"TRUTH AND REALITY"

By Dora Marsden

III

WHEN therefore all which pertains to the Perceiving Ego is taken cognizance of by language the conundrums about the Nature of the respective Worlds—of Sentient Mind, of Appearance, and of reality—all disappear. Sentient Mind is relieved of its imputed "logical" necessity to play the rôle of victim to the Shows of Appearance—those deluding phantoms of "Reality" which are forced upon Mind by the limitations of Sense. And the Infinite Eternally-elusive "Reality" of metaphysics which finite Sense is doomed ever to seek and never to find, and which under aspects distorted by its own deceptive mirror of finiteness and limitation sense offers to the Perceiving Mind equates into something quite other: a convenient label for a mass of confusion: a compound of lost trails of observation, of subtle dialectical points abandoned, and of those fixed opinions whose interests are best served by allowing confusion to persist and become established unmenaced by a too stringent inquiry.

It is not however only the Ineffectuals who would follow the trail but can't, and the Voluptuaries—philosophical and religious—who perhaps could but won't, who allow this trifold conception of Mind plus Matter with Perception as the Bridge in between, to fix their attitude towards the panorama of Life and the World. No matter under what kind of metaphor it disguises itself—whether it is that of Sense as a Bridge, Mind as a Mirror, Appearance as Correspondence, in religion, philosophy, poetry, and ordinary every-day practice, an identical attitude reveals itself. Here at least "Common sense" and "Culture" are at one. It is, as a matter of fact, almost impossible to use language without unconsciously adopting it, probably because before language itself was ever moulded this attitude was already and instinctively held. A correspondent writing in the current issue of The Egoist voices the objections which naturally would suggest themselves to such as maintain this attitude against the assertions made in this series of articles as to the relationship of a Mind to its World. This correspondent writes:

I should be interested to have a clearer explanation of Miss Marsden's use of the word "create" in its relation to the Ego and its Images. Thus she says "the 'I' creates its own World. The World is of it. As the 'I' is, so the World is. The 'I' gives to itself such images as it can strike out from itself " (January 1, p. 3). I should have said the "I" perceives to the extent of its powers such images or the images of such things as it comes in contact with. Again: "The progress of science is but the expanding of the 'I': of that world of images which we call the scientist's soul. And all that which we call the Objective World are but so many chords—auras—thrown out by the 'I' itself" (January 1, p. 4).

Again: "There is no Reality outside the realm of Sense, lying 'there' ready-made until such time as sense can gain its way towards 'it.' There is only the actual sensing life which throws out new appearances from itself as its powers grow, and which creates all things which are and will create all that ever will be in the future, no matter how great and wonderful and radiant." It is not clear to me how this process works. There would seem to be rather an interaction. Allowing that the "I" changes, so its world changes, it appears to me that as its world changes so the "I" and its images change; and that instead of being the original creator of all the phenomena which its organs sense, the "I" at the beginning of its life gradually becomes aware of Things by their action on itself, which action sets up the process perfected by practice, i.e. of its sensing them. And the better the sensing, and remembering and comparing of sensings, the fuller its particular world becomes. I am probably more capable of perceiving wonderful and more radiant worlds than I do. But it does not at present help my understanding to say that the worm, the archangel and myself each created that which we respectively perceive.

Putting on one side for a moment the question raised as to the sense in which we use the word "create," and a further and unquoted question from the same correspondent as the responsibility as regards a drunkard (which really is a modest but quite pertinent request for a detailed sketch of the architecture of the universe), let us give further attention to this matter of a "World" (i.e. a "Reality") lying "there" outside the realms of
sense," waiting, "ready-made until such time as sense
can gnaw its way towards it." The line which the
explication of the matter will have to take has already
been partially indicated in the article from which our
correspondent quotes, and it will perhaps be in the
interests of clearness if we quote from them still more.
In pressing home how intellectually urgent it is to
consider in their actual relation to the Ego those of its
aspects which verbally and quite arbitrarily have been
torn from it in order to furnish a content for an "Ex­
ternal World," we wrote: "The term 'I' . . .is the
assertion made twice, as is the phrase 'I exist,' and
its further equivalents 'I feel' and 'I sense' (and we
might here insert 'I perceive'). Anything which we
allow 'I am conscious of' for 'I feel,' 'I live,' and 'I
am. This is true of the whole of the post-dating of the
perception of a thing in its further equivalents 'I feel' and
'I sense' (and we might here insert 'I perceive'). Anything which we
allow 'I am conscious of' for 'I feel,' 'I live,' and
'I exist' are properly speaking devoid of connotation, but they
take on a loosely suggested meaning on account of their
association with 'am' feel,' etc. Abstracted from the
'I' as the infinite form of the verb is, it is divorced
from the only source capable of investing it with mean­
ing. The infinite pure and simple has no tally (outside
itself). Nor accurately speaking have any forms of the
verb other than the first person singular linked fast to
its subject. Always it is 'I' which feels. You, they,
she, he, it, merely appear to me to feel. In order to support the above assertions several
propositions require working out. It is perhaps of the
first importance that the verb "Perceive" should be
put in its correct Time-relation (if we may so call it) to the verb "Be" and its forms, and that "Things Per­
ceived" should be put in their correct Space-relation to the "I" which perceives them.
Then the verb "Be," which plays the rôle of Deceiving
Spirit in the metaphysical hoax, requires a complete
psychological analysis—a difficult grammatical task.
Whoever accomplishes it will have sealed Metaphysics
once and for all.

