel of a mill which goes round in a stream."

□

Once a god came here from the East. He sat down on the black earth and slept. The earth caught him and imprisoned him. When the days are hot and silent you can hear his voice singing of the desert.

□

If the round world were an eye, how far could it see into Eternity?

□

The night falls on the earth ; it creeps into the crevasses of the ice and lies on the fire at the bottom of a crater.

YOÏ PAWLOWSKA.



J. D. FERGUSSON



CHRONICLES OF THE MONTH

THE REVUES AND GEORGE FORMBY

There is reason to complain that the Revues at the principal music-halls are too much like the old musical comedies in their solemn parade of legs and inanities, but also there is reason for congratulation on the evidence they contain of a desire—at last—to laugh at ourselves, not only at our mistakes but also at our achievements. Nothing so surely tests the vitality, and therefore the value, of an institution or a man, as ridicule. It pares away the weak and the unsound and liberates the strong and the true. The admirable burlesque (by a familiar hand) at the Hippodrome pricks the common-form drama of the theatres and lets all the steam out of it, just as the "Gaiety rehearsal" at the Alhambra laughs that particular form of unprofitable amusement out of court. It is to be observed, however, that in both cases the authors are dealing with subjects of which they are masters through familiarity. When it comes to politicians or suffragettes or ideas or the law or literature, the fun of the Revues is almost always inept and has no "bite." The writers or contrivers of it are not imaginatively masters of their material. You need to understand a thing or a person very thoroughly if you are to caricature it or him—as thoroughly, for instance, as Mr. E. T. Reed understands Parliament or Mr. A. A. Milne the golfing imbecile. Rag-time is in the spirit of caricature—a bubbling over of sense into nonsense, of exuberance beyond the control of the intellect. It forms then as perfect harmonious setting for the "guying" of movements and personages and everything that has so far become habitual as to be a clog upon the free play of the national character. After hearing Mr. Willie Solan sing "I want to be in Dixie," you are prepared to see the absurdity of anything, even of

yourself, and if he were allowed to sing in front of a black curtain instead of the conventional "street" front drop of the comic, such a spirit of fun would be let loose as would be entirely inexpressible until the last notes were played and the last curtain had fallen. That is only one out of many instances of neglected opportunities, of failure to give a good thing its full effect. It is typical of the music-halls, as it has always been typical of the theatre, to trust to individual talent or charm and to fill out with bald and unconvincing detail which hampers and does not assist the comedian. But in the music-hall there is this advantage, that at least the comedian does not, as Toole and Terry used to do, have to surround himself with something that looked like a play, and was tiresomely nothing of the kind. A Revue has the whip-hand of musical comedy in that it does not pretend to have a plot. It is a go-as-you-please entertainment, but if it is to continue to go and to please, it must have not only a fine reserve of clever people to appear on the stage, but also a continual supply of clever brains evolving and developing new methods of attack and freshly absurd angles from which to view the stream of social existence. The Follies came to a point at which they could only mark time, because they failed to develop a sufficient skill in caricature. They stuck, as the Revues stick, in the theatre. Outside it, their grasp on their material was feeble. The Alhambra has turned to Mr. Heath Robinson for a "guying" of horse-racing. That gives a lead. If it is followed the Revue should become a most valuable part of the life of the community. If it is not, it will die with the fashion on which it is at present existing.

If you wish to understand what I mean by the spirit of caricature, see Mr. George Formby, incomparably the most humorous and the most significant figure in the music-halls. He is essence of Lancashire, grotesque, sometimes almost horrible, hugely funny, infinitely pathetic—pure caricature, the best caricature, which makes nonsense an interpretation and a revelation of sense. He is almost perfectly master of the art of the theatre, and, though he works in the medium of his own personality, every worker in the theatre—actor, designer, or writer—can learn from him. Certainly every collaborator in a revue could learn from his achievements something of the art of absorption and transmutation which, with the collaboration of the audience, makes of any stage performance, grave or gay, an irresistible thing.

GILBERT CANNAN.



LETTRE DE FRANCE

V. ROGER FRENE

Il y a des poètes—ils sont assez rares d'ailleurs et Jean de Lafontaine est l'un d'entre eux—qui ont composé des vers ailés et légers comme des abeilles. Roger Frène n'est pas de ceux-là et sa poésie pacifique, robuste et solidement équilibrée, a quelque chose de physique, de quasi matériel qui n'est pas sans une originale et forte beauté. C'est ainsi qu'il écrira, parlant de l'automne :

Mais parmi la splendeur pesante de tes phases
Quand tu répands partout les forces de l'été,
Je goûte seulement les profondes extases
Que donnent les couleurs de ta maturité.

ou bien :

Ainsi tu promenais presque ivre ton regard,
Et tes sens savouraient la splendide matière
Devant cette vallée ou d'un grêle brouillard
Montait l'adieu des rossignols à la lumière.

ou encore :

Tu contemplais, penché sur le sommet d'un mont,
Tout le déroulement fastueux et fécond
D'une grasse campagne à peine imaginaire.

ou enfin :

Et tu rythmais ce livre aux remous enfiévrés
Ou ta jeunesse peint avec des mots dorés,
Dans l'ivresse joyeuse et la fraîche musique,
Le resplendissement de l'univers physique.