And there is need to reassert the exclusive claim to the "I" to the subjective rôle in all philosophical
language. The allowing—for brevity's sake—of the images perceived by the subjective perceiving "I" to
assume the identity existing between Being and Appearance
means the specific group of features of a feeling there
we mean the specific group of features of a feeling there
which it forms some specific mode. When we affirm of
a thing that it "is," it has established its claim to a cognizable existence; but its identity existing between Being and Appearance
must be so firmly established is because of the fact that
the very persuasiveness of the "I" leads to its activity being taken for granted in such a degree of
absoluteness that it is tantamount to overlooking and ignorance of its existence. The resulting of which are the
confusing and philosophical distortion of these point set for the encouragement of error, there
exists no strict dividing line: each one merges into the other and each lends every support in the production
of their common effect—confusion.
The verb "Perceive" has grounds which super­
ficially—though arbitrarily limited to express the "awareness of feeling" in its maternal stage
only. First a thing "is," and thereafter—it is implied
—we "perceive it." Whereas, actually it is only after we
have perceived it that it can be affirmed of a thing that it "is." When we perceive . . . A, B, or C, then
A, B, C are "is" its (i.e. perceived) and "is perceived" psychologically imply the same
thing. The post-dating of the perception of a thing in
relation to its "Is-ness"—its "Existence"—though it
has secured a firm foothold in speech has no place in
the actual psychological process. Perhaps the reason
why this duplicating of terms for a single activity has
become so firmly established is because of the fact that
the one verbal form "Is" has been made the stock form
of a passive condition, while "Perceive" is constantly
in use to denote the active and successively repeated
processes. When once a thing "is" (i.e. is perceived),
it has established its claim to a cognizable existence; but the perceptive power which furnishes the "existence" anew
each time it is recognized. The stationary power of
the "I" comes thus to be regarded invertedly as consi­
dering an independent existence for the "thing," while
the perceiving power of the "I" itself—though permanent because not exercised constantly in per­
cieving this particular thing (i.e. exhibiting its creative
power in this particular fashion) is regarded as merely
"taking views of the thing." The argument here grows
frail and thin almost to vanishing point: only it stops
short of vanishing, and because it does so it spells out the
end of traditional metaphysics which is based upon
an acceptance of I by a Sensing New that "Be" and
"Perceive" represent two different sets of mental facts.
This argument must be insisted upon. It cannot be
affirmed that a thing "is" until a Sentient Mind has felt it. The affirmation itself means nothing more
than just this, "I feel . . . the feeling or group of feelings" and at the same time the feeling or group of feelings"
("thing"). Even when "Is-ness" (i.e. Existence) is
claimed for "things" apart from the mind which per­
ceives them, the former cannot be asserted to "be"
until some Perceiving Mind is aware of them, and then
they are only to such minds as have perceived them.
Of things which "are" to us, we can only say that as far as we are concerned the statements as to their verbally imputed existence "are". Before we can
emphatically declare that a thing "is," we ourselves
must have perceived it: all certainty of assertion as to
its existence depending upon it being thus felt. "I feel" and "I perceive" are one, and that which I feel
can be said to have being only inasmuch as I feel "It." The moment of feeling a thing (i.e. of perception of it) is therefore the moment of its coming into existence: of its
creation. The notion that a thing of itself "is," and is
therefore free from any dependence upon the mind which
"perceives it", is, and is the deepest and most insidious
fallacious philosophy of all. The verb "Perceive" is to be
understood as implying that whatever is read or felt or
thought is brought to mind by the perceptive power which furnishes the "existence" anew, and so it will be clear that to mistake the "is" in perception for an independent
existence is a chimera.
To summarize: the only construction which the
statement that "a thing exists" can carry is that one feels
specifically so-and-so. And because by a thing we mean the specific group of features of a feeling there
there can be no "things" conceivable which are not part of
the Sentient Ego which feels. A thing has Being when it
feels, and it "is" only to those who feel it. Being
begins and ends in the feeling experienced of a thing
for which it forms a specific mode. When we affirm of
a thing that it "is," it is its Perceivability which we are
affirming. When we confidently declare that a thing
"is" we mean that our feeling retina is distinctly
affected so-and-so; the particularized state of feeling
indicated by the verbal sign "so-and-so" constituting the
thing." It may be thus, as it may be otherwise, and
"I feel . . . thus," "I exist . . . thus." To say that
the "thing exists" encourages a form of speech which is least fitted to make clear the fact that "It is"
equals "It is to me," which in turn equals "I feel it." The
phrase "It exists" is in the full possession of power to
confuse the philosophical mind. The only correct expression of the "I" with an independent existence is
"It" or "anything which the mind can perceive is nothing but a
bundle of feelings: passing modes of the existence of
the "I" which perceives (i.e. creates) them. This ball for
instance represents the conglomerate of those of my
feelings which I have been accustomed to dominate

* Words in italics to indicate slight alteration of the original phrasing.
as small, hard, round, grey, solid, and heavy. These specific conditions of my feeling retina when evidencing themselves simultaneously and in immediate proximity with each other I am in the habit of calling a ball. The fact that a vast number of other perceiving Egos will also arrive at an evidencing of them together (i.e. will give to them an account of an apparent similarity in purposes and in sensory power, among those to whom it seems so to appear. This fact does not argue or establish an identity for the "things" variously sensed, nor does it establish for them—or it—an independent existence.

A thing is born of and takes its features from two factors, both of which are individual to the Ego in whose eye or appearances it has a place. These features are (1) the desire to beget the "thing": which Desire itself is the impulse setting towards its own fulfilment. This fulfilment is the Purpose, the New Thing: the New Feeling. (2) The individual degree of living power which is to bring the new thing forth: create it, in fact. It is the interplay of these two factors: Desire-borne Purpose and Power of Execution which are the architects and builders of the World, makers and creators of all things. Want of parity between the two leads to those shades of differentiation which we know as the Nature of Things, and since it is oftenest Power which lags behind Desire, a feeling ordinarily takes its character (i.e. is seen as) the other way round. Ego is by virtue of the satisfaction it gives to the desiring and purposive part of the "I." Thus things are features on the line of achievement of any particular purpose. They are intermediate feelings in the sequence of feelings which lead up to a specially desired feeling—a so-called end. Feelings group themselves into this thing or that according as they relate themselves to one or other of a number of outstanding purposes. For instance, what to human beings (who are Egos which go shod) is a boot, to a puppy is a piece of stuff suitable for sharpening teeth. What in a furniture shop is a carefully carved and constructed piece of workmanship, to a drowning man is a substance that floats. What to one human being in another represents all the potentials and extended purposes of a man, to a wild animal on the prowl is what a well-cooked joint might be to us. The air to a fish must be a very different "thing" from that which is to men very different to what it is to a fish. Even those things of which the nominal desire for sole possession provides the struggles of sentient being with motives are not the same things. The Ego already possesses in the only sense in which actual possession has meaning, everything which its eye, ear, tongue, or other more "elemental" desired ends are in process of creation: being constantly remoulded and bettered on a basis of a previous achievement of ends. This progressive achievement of ends is our Paramount Purpose which matters, and which accordingly is the thing in Excessus, while former things unrelated to it inevitably sink into the temporary oblivion of "nothing-ness".

And next in degree to Purpose, the things which at once assume an aspect of determined and obstinately actual existence are those which resist the free (i.e. easy sufficiently-empowered) movement towards the Purpose's completion. To the driver whose desire it was to experience free unhindered movement, the air which moved streets offering little resistance would be "nothing," but to men buried in a mine, air would be the one supreme thing by comparison with which the rest of their worlds would become "nothingness." The character of a thing is a variable upon its relation to Purpose. That body of solids which we call "solids" have ordinarily the character regarded as the things most resistant to the exercise of effort. That this is only a temporary habit is made plain by the fact that the birth of a desire to move through the air has turned this other medium, air—the one-time type of non-resistance—into quite the most resisting kind of resistance—for that particular purpose (i.e. flying). The human desire to fly is age-long: its satisfaction but just now: so resistant to purpose—the only meaning of resistance which matters—has the air proved, and now that it is being brought into submission, air itself, like solids, the former type of most resistant human element, will begin to remain things. Power and resistance is temporary also—an aspect which the limitation of individual power in a certain way has enabled it to take on As for solids: when we have the power to walk unhindered through a solid as now the eye assisted by a new element has the power to pass unobstructed through it, it will not be a solid; quite probably it will even appear as the "nothing," which ordinarily the atmosphere appears. There is nothing to suggest that "solidity" is a permanent characteristic of any particular thing: nothing to suggest that there will not be living beings who will laugh at solids (i.e. make "nothing" of them) in much the same way they will be able to effect their purposes through them with little apparent resistance.

All things then are feelings related to our purposes and achievements. We work upon the feelings we already perceive in order to create different ones nearer to the satisfaction we desire. When a feeling—an imaged thing—appears in the "I," it satisfies or does not satisfy the desire which was the impulse responsible for its creation, and thereupon the feeling activity is bent over anew to respond in order for the whole feeling image will be a more likelier answer to Desire. So constantly, new Feelings (i.e. things) are in process of creation; being constantly remoulded and bettered on a basis of a previous judgment as to effects until the satisfying image is achieved. This progressive achievement of ends is our most impressive Egoistic activity. The power to achieve other more "elemental" desired ends is so perfected
that we need only desire, and the End desired is forth­with effected. This is the case with all our established (i.e. completely embodied) faculties of sense. They represent the whole line in being. Being without conscious effort: they are apparently ready-made. Thus we can see a thing or a multitude of things if we want to, and will open our eyes; and can cease to see them, if we choose, by closing them. We can smell or not smell, hear or not hear, even taste or not taste, according as we desire and open and close the passages through which the particular sense operates. This creative faculty is none the less effec­tive because, in these cases, ample possession of power has made the end almost answerable to the call of Desire. Desire and power act in equal degrees and creation is spontaneous as is the case in the creation of a new life itself. It is this effortless creative activity which is so much taken for granted as to be ignored. But frequently it is only where egoistic power is only partially equal to desire and where the long process of arduous trial and effort which we know as fabrication and manufacture are displayed that we readily allow "Creation" to have taken place.