Ces quelques citations que je cueille dans les deux volumes de Roger Frène : "Paysages de l'âme et de la terre" et "Les Sèves originaires, suivies de nocturnes," font sentir mieux que toute dissertation la tournure d'esprit du poète et sa façon de contempler les choses. On se rend compte, lorsqu'il chante :

Dans un vers lent, matériel
Et plein d'une riche substance

**Comme un pesant rayon de miel,
J'aime que la lumière danse . . .**

qu'il a parfaitement pris conscience des moyens naturels qu'il emploie pour traduire ses émotions et qu'il est parvenu à mettre en pratique le précepte gravé au fronton du temple de Delphes et qui était de se connaître soi-même.

Il est permis de se demander quelle secrète et profonde inclination traduit cette poésie. La lecture des ouvrages de Roger Frère ne laisse bientôt aucun doute à ce sujet. Son but, c'est de donner et de se donner l'impression ou l'illusion de vivre de la vie générale du monde et de se rattacher à une chose immortelle ou, du moins, infiniment durable : l'existence de l'univers.

**Avec docilité je subis le mystère
D'être comme un reflet des aspects de la terre ;
Ainsi qu'un arbre plie et courbe dans le vent,
Je m'abandonne au souffle du destin mouvant . . .**

**Je me compare à l'herbe, aux sources, aux ramures,
Aux rivières tour à tour claires ou impures,
Traîneuses des bleus ciels d'été, des graviers noirs,
Reflétant le rivage et le jour et le soir,
Aux près, aux champs, aux bois, aux vallons ou je passe ;
Je chante la nature et sa robuste grâce ;
Les gouttes, les ruisseaux m'augmentent en chemin . .**

**Pareille à la forêt innombrable et vivante
Qui, ravageant le sol d'une racine ardente,
Se nourrit de la terre et transforme sa chair
En beaux rameaux épais ou frémissent les airs,
Fais que mon œuvre éclate en strophes bien nourries . . .**

Il faut voir là, non pas une félicité béate et superficielle, mais l'épanouissement magnifique, dans le panthéisme, de l'instinct le plus profond, la volonté de vivre et de grandir. C'est que le poète a goûté

**La vieille volupté de rêver à la mort,
comme dit Stuart Merrill ; volupté terriblement amère et désespérée et qui laisse à la bouche un goût de néant ; émotion à laquelle il n'est point donné d'échapper pour peu que l'on médite sur les mystères de la destinée et de la vie. Tout la suscite en nous :**

Le café, les liqueurs, le feu des cigarettes
 Dans le cerveau l'insinuent doucement,
 C'est elle que je presse avec ton corps charmant . .

et Roger Frère fait dire par le squelette qui, pendant un dialogue d'amour, apparaît en écartant les branches, " une rose a la mâchoire, un nid d'oiseau dans chaque main " :

Je suis au fond du vin qu'on boit et de l'amour,
 Dans la plus noire nuit et dans le plus beau jour.

Mais le poète s'est édifié une philosophie qui par certains aspects ne manque pas de rappeler la doctrine stoïcienne. Que l'on se souvienne de la parole de Marc-Aurèle : " Considère sans cesse que c'est par un changement que tout se produit et accoutume—toi à penser qu'il n'y a rien que la nature universelle aime tant que de changer les choses qui sont, pour en faire de nouvelles qui leur ressemblent. Tout ce qui est, est pour ainsi dire la semence de ce qui doit naître." (On trouve la même pensée dans Schopenhauer, " Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.") N'est-ce pas ce qu'exprime aussi Roger Frère :

Les branches faneront bientôt comme nos ailes,
 Murmurent tous ces migrants ensoleillés,
 Et rendant notre corps aux formes éternelles
 Nous nous endormirons et serons réveillés.

Devant le déroulement des saisons et les triomphes alternés de la vie et de la mort, devant les forces de l'été toujours renaissantes après l'hiver mortuaire, le poète, laissant de côté les vaines et romantiques imprécations à l'adresse de la nature impassible, a eu comme l'intuition de la vie éternelle de l'univers avec ses phases, ses exubérances et ses torpeurs. " Représente-toi sans cesse, disait Marc-Aurèle, le monde comme un être animé, composé d'une seule matière et d'une âme unique. Vois comment tout se conforme à son seul sentiment ; comment tout se fait par son unique impulsion ; comment tout est la cause co-opérante de tout ce qui se produit ; enfin quels sont l'enchaînement, la solidarité mutuelle de toutes choses." C'est l'impérissable problème de l'univers. On se rappelle ce que M. Maurice Barrès en a écrit dans " Le Jardin de Bérénice " : " Il était dans le tempérament de ce petit être sensible et résigné de considérer l'univers comme un immense rébus. Rien n'est plus judicieux, et seuls les esprits qu'absorbent de médiocres préoccupations cessent de rechercher le sens de ce vaste spectacle. A combien d'interprétations

étranges et émouvantes la nature ne se prête-t-elle pas, elle qui sait à ses pires duretés donner les molles courbes de la beauté.”