Long usage has taught us to regard the elements resistant to existing sensory powers as the very Stuff and Matter of life, because they seem ready to dominate us if we do not dominate them. They appear far too constant and firm to be created, therefore, and made easily to foster the belief that we are responsible for their creation. Accordingly it is only to that part of our faculty (i.e. power to do) which we recognize as being patently creative in the "pioneering" sense (i.e. producing because therein lies the act) engaged in producing those obvious evidences of creative power which we call "manufactured" things. Manufacture is the last (latest rather) gasp of egoistic creation: it is the play of power just where power fringes off into impotence: just therefore where it is inextricably confounded with the apparent resistance of "things": this resistance being precisely the inverted appearance which egoistic impotence takes on. Manufacture takes place in the arena where power begins to find its limitations, and just as on the seashore where sea meets land there is most surge and foam so the creative egoistic activities which we call manufacture—the adding of little to little, the winning of point by point, the slight slow change of this thing into that—appears more "creative" than the great silent constantly active, constantly creative agents which are presented by our established faculties. Upon magnitude, upon fabrication, therefore, where "I can" plays about "I can't": where our potentialities niggles away at our limitations, human attention is most fixed because in these are bound up the purposes of the moment. While that which has been done now securely "is" and is established, the New Worlds are still lying unborn, their very nature dependent upon, stored up in the desires which to-day we breathe out or inhibit. For desire is the scaffolding upon which power will realize all the desires which to-day we breathe out or inhibit. For desire is the scaffolding upon which power will realize all the desires which to-day we breathe out or inhibit.
exhaustion and consequent revolt. The Objective World is accordingly as "psychic" as the Mind itself. What distinguishes the "things" (i.e. the feel) of the former is that, being set in space, they are removed to a distance—greater or less—from the points where the fabricating and dominating powers of the Ego are most effective; from its core which is constituted by the body. The Ego includes both Body and the World. It consequently includes Space itself which is but one feeling—one thing—among other things which constitute the World. Space is not therefore to be regarded as the containing vessel in which lies the World. The "containing vessel" if such a phrase is to be used at all is the "I" itself which contains Space, Time, Matter, Motion—all that is within the World and all that is said to be "outside" it. Perception itself is the "I's" own awareness of what it creates; it is the term which we give to the fact that the Ego knows what it is about, i.e. that it knows its own purposes.

It would be a regrettable omission not to include in an analysis of tricky metaphysical terms such as "It," "Thing," "Is," "Perceive," "World," and "Space" the ubiquitous metaphysical term "There" which in conjunction with "Is" has introduced every metaphysical poser language has been capable of producing. "Is there ... an independently existing World?" "Is there ... an a-sensible existence?" "Is there ... anything 'beyond' the world of sense?" "If all sentient life were removed would the World still be?" "There?" "There!" "There" is manifestly the great standby of this species of conundrum. Generally the word is used and accepted as a vague covering term for "Space," but in the illustration of its usage which the instances cited furnish, it will be seen that it is not made synonymous with Space but with the all inclusive excuse, including Mind and World as comprehensively as the "Realm of the I." It is thus made to cover that which is created and that which creates, while implying that it bears only the connotation of Space. A little close attention shows that these metaphysical problems compounded with "There are" do not present genuine difficulties; they merely disguise absurdities. A question such as "Is there a World independent of the Life which is aware of it?" means "Could life sense a thing (i.e. that which is sensed) without sensing it?" Such absurdities could never be perpetrated were it not for the disguising veil which "Is there?" draws over the living sensing activities actually involved. The World "is" that which is sensed; by being sensed it is created. The World corresponds to nothing save what it is felt to be, since what it is felt to be is the stuff which makes it. The notion that the "Shows of Sense" are not "absolute" in themselves but must be regarded as the distorted correspondence of a "Reality" which is unsensed and unsensible has only been encouraged to persist in order to provide philosophers with the semblance of a means of escape from the dilemma in which their phraseology has involved them. The fact that it is allowed to be assumed that "There is" used as connoting a "Scoop of Space" containing the "External World," whereas actually it is used with the full meaning of the "I" gives the ruse the appearance of plausibility. In "Is there?" the "there" holds an intermediate position between that inversion of relationship which grammatically permits the "objects" to become subjective; and the (grammatical) recovery of the position of subject by the "I," since actually "there" is used with an equivalence of meaning. It is because it is so used that the absurdities of the propositions appended to it are self-evident. "Is there ... psychologically means "Am I," "Do I ... feel." How can it be asked "Do I feel a World (of feelings) apart from feeling?" It is absurd. The metaphysical problem is born of a jugglement with the meaning of the various parts of the verb "Be" in conjunction with an elliptic-born, grammatical inversion of objects into subjects which psychologically only the "I" can or may use; and must be regarded as the distorted translation of psychic phenomena into evil grammar that all the "mysteries"—the Grand Perhapesses—of Philosophy, Religion, the Absolute Part of Ethics and its Principles of conduct are in need of being led back.

Note.—This series of articles, "Truth and Reality," will be continued in subsequent issues of THE EGOIST, but will appear under the heading of their sub-titles only.—Ed.
disgruntled. And until "Workers" are Class-conscious in this sense, Industrial Revolutions will continue to be little more than Industrial Somersaults.

However, let the attitude of "Workers" towards "Governors" be what it may, and arrange itself as it can, there is a side to this attempt to reduce all opinion to the level where it can be found justified by the "crowd" in which we are more nearly interested. One recognizes that a reluctance to scandalize even the "least of these our little ones" might well be fostered on the grounds that to agitate "Fixed Ideas" and break up "good characteristics" is at worst to make unstable the ideal basis of many contented and amenable spirits, and, at best, to set them on individual and responsible enterprises for which perhaps they lack the power and consequently the taste to carry through. And, moreover ordinarily, those who happen to be in the crowd but who are not of it swiftly make that fact evident. The one unassailable ground, therefore, from which one unassailable ground, therefore, from which one might argue for the "least of these our little ones" is taken account of before the event and arranged for, if "sin" found justified by the "crowd" in which we are more nearly interested. One recognizes that a reluctance to scandalize even the "least of these our little ones" might well be fostered on the grounds that to agitate "Fixed Ideas" and break up "good characteristics" is at worst to make unstable the ideal basis of many contented and amenable spirits, and, at best, to set them on individual and responsible enterprises for which perhaps they lack the power and consequently the taste to carry through. And, moreover ordinarily, those who happen to be in the crowd but who are not of it swiftly make that fact evident.