Mais le monde n'est plus tout à fait un rébus pour notre poète, qui n'a d'ailleurs que peu de goût pour les choses mystérieuses (parce qu'elles sont trop déchirantes pour son âme, avide de certitude, qui ne trouve point dans le doute le mol oreiller qu'y rencontrait Montaigne) et s'il laisse de côté l'inexplicable but de la vie universelle à laquelle il participe, il ne veut du moins pas avoir la moindre hésitation sur la réalité de ce but ; et, loin de se rebeller, comme fit Schopenhauer, contre les volontés secrètes de la nature, il s'abandonne à la destinée, non pas avec résignation, mais avec joie, avec confiance, “ en un grand geste heureux.”

Nous bénissons ta loi, Dieu des métamorphoses
Et du sourire universel,
Qui fais reverdir l'arbre et délacer les roses !
Sur ton passage sensuel
Penche l'enivrement magnifique des choses.

Il est prêt à reprendre l'hymne de Cléanthe d'Assos ou à s'écrier avec le vieil empereur philosophe : “ Tout ce qui t'accommode, ô monde, m'accommode moi-même. Rien n'est pour moi prématuré ni tardif, qui est de saison pour toi. Tout ce que m'apportent les heures est pour moi un fruit savoureux, ô Nature ! Tout vient de toi, tout est dans toi, tout rentre dans toi. Un personnage dit : Bien-aimée cité de Cecrops ! Mais toi, ne peux-tu pas dire : O bien-aimée cité de Jupiter ! ” N'est-ce pas ce que plus tard écrira Nietzsche : “ Ma formule pour la grandeur de l'homme est *amor fati* ; ne vouloir changer aucun fait dans le passé, dans l'avenir, éternellement ; non pas seulement supporter la nécessité, encore moins la dissimuler—tout idéalisme est un mensonge en face de la nécessité—mais l'aimer.” Et n'est-ce pas cet amour de la nature, cette fusion de l'homme dans la nature, cet abandon de notre fugitive et pauvre volonté à une volonté plus vaste, plus durable et grandiose, n'est-ce-pas, ce retour à la nature, ce qu'ont chanté les grands écrivains de tous les temps : Rousseau, Molière, Lafontaine, Virgile, Lucrèce ?

Combien l'aspect de toutes choses change, considéré de ce point !
Écoutons Roger Frère :

Comme il sent la flore blanche
Bruire un moment,
Le Faune courbe une branche
Qui vers lui gazouille et penche
Et la baise doucement ;

RHYTHM

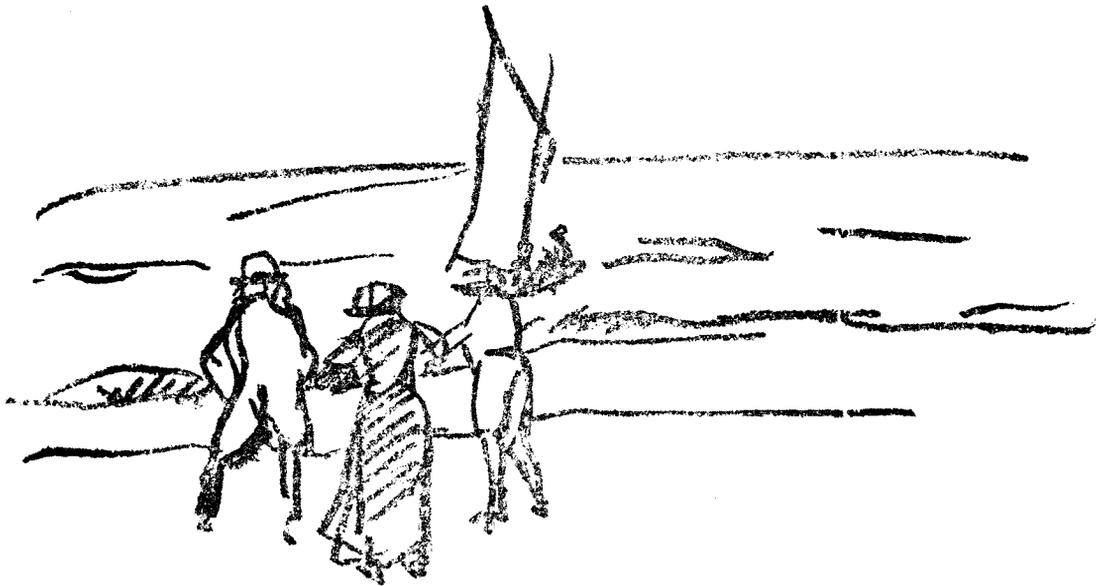
Cent fois, j'ai vu ce bois dense
 S'éclairer ainsi ;
 J'ai connu la renaissance
 Des êtres, l'éveil immense
 Des champs dans l'air adouci ;

J'entendis cette fontaine
 Que gorge l'azur
 Gronder dans sa rive pleine,
 Les ramiers gémir leur peine
 Au murmure morne et pur ;

Mais aujourd'hui tout s'éclaire
 D'un charme inouï,
 Mon âme visionnaire,
 Du printemps, grâce et mystère,
 N'avait pas encore joui.

Tel est ce poète grave et parfois majestueux qui ayant longuement médité sur la mort ne nous apporte point des pages d'épouvante, de terreur et de découragement, mais nous donne une belle leçon d'optimisme, de ferveur et de confiance dans la vie.

TRISTAN DEREME.



ANNE ESTELLE RICE

THE GALLERIES

Cubists at the Grafton



“Qui comprend Cézanne pressent le Cubisme.”* Yes, but by inversion. How nearly Cézanne and the Cubists meet, the rearrangement at the Grafton Galleries showed us. Matisse made way for the Cézanne water-colours which filled the first room. From Cézanne to Herbin, Derain, Marchand and L’Hote is easy going. To Picasso there is a bigger jump, for though they are in the same circle they are at opposite ends of its diameter. These water-colours of Cézanne’s are sketches ; the foundations upon which he would build up his more solid syntheses. Nature begins to appear in planes, summarily noted, but as yet it is scarcely drawn into the net of the painter’s artifice. They are “*précis*,” the first dispositions for attack, preliminary markings out like the sculptor’s first rough shaping in clay. The complete harmony is still to come ; the trees have not yet taken root ; the hills are not yet heavy in their earthy folds.

But how strangely alike are these fledgling landscapes and the abstract compositions of Picasso. In that word “*composition*” lies a paradox, for Picasso begins where Cézanne ended, and ends where Cézanne began. Cézanne thought always of his “*motif*” ; it grew from sparseness into lusty strength ; from bones only to bones and flesh and blood. Picasso begins at the other end. The fuller vision becomes ever more attenuated. The flesh falls away ; the very bones are separated, broken and fashioned again. It is an endless process of disassociation and of renewed synthesis ; the translation of things seen to emotional co-efficients that can only be expressed by the subtlest symbolism. Instead of the solidity of nature, the strength of the “*motif*,” which Cézanne gave us, Picasso finds a new form for an inner vision or sensitiveness. The one art sprang from the earth’s core ; the other is metaphysical.

The character of Picasso’s work makes any sort of finite criticism valueless. When an artist has not only ceased to represent, but has

* “*Cubisme*,” by Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger (*Figulère*, Paris).

reached a point where his means of expression are pregnant with he knows not what ; where he no longer tells a tale or holds a mirror up to nature, or even clothes his imagination in a common livery, so that we may recognise it and see it in terms of fact—what is there to be said in language incapable of such refinement as the painter's own ? These pictures mean nothing that can be set down in words, for they may mean a hundred things or none. For Picasso has not simply devised a new vocabulary which with application and sympathy we may learn, thus holding an interpreter's key. This linear music, if it has power at all, has none that is assessable by code or formula. Sincerity recoils at first before these canvases, for they are dumb to intellectual questioning.

But the eye rests on them with ever increasing satisfaction, with an unfamiliar sense of ease. A great calm has emerged from the painter's earlier tumult. The early portrait studies, if entities may be called studies, were full of restless passion, of an intensity of perception that made them almost painful to see, so overwhelmingly were the emotions expressed. I do not mean that the passion has gone, but rather that Picasso seems to me in his new work to be strung to the highest pitch of exaltation when passion can no longer speak, for speech is made of the common stuff of experience, and the artist has to find new symbols for his passion or forego to paint. The poet does not compose lyrics in the arms of his mistress, but in retrospect, when the blood flows soberly again.

Is this art fruitful ? Can utterance be found for silence ? May an artist without danger turn his back on humanity and speak in a strange tongue ? Must we postulate a new world for a new speech ? After all this is the æsthetic question that has always set men at loggerheads, sharpened to its finest edge. In other words, how far must an artist consider his audience ? But if the artist is to condition his work to the intelligence, to the perceptive capacity, of one man, he must do so for a million, which is asking rather much of him ! Is it possible, indeed, to set a limit to his aloofness ? I think not. When the public demands intelligibility as a right, it is claiming a mastery, whereas in art there can be but one master : the artist. In claiming the right to understand, the public is forfeiting a greater freedom, the power to feel. The treasury of our emotions is double-locked against the intellect ; when we reason about emotions they cease to be real. The weakest philosophies have always been those which seek to confine the phenomena of experience within the limits of human intelligence,



ETCHING

VLADIMIR POLUNIN

to make the infinite tally with the finite. Only with unquestioning acceptance of life can we face it fearlessly.