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In November of the same year, Edward Storer, author already of "Inclinations," much of which is in the "Imagist" manner, published his "Mirrors of Illusion," the first book of "Imagist" poems, with an essay at the end attacking poetic conventions. The first poem in the book was called "Image," here it is:

**AUTUMN**

A touch of cold in the autumn night
I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge,
Like a red-faced farmer,
I did not stop to talk, but nodded;
And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.

Mr. Storer, who has recanted much since, was in favour then of a poetry which I described, in reference to his book, as "a form of expression, like the Japanese, in which an image is the resonant heart of an exquisite moment." A fair example of his practice is this from "Clarice-Henley":

"Clarice! Clarice! The oasis of lunch,
We laid Arabian-Night-wise in the green
And pleasant desert of the field
For our most welcome selves.
And that rememberable canopy of white
And holy linen, that denied your face
Unto a hundred daisies' peeping glance,
We placed to bear the bread, the wine—the flowers
Of your dear hand."

I have always wished that Storer, in his after work, had brought more art to the exploitation of the temperament he displayed in the "Mirrors," which, for me, is a book of poetry. But he changed his manner completely.

At that time, I had been advocating in the course of a series of articles on recent books of verse a poetry in *vers libre*, akin in spirit to the Japanese. An attack on the Poets' Club brought me into correspondence and acquaintance with T. E. Hulme; and, later on, after Hulme had violently disagreed with the Poets' Club and had left it, he proposed that he should get together a few congenial spirits, and that we should have weekly meetings in a Soho restaurant. The first of these meetings, which were really the successors of certain Wednesday evening meetings, took place on Thursday, March 25, 1909. There were present, so far as I recall, T. E. Hulme, Edward Storer, F. W. Tancred, Joseph Campbell, Miss Florence Farr, one or two other men,
more vagueemens in my memory, and myself. I think that what brought the real nucleus of this group together was a dissatisfaction with English poetry as it was then (and is still, alas!) being written. We proposed at first to replace it by pure vers libre, by the Japanese tanka and haikai; we all wrote dozens of the latter as an amusement; by poems in a sacred Hebrew form, of which "This is the House that Jack Built" is a perfect model; Joseph Campbell produced two good specimens of this, one of which, "The Dark," is printed in "The Mountain Singer"; by rhythmless prose like Hulme's "Autumn," and so on. In all this Hulme was ringleader. He insisted too on absolutely accurate presentation and no verbiage; and he and F. W. Tancred, a poet too little known, perhaps because his production is precious and small, used to spend hours each day in the search for the right phrase. Tancred does it still; while Hulme reads German philosophy in the trenches, waiting for the general advance. There was also a lot of talk and practice among us, Storer leading it chiefly, of what we called the Image. We were very much influenced by modern French symbolist poetry.

"Les Imagistes," by Ezra Pound, whose book, "Personae," had been published on the previous Friday, joined the group, introduced, I believe, by Miss Farr and my friend T. D. FitzGerald. Ezra Pound used to boast in those days that he was

Nil greater "Villon" et doctus cantare Catullum,

and he could not be made to believe that there was any French poetry after. Romances. He was very much all of his troubadours; but I do not remember that he did more than attempt to illustrate (or refute) our theories occasionally with their example. The group died a lingering death at the end of its second winter. But its discussions had a sequel. In 1912 Mr. Pound published, at the end of his "Ripostes," an exercise in vers libre. The poetical works of T. E. Hulme, five poems, thirty-three lines, with a preface in which these words occur: "As for the future, Les Imagistes, the descendants of the forgotten school of 1909 (previously referred to as the 'School of Images') have that in their keeping." In that year, Pound had become interested in modern French poetry; he had broken away from his old manner; and he invented the term "Imagisme" to designate the aesthetic of "Les Imagistes." In March 1913, an "interview," over my signature, of an "interview" in the American review "Poetry," followed by "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" by Ezra Pound. The four cardinal principles of "Imagisme" were set forth as:

(1) Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
(2) To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.
(3) As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.
(4) The "doctrine of the Image"—not for publication.

Towards the end of the year Pound collected together a number of poems different writers, Richard Aldington, H.D., F. S. Flint, Skipwith Cannell, Amy Lowell, William Carlos Williams, James Joyce, John· Cournos, Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Hueffer and Allan Upward, and in February-March 1914 they were published in America and England as "Des Imagistes: an Anthology," which, though it did not set the Thames, seems to have set America, on fire. Since then Mr. Ezra Pound has become a "Vorticist," with a contradiction, for, when addressing the readers of The New Age he has made Imagism to mean pictures as Wyndham Lewis, and to write them; writing later for T. P.'s Weekly, he made it pictures as William Morris understood them. There is no difference, except that which springs from difference of temperament and talent, between an imagist poem of to-day and those written by Edward Storer and T. E. Hulme.

F. S. FLINT.
successful; and the failure is in the attempt to produce a piece of sustained hard work, like the translations of Guido Cavalcanti and of Arnaut Daniel.

On the other hand the emotional rendering of "The Seafarer" is unsurpassed, and I venture to say, unsurpassable. There is a magnificent frisson in these lines:

"And his laud beyond them [shall] remain 'mid the English, Aye, for ever, a lasting life's-blast, Delight 'mid the doughty, Days little durable, And all arrogance of earthly riches, There come now no kings nor Cæsars Nor gold-giving lords like those gone, However in mirth most magnified, Whose'er lived in life most lordliest, Drear all this excellence, delights undurable! Waneth the watch, but the world holdeth. Tomb hideth trouble. The blade is laid low. Earthly glory ageth and seareth," &c.