Of course Picasso's apparent austerities of statement will not stir every man to feeling. But if an art can bring one man nearer to the heat of elemental passion it is surely justified, however strange the means. Picasso, I think, has discovered in the relationship of line and substance an ever-variable annotation for a new subjectivity, conceived too intensely to be embodied in a recognisable symbolic statement.

But of what avail is it to write of an artist who himself uses no recognisable terms, whose art strikes at the consciousness like the elemental sound of wind or water? I can only hope to suggest a mental attitude, to indicate as best I may the strange emotional content of Picasso's work.

Herbin, Derain, L'Hote and Marchand are more easily understood. Herbin gives to static form a tingling, dancing life, an actual liveliness, that is no mere matter of appearance, but the statement of abundant, joyous vision. Of all the purely sensual painters at the Grafton Galleries, he and Derain were the most accomplished. Herbin's "Pont Neuf" is a masterpiece of solid flashing facets. Derain's tonality is more subdued to contain a more sombre apprehension of life, but he is no less a master of form. André L'Hote has clearly a great future before him. He is a very young man, but his work is already full of fine achievement. He is a vigorous colourist, and is allied to Cézanne as all the Cubists are by a closely reasoned synthesis. No doubt he has much to learn in sureness of expression, but there can be no mistaking the sensual warmth of his vision.

O. RAYMOND DREY.



MR. C. J. HOLMES AT THE CARFAX GALLERY

An Exhibition of Mr. Holmes' work is perhaps the most important event in the modern English art world that can occur. He is at once so self-critical, so modest, and yet so quietly confident, that he holds few and small exhibitions, which represent as much of his work as he cares to show in public. This rigorous self-discipline may stand as a fine and rare example in a time when every sketch thrown off, every couplet scribbled, is placed before a perplexed and uneducated public. The profound truth that in many cases a drawing is finer than the finished picture, a sudden lyric than the longer, more polished poem, has led to a belief that any sketch is finer than any completed work. On all sides mere workshop exercises are offered for sale, notes and jottings that should never have left the studio or the study. It is no small part, therefore, of the reverence which is slowly giving Mr. Holmes his due, that the admirer will find in his exhibitions only what has satisfied the artist himself.

There may now be seen—or rather, there must now be seen—at the Carfax Gallery in Bury Street the most recent of Mr. Holmes' works which have passed the examination of their author's approval. They are not numerous—about 20 watercolours and half a dozen oils—but they have more to say than the rest of the London exhibitions put together. There is not a failure among them; any comparison must depend on personal taste. But as a whole they are finer than those in the last exhibition, held two years ago. Every year increases Mr. Holmes' knowledge and love of landscape. To the Lakes, which he has already made his own, he has now added North Wales. He paints with the mastery of real acquaintance. The days he spends wandering on the fells, and fishing in their streams, all help to bring to the Carfax Gallery for three or four weeks every second year the music and mystery of stream, heather and hill. In the suggestion of wild slope, of wind-swept marshland, of endless writhing walls, which curl from hill to hill and pattern the spaces of the valleys, there have never been such pictures as these. The lines in the foreground of "Widdale Moor" are the melody that swirls above the solemn orchestration of those lowering, background hills. The motif is sinuous for all its solemnity. But in "Highcup Nick" we have another measure. Here the notes are short and strong, and the long grey slope of rock and grass is the

variation on a theme of angular rigidity ; the theme of the distant cliff.

Mr. Holmes passes from mood to mood. In "Evening on the Marshes, Tenby," he is lyrical, almost melancholy. There is a world of colour in the sand-cliffs, and the roadway winding through the grass and water still glows with the sunlight of the day that is dead. There is memory of sunlight too in the "Pembroke Castle," but the sky is too red for peace, and one feels the menace of a storm. Yet another kind of evening is suggested in "Ingleborough"—the tired, dripping evening after a day of rain, when the sky clears at sunset and the hills are so plain that they seem transparent. With a simple band of yellow in the sky, Mr. Holmes has given the wetness of the air. And so on through every phase of moorland weather—steady, caressing rain in "Rainy Morning, Mallerstang," angry bleakness in "Saddle-back," sullen loneliness and lack of wind in "Beck above Ashbank." The drawing reproduced in this number of "Rhythm" is interesting because it represents the more kindly side of the land Mr. Holmes loves, and because it is the finest of the field drawings in this exhibition. Instead of pallid, wiry grass or reeds, the fields are brilliant with early green and the dark brown hill behind has a ruddy tinge that promises spring-time. The generous curves of slope and road are in themselves fertile, maternal. There is nothing rugged or angry ; nature here is very strong and very tender.