But of all his translations, not even excepting his recent very beautiful adaptations of the Chinese,* this "Prayer for his Lady's Life" seems to me the most exquisitely rendered, with a grace and energy finer even than the original.

"Here let thy demency, Persephone, hold firm, Do thou, Pluto, bring here no greater harshness, So many thousand beauties are gone down to Avernus Ye might let one remain above with us."

"With you is hope, with you the white-gleaming Tyro, With you is Europa and the shameless Pasiphaë, And all the fair from Troy and all from Achaia, From the sundered realms, of Thebes and of aged Priamus; And all the maidens of Rome, as many as they were, They died and the greed of your flame consumes them."


And you cannot argue it out by syllogisms. It might have come out of some Greek anthology; but that does not bring you any nearer to it. In fact, the more you attempt to reason about it the less will you get out of it. It must work on you as an evocation. You may see a woman in white muslin who has waited, not long, but long enough, in the long grass of June, under the shade of a large elm by a river's bank, the Thames; and, if you are a male, you will lean over her and listen to the sound of her voice, without troubling much about the purport of her words, knowing that they are not a reproach but rather a responsive music; or the strange names may affect you so that the time becomes a time that you do not know as June; and the dress of the woman is vague and lovely to you; and the scene is one that you can place in no country. The thing then will seem to have happened in eternity, which is only time divested of its temporariness. Or take this oft-quoted poem:

"HERMES OF THE WAYS"

"The hard sand breaks, And the grains of it are clear as wine.
"Far off over the leagues of it The wind, Playing on the wide shore, Piles little ridges And the great waves break over it.
"But more than the many-foamed ways Of the sea, I know him Of the triple pathways, Hermes, Who awaiteth.
"Dubious, Facing three ways, Welcoming wayfarers, He whom the sea-orchard shelters from the west, From the east Weathers the wind, Fronts the great dunes.
"Wind rushes Over the dunes, And the coarse, salt-crusted grass Answers.
"Heu, It whips round my ankles."

The detail there is clear; it fits the experience of all of us so well that there is no need for me to insist on its truth by appealing to my memory for corroboration. But the introduction of Hermes into the poem takes it out of our experience; the sand-dune is one that we shall never visit; we are permitted to catch a wistful
glimpse of it through the words of the poet; the sea
imagination; and the wind rushes upon her from the
caves that are in no charted range of mountains.
She is lonely.
If you dwell on the poetry of H. D. you will feel this
loneliness more and more. She has lived in the same
world as you and I; but the things she has seen and
the emotions she has felt have been transmuted in her
world rather than the strenuous action, involved, passion,
and anxious thought that make up the complex of
modern life. But there will be time, too much time,
perhaps, for that.
Of H. D.'s later poems a tendency to pare and cut too
bareness and jejuneness. But it is only slight; and
there is more danger of her becoming inhuman, in the
sense I have indicated.
by the way, have only, so far, appeared in anthologies
in this place. The form of her poems seems to me to
expression and experience of the poet. It is evident that
here is a woman who is creating
beauty and the constant simultaneous criticism of what is created,
curiously and produce enigma, which was the fate of
Mallarmé. In all art, it seems to me, there must be
quality of his pity for the spectator will decide this.
An artist cannot be inhuman and be understood. I
have said nothing of the form of these poems (which,
by the way, have only, so far, appeared in anthologies
and periodicals). I have nothing to say, least of all
better pass on. Perhaps I may, instead, quote one
more short poem:

"PINES"

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines,

On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us,
Cover us with your pools of fir."

Is it not evident that here is a woman who is creating
a body of poetry that is original in form, spirit, and
imagery? It is a poetry whose beauty can be pondered
on, nor can it be made trite by frequentation. Need
more be said?

F. S. FLINT.

THE POETRY OF JOHN GOULD

FLETCHER

THERE is for me a quaint charm in the idea that
in this tragic year of 1915 a poet of the name of
Fletcher—a name already borne by no fewer
than five English poets, one of them author of the dullest
poem in the language—should be turning out work in the
highest degree vivid, original, and provocative. I
do not recall in a pretty extensive reading of slim books
of modern verse any other work of more tingling fresh-
ness than Fletcher's in his " Irritations" or in his fine
representation in "Some Imagiste Poets."

In his joyously swash-buckler preface Mr. Fletcher
affirms his poetic faith. Any stanzaic form which clips
emotion to measure is bad, as he says: "The good
poem fixes a free emotion or range of emotion into an
inexplicable personality. That is how I feel about
poetry : it is a charm of its own good," as the commutative
phrase is, but since no one ever profited by good advice, THE
Ecoshie hardly seems the place in which to speak them.
The thing that counts is that if any jaded, possibly
jaundiced "Poetry Lover" wants to be stirred with
the sense of a living, sincere poetic art Mr. Fletcher is
his man.

FERRIS GREENSLET.

ALL BACK NUMBERS of "THE EGOIST" and
"THE NEW FRIEEMAN" can be obtained
from the publishing office: Oakley House, Blooms-
dale Street, London, W.C. Price 6d. each. By
post, 6d.
POEMS

IN THE TUBE

The electric car jerks;
I stumble on the slats of the floor,
Fall into a leather seat
And look up.

A row of advertisements,
A row of windows,
Set in brown woodwork pitted with brass nails,
A row of hard faces,
Immobile,
In the swaying train,
Rush across the flickering background of fluted dingy tunnel;
A row of eyes,
Eyes of greed, of pitiful blankness, of plethoric complacency,
Immobile,
Gaze, stare at one point,
At my eyes.

Antagonism,
Disgust,
Immediate antipathy,
Cut my brain, as a sharp dry reed
Cuts a finger.