I have left till last the drawing I liked the best, not merely because I liked it best, but because it is significant of a new field of adventure in which Mr. Holmes may win fresh triumphs. This drawing is called "Near Leeds"—and I think it may be the beginning of the school of industrial landscape painters. One aspect of the new movement in art is the belief in the beauty of modern life. We have pictures of docks, of busy streets, of railways and railway stations. Artists are beginning to revel in springing girders and all the wonder of machinery. But hitherto this painting has approached from the side of humanity. I think this is French influence ; the French can always paint humanity, but very seldom nature. There was great need for a man who would do in paint what Verhaeren has done in poetry, who would realise the beauty of effort and progress as a natural prospect. Those who know the West Riding will have wonderful memories of the colour of smoky skies, of tall chimneys, of sudden solemnity of quarryings, of slack-heaps, of railway-lines. In this drawing "Near Leeds" Mr. Holmes has painted one of those round Yorkshire hills, with grass

that seems doubly green beside the sooty roads, and the dirt at its roots. Over the hill runs a road, a fearless switchback, and along it telegraph wires. Behind hangs a curtain of smoky sky, dull grey brown ; in the foreground is a piece of gloomy river, already fouled with mills, destined to win a final blackness in the crowded bottom of the Hunslet valley. When one considers this drawing, and remembers the picture Mr. Holmes showed in the New English last autumn, two chimneys behind a slant of hill, a sudden hope springs up that the man has been found, and that a painter who loves a lonely moor loves also that same nature when she is transformed by the turmoil of human effort. If this is so, and if Mr. Holmes is indeed to lead the way in the new landscape, we may indeed rejoice that such a champion has appeared.

I have not attempted to mention every item in this exhibition ; I have not talked of the oil paintings at all. But if the public will realise that there is great art to be seen at the Carfax, nothing will have been lost.

MICHAEL T. H. SADLER.

ORAISONS FUNEBRES II.

T. B. DORCAS, Man of Letters.

Messieurs,—Only himself could worthily speak, only himself could have the apt mastery of empty words meet to be used on this occasion, for no other man loved him as he loved himself. Hardly is it necessary to say of him more than what he was always saying of himself : “ He knew his limitations ” Never a writer achieved success but this admirable shepherd of reputations approached him with these words : “ I, of course, know—do I not ?—my limitations, but you, Sir, are that rare bird (rare, I mean, in English literature) an—you don’t mind my saying it ?—an artist.” His limitations were envy, on the one hand, envy, from which he never escaped, and, on the other, success, beyond which he never looked. He adored, not books, so much as the superstitious tradition which clings round them and stifles them. That was the nearest approach to a passion that he admitted to his life. Life, do I say ? Nay, rather, letters, which formed his whole existence, covered up his tracks and disguised his indolent death in life. For, as he had never lived but in seeming, so he escaped those moments of crisis that for the less fortunate mean death or life. It was as though he had sold his soul before he was

born. He was published rather than born, and where other men looked for life, he looked for letters, and limitations. He discovered that every natural process is a limitation if it be ignored, that love is the hardest limitation of all if it be conducted in terms of literature rather than in those of life. He discovered that if you say nothing at all, you can say it in season and out, offend nobody, and never run the risk of rousing the jealousy of other men of letters. Having nothing to say, no life to express, no interest outside the cloistered world of journalism, he ranged up and down literature, piecing together the literary personality which could be most profitably foisted upon that world, and, through its fanfaronade, upon the world outside, the bourgeois world which must give presents every now and then to its sisters and its cousins and its aunts. From this dead writer he took a turn of style, from that a humorous sentimental waggishness, from this living writer (being successful) a mild and seemingly reflective egoism, from that a teasing preoccupation with the tittle-tattle of the coteries. All this he parcelled out six times a year with a smile childlike and bland, disarming criticism by a sort of apology "in trepidation." Conceive Uriah Heep well fed and prosperous and you have the picture of this admirably consistent man who achieved the paradox of carrying insincerity to the point of a fine art.

He was marvellous. No other man has ever had so sure an instinct for the manipulation of the flattery of literary reputation. No writer in London ever knew Dorcas, the man, but few escaped knowing Dorcas, the man of letters. He was a perfectly reliable barometer. If your name was in the ascendant, Dorcas would make a joke about you. If for the time being you were obscure, Dorcas was silent. That was his literary interpretation of friendship. He could conceive of no other. Life had no meaning for him . . . I find it hard to go on without tears, for an examination of his work forces me to the conclusion that letters had no meaning for him either. He had no meaning for himself. Why then did he write so persistently?—Gentlemen, search your own hearts. It was to escape his own boredom that he wrote. It was for this tragic reason that with such incredible precision he reduced the whole of existence to a game of croquet on a suburban lawn enlivened with the twittering humour of a curate. Monumentally this man was the type of the tragedy of his generation. Ora pro nobis, Domine.