I surprise the same thought
In the brasslike eyes:
"What right have you to live?"

Richard Aldington.

MID-DAY

I

The light beats upon me.
I am startled—
A split leaf rustles on the paved floor.
I am anguished—defeated.

A slight wind shakes the seed-pods.
My thoughts are spent as the black seeds.

My thoughts tear me.
I dread their fever.
I am scattered in its whirl.
I am scattered like the hot shrivelled seeds.

The shrivelled seeds are split on the path.
The grass bends with dust.
The grape slips under its cracked leaf.

II

Yet far beyond the spent fruit-pods
And the blackened stalks of mint,
The poplar is bright on the hill.
The poplar spreads out, deep rooted among trees.

O poplar, you are great among the hill stones,
While I perish on the path
Among the crevices of the rocks.

H. D.

CHICAGO

To Harriet Monroe the Editor who discovered Imagism

Out of the land of limitless snows the north wind arose and gathered up his thin black arrows.
The red wind, the tuneless wind, started his long easy lope down the unsloping plains of the Land of Little Sticks. From the swamp, from the lake, he blew aloft in the sky clouds of flapping black geese. Shrieking and whimpering, like rabbits caught by the lynx, the plains reeled away beneath him, frayed ribbons of tape. He danced and shot and swirled and dived amid pale waters flashing far away to the horizon. He curled and twisted and hissed like a running snake amidst the clamour of geese and the low, mournful howling of wolves that ran over the snow after his foot tracks.

Muttering and shaking his heavy head, matted and shaggy with sleep of the dead, the west wind began to creep out of the rust-stained crags that fell shattered to the base of the canyon. He yawned and growled comically, and from his hot breath the rocks danced as if a giant fist had smitten them. In the twisted crannies the sound reverberated with the low dull echo of muddy torrents. Mournfully and heavily it rumbled off, pushing the clouds before it, shuffling and scrambled eastward with sullen explosions of pent ire and spitted fires of forked lightning. Gloomily it lowered over the rolling breadth of the prairie, smashing the flowers, and uprooting the grasses with its long claws of rain.

The south wind whispered as she sidled up the great swaying bend of the river. Intervened greenery entangled her feet. Her eyes were sorrowful and she scattered dull white flowers. She loved the full body of the fat river rolling its mud through the forest. He would not heed her, as he ate away at his banks every day, or swirled in oily bubbles away to hide in some low bayou, playing soft pipes with reeds that rustle amid down-swaying mosses from motionless cypress trees. The south wind sought the river at its source, and when his course grew more rapid through the rolling green bluffs she fell pensive and silent. She crept, she struggled, lisping, whispering, "Is he there?"

The east wind snorted and chuckled in rude strangelng gags as he came down from the mountains. He was as blue as a fish, for he had seen the sea, and at his coming the gnarled black oak trees crackled and rattled with gusts of sardonic laughter, spilling brown torrents of leaves. They bent, they broke, and he jeered at them. Now and then he paused to splash with snow some sullen council of smoky blue pines, or to shatter the rain with axes of ice. He flickered, he relapsed, he re-whirled the silent snow drift that the north wind had fashioned and then trailed over it his streaming robes, making it run away in oily trickles of rosy ooze to the river. He laughed, he advanced, and at each turning of the hills he changed his mind.

Now the winds unite together, and they dance and change the weather on a low, sandy barren of the plains. To the north, frozen waters; to the east, rainy forests; to the south, lowland valleys; to the west, gusty plains. They change hair and face and weave their figures, and not a single one lingers, as they veer through the queer varied year. Sometimes it is the north wind that carries the sad crying south wind to his lakes and tundras to swelter awhile under a soft blue sky half shrouded in a haze canopy. Then, like black arrows, swarms of flies and gnats arise from the shallows and sting her to death. Sometimes the east and west wind fight all day with delight. They are red marks on the blue body of the east wind, and drops glare on the grey shaggy cloak of that old bear, the west. Sometimes north and south, and east and west chase each other like sister and brother. But they never rest, but tire in the eastern sky, and when their course is ended, a kis or blow on the mouth they scatter forthright nor slacken their race.

Behold, what the winds have created; a whole world's meeting place! Black towers, like bastions of iron, break the wrinkles of the lake, stop the roll of the silent green prairie, turn back the cracking dense grown forests, arrest the meandering river. Men of the north, huge, blond and drunken, come to roll and stroll and sleep and sit brooding long in melancholy defeat. Men of the east shifty sidle amid them, polite and smiling, uneasily twisting, or vague and impassive, lost in some inhuman dream of peace. Men of the south, felinely graceful, saunter with sombreros stuck on the backs of their heads, a flower or a dagger in their fingers, a flower or a cigarette at their lips. Men of the west,
hulking, flamboyant, generous, cruel, reckless, ride
whizzing up the streets, their faces hacked by the wind
to the resemblance of an Indian's. Through blood,
through mire, through dust, through heat, through lust,
through fire, through defeat, through treachery, they
strive, and tear, and struggle, like loosed wild beasts, and
their pantings are the white hissing bursts of steam
from the freight locomotives that crash through the
city bringing more weight of life to aid them. But the
gloomy arched bastions stand forever, gazing out at the
sad wastes of plain and water, bearing the afront of
the winds that hoot and shoot and howl past them;
the north wind trolling his skoal to his dead vikings;
the east wind nasally yelping and whining for his fallen;
the south wind mounting and blubbering over her
lovers; the west wind roaring like a giant bear that is
brought to bay in its lair, and turns at last on its
hunters, preparing for its death onset after the fire has
attacked its cavern and the high trees have fallen on the
trail.