BOSSUET JEUNE.



REVIEWS

THE LETTERS OF A POST-IMPRESSIONIST. Constable. 7/6 net.

The letters of Van Gogh are at last accessible to the English public. The painter is generally a poor talker about his art, but these letters, so naive, so colloquial, so full of enthusiasm and individual expression, must help the reader to understand Van Gogh's art by making him love the man. Some of them were written to his brother Theo and some to his friend Emile Bernard. His one passion was his work of painting, and it is of this that he wrote again and again, describing his pictures sometimes in words and sometimes by pen and ink sketches (many of which are reproduced in this book), questioning eagerly about the work of his friends, ever seeking to draw closer to them and to aid them in their struggles. Of his own straits, which were often desperate enough, he always wrote with courage, showing himself more concerned for his brother who helped him from time to time with small sums than for himself. At one time he had to confine himself to drawing, for he had no money for canvases and oil paints; at another he wrote to his brother that he would willingly forsake his art and go into business if he wished it. His work absorbed him—"To paint and to love women are incompatible. This is really a confounded nuisance!"—he wrote to Bernard. However, he made the sacrifice of life to art cheerfully. He painted all day; under the blazing Provencal noonday sun, or with the Mistral blowing his canvas down and buffeting his hand as he worked. All life intoxicated him. He loved to paint men and women in the fields—"I want to paint humanity, humanity and again humanity"—but above all he worshipped the sun. Again and again he wrote of the sun; gold, yellow, orange and red were his favourite colours. He found intense joy in painting sunflowers. When Gauguin was about to visit him at Arles he wanted to decorate the walls of his cottage with sunflowers. He painted cornfields glorious in sunlight; he put the sun itself into picture after picture.

He wrote with reverence of the Impressionists, especially of Manet, Monet and Degas, but he could not agree with Neo-Impressionism. He wrote: "About fifteen years ago people began to speak about

'luminosity' and 'light.' Even if this were right in the first place—and one cannot deny that the system produced very masterful works—it is now beginning to degenerate ever more and more throughout the whole of the art world into an excessive production of pictures which have the same lighting on all four sides, the same general atmosphere, as I believe they call it, and the same local colour. Is that good? I do not think so."

Like a true artist he valued expression above everything else. He quoted Zola—"Dans l'œuvre d'art je cherche, j'aime l'homme, l'artiste"—with admiration. This conviction is upheld many times in the letters. "Tell Seurat I should despair if my figures were correct; tell him that if you take a photograph of a man digging, in my opinion, he is sure to look as if he were not digging; tell him that I think Michelangelo's figures magnificent, even though the legs are certainly too long and the hips and pelvis bones a little too broad; tell him that in my opinion Millet and Lhermitte are the true painters of the day, because they do not paint things as they are, drily analysing them and observing them objectively, but render them as they feel them; tell him that it is my most fervent idea to know how one can achieve such deviations from reality, such inaccuracies and such transfigurations, that come about by chance. Well yes, if you like, they are lies; but they are more valuable than the real values." He wrote again "What I aim at above all is powerful expression" and "Are we not more keenly in search of strength of expression than of sober brushwork. . . ?" Painters had sacrificed expression for the sake of the fascinating technicalities of chromatism. "I believe," wrote Van Gogh, "in the absolute necessity of a new art of colour and drawing." In yet another letter he wrote: "It is impossible to attach the same importance both to values and to colour. One must choose one's way . . . and my way will be the road to colour."

I have quoted these passages because they contain the complete gospel of his painting. He wrote of colour like a lover of his mistress. He gave the colour schemes of countless pictures, of countless scenes. He longed to paint from imagination, but felt that he had not studied nature long enough to achieve good results. "When Gauguin was at Arles I allowed myself, as you know, to be led into working from imagination. . . . At that time I thought that working from imagination was very delightful. But, my dear friend, it is an enchanted land, and suddenly one finds oneself confronted with an insurmountable wall. Maybe after a life spent in many efforts and endeavours,

and after a hard struggle shoulder to shoulder with nature, one might venture to try it."

Perhaps, had he lived, he might have painted those "starry heavens" and "meadows studded with dandelions in the sunlight." He died by his own hand in an institution for nervous diseases at the age of thirty-seven, his mind consumed by the fire of his genius in a weak body. His disorder only seemed to intensify his spiritual sensitiveness. If any still doubt the sanity of his art, may they be among those wise men who read these fascinating letters.

O. RAYMOND DREY.

WOMAN AND TO-MORROW. By W. L. George. Herbert Jenkins. Price 3s. 6d.

It is very difficult to argue about feminism. Civilisations can be built on all sorts of domestic and undomestic foundations. And it is simply a matter of individual preference. What sort of civilisation do you want? That determined, how does it correlate with the status of women? Or, vice versa, what do you demand of women? In what kind of civilisation does your demand necessarily result? Objective criticism of solutions seems almost valueless. I can only make my own confession of faith, and, discarding all impersonal passives and even first person plurals, declare in a full blast of egotism that, apart from details, I believe I am in thorough agreement with Mr. George. He is not given to metaphysical speculation and theological disquisition, and, accordingly, I feel diffident about attempting to indicate his point of view. But I understand that he wants ultimately a condition of voluntary anarchism, for which, however, the stubborn heart of man must be prepared by an intermediate period of socialistic restraint. It is here that my mediæval mind misses an excursus on the exact sense of the word "liberty" and another on the meaning of evil with special reference to the doctrine of original sin. In your attempted progress, what state of mind are you endeavouring to achieve, and what are you trying to eliminate by the way? Are you a sublapsarian? . . . Well, never mind.

Mr. George's method is direct and lucid. He begins with a general manifesto on women's disabilities and potentialities. He passes on to indicate how much wider is feminism than suffragism, to point out the waste of creative power involved in the present organisation of the home, the suppression of her artistic faculties, the

effect on her of excessive hard work, the possibility of the complete emancipation of her capacity for passion.

Now, this sort of argument is bound to be sentimental. But it can be made justifiably or unjustifiably sentimental. It is unjustifiably sentimental when it proceeds on the assumption that the women at present existing are capable of all the splendours—art and passion and so forth—and that nothing but political and economic independence is required for their development. Mr. George takes the justifiable line that, though contemporary women for the most part reveal servile traits, a gradual modification of conditions would probably raise the standard of the sex until they could live on terms of equality with men. He believes, rightly enough, that the first result of women's political emancipation would be an outbreak of tyrannous and exasperating legislation; and he is prepared to face it, because he is convinced that it would prove to be nothing but a sowing of wild oats.

However, there is more than a trace of falsity in all general discussions of the political and artistic possibilities of women. It is rather like trying to infer from the professional manner of barristers whether on the whole they make good husbands. Women are discussible as a class only in regard to non-political and non-artistic qualities. Mr. George is alive to this danger. He sees an infinite variety of psychological types awaiting liberation from the bonds of sex-commercialism. Essentially this is a liberation of passionate affinities. It seems to me that you must either agree with Mr. George, or repudiate the worth of passion, or maintain that authentic and valuable passion breaks through all difficulties by its own momentum. Just as you like. I suggest that even passion is relative, not absolute, and that, when worthless or devastating, it has suffered from undue suppression.

In fact, Mr. George really wants a state where consciousness has become as sure in its action as the growth of vegetable tissue. He knows that he is out for an unattainable ideal. He knows that that is in part his justification. He knows that its least realisation involves the traversing of sundry chaotic gulfs. And this is, he feels, on the whole a very jolly prospect. At the end of his book, my mediæval mind may still see life as a pilgrimage, but as a pilgrimage to Thelema rather than to the New Jerusalem.

F. GOODYEAR.

LAFCADIO HEARN. By Edward Thomas. Constable. Modern Biographies. 1s. net.

Ninety small pages make a very short space in which to compress a biography and critical appreciation of Lafcadio Hearn. Happily Mr. Thomas is master of a carefully condensed style, enabling him to give us a compact, watertight little essay somewhat after the manner of an encyclopædia article. The main outlines of Hearn's life are there; all his books are touched on, and the development of his writing is traced with genuine insight into the psychology of literary technique and mannerism. We are shown the tortured mosaic of the early works, the easy but rather undistinguished and journalistic flow of the first Japanese books, the deliberate and more achieved facility of his final period. It is hard to see how Mr. Thomas could have done better. Yet Hearn is a personality at once so distinct and so elusive that a looser, more impassionistic and less conscientious method of composition might possibly have brought more of him before us. We know that he was strangely saturated with Buddhism and with Herbert Spencer, and that he wrote essays reconciling the two modes of thought. What we want to know, and what Mr. Thomas perhaps cannot be expected to tell us, is how far this reconciliation was natural, essential and permanent, and what it stands for in the history of the human mind. Again, we know Hearn for a romantic: did he become a realist in Japan, finding there a life from which he felt no necessity for escape. The data for the answer are not yet forthcoming; we do not know how far Hearn had actually succeeded in identifying himself with Japan. Meanwhile we need more fancy portraits painted, until we are able to compound his true figure by means of a compromise between them. His attitude to the tropics is brought out clearly. He felt and saw the tropico-pagan life as Gauguin felt and saw it—the terrifying, seductive insistence of material surfaces; the flat masses of opaque colour; the impenetrable prison-wall of beauty without a beyond. As Mr. Chesterton has pointed out, it was not by accident that Christianity came to express itself in stained glass. But where in this orientation lies the evanescent penetration of the Japanese vision, the frozen glimpses, the sudden world-revelations of the infinitesimal? Wherever that is placed, Hearn must be sought close by.

F. G.

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