December 30, 1914.  JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

EASTER

FRIEND
we will take the path that leads
down from the flagstaff by the pond
through the gorge thickets:
see, the golden spikes have thrust their points through,
and last year's bracken lies yellow-brown and trampled.
The sapling birch-groves have shown no leaf,
and the wistarias on the desolate pergola
are shorn and ashen.
We lurch on, and stumbling,
touch each other.
You do not shrink, friend.
There you, and I here,
side by side, we go, jesting.
We do not seek, we do not avoid, contact.

Here is the road,
with the budding elm-trees lining it,
and there the low gate in the wall;
on the other side, the people.
Are they not aliens?
You and I for a moment see them:
shabby of limb and soul,
patched up to make shift.
We laugh and strengthen each other;
but the evil is done.

Is not the whole park made for them,
and the bushes and plants and trees and grasses,
have they not grown to their standard?
The paths are worn to the grave, with their feet;
The green moss will not carpet them,
the flags of the stone steps are hollowed;
and you and I must strive to remain two
and not to merge in the multitude.
It impinges on us; it separates us;
we shrink from it; we brave through it;
we laugh; we jest; we jeer;
and we save the fragments of our souls.

Between two clipped privet hedges now;
we will close our eyes for life's sake
to life's patches.
Here, maybe, there is quiet;
we will close our eyes for life's sake.
To the trenches, I see again a face with blue eyes,
So when I run at length thither across
the battle lines, I see again a face with blue eyes,
that, drifting away,
reveals beneath the immaculate white splendour
of its neck and wings
a breast black with scum.

Friend, we are beaten.

F. S. FLINT.

ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABBACHTHANI?
How I hate myself, this body which is me;
How it dogs me, what a galling shadow!
How I would like to cut off my hands,
And take out my intestines to torture them!
But I can't, for it is written against me I must not,
I must preserve my life from hurt.

But then, that shadow's shadow of me,
The enemy!

God, how glad I am to hear the shells
Droning over, threatening me!
It is their threat, their loud, jeering threat,
Like screaming birds of Fate
Wheeling to lacerate and rip up this my body,
It is the loud cries of these birds of pain
That gives me peace.

For I hate this body, which is so dear to me:
My legs, my breast, my belly;
My God, what agony they are to me;
For I dote on them with tenderness, and I hate them,
I hate them bitterly.

My God, that they should always be with me!
Nay, now at last thank God for the jeopardy,
For the shells, that the question is now no more before
me.

I do not die. I am not even hurt,
But I kill my shadow's shadow of me!
And God is good, yes, God is very good!
I shot my man, I saw him crumble and hang
A moment as he fell—and grovel, and die,
And God is good, for I wanted him to die,
To twist, and grovel, and become a heap of dirt
In death. This death, his death, my death—
It is the same, this death.

So when I run at length thither across
To the trenches, I see again a face with blue eyes,
A blanched face, fixed and agonized,
Waiting. And I knew he wanted it.
Like a bride he took my bayonet, wanting it,
Like a virgin the blade of my bayonet, wanting it,
And it sank to rest from me in him,
And I, the lover, am consummate,
And he is the bride, I have sown him with the seed
And planted and fertilized him.

But what are you, woman, peering through the rents
In the purple veil?
Would you peer in the empty house like a pilferer?
You are mistaken, the veil of the flesh is rent
For the Lord to come forth at large, on the scent of
blood,
Not for the thieves to enter, the pilferers.

Is there no reconciliation?
Is marriage only with death?
In death the consummation?
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For the Lord to come forth at large, on the scent of
blood,
Not for the thieves to enter, the pilferers.
And God abroad and alight on us everywhere,
Everywhere men and women alight with God,
My body glad as the bell of a flower
And hers a flowerbell swinging
In a breeze of knowledge.

Why should we hate, then, with this hate incarnate?
Why am I bridegroom of War, war’s paramour?
What is the crime, that my seed is turned to blood,
My kiss to wounds?

Who is it will have it so, who did the crime?
And why do the women follow us satisfied,
We expiate in our bodies’ rents and rags
Our bride among the rustling chorus of shells,
Whose birds they are,
We give up, O Lord, our bodies to deadly hate,
We take the bride, O God, and our seed of life
We give hate her dues, O God, we yield her up
Our bodies to the expiation, Lord.

But shall I touch hands with death in killing that other,
The enemy, my brother?
Shall I offer to him my brotherly body to kill,
Be bridegroom or best man, as the case turns out?

The odds are even, and he will have it so.
May it be I shall give the bride
And the marriage shall be my brother’s—it may be so.

I walk the earth intact hereafterwards;
The crime full-expiate, the Erinnyes sunk
Like blood in the earth again; we walk the earth
Unchallenged, intact, unabridged, henceforth a host
Cleansed and in concord from the bed of death.

D. H. LAWRENCE.

SPRING DAY

THE day is fresh-washed and fair, and there is a smell of tulips and narcissus in the air.
The sunshine pours in at the bath-room window and bores through the water in the bath-tub in lathes and planes of greenish-white. It cleaves the water into flows like a jewel, and cracks it to bright light.

Little spots of sunshine lie on the surface of the water and dance, dance, and their reflections wobble deliciously over the ceiling; a stir of my finger sets them whirling, reeling. I move a foot and the planes of light in the water jar. I lie back and laugh, and let the green-white water, the sun-flawed beryl water, flow over me. The day is almost too bright to bear, the green water covers me from the too bright day. I will lie here awhile and play with the water and the sun streams.

The sky is blue and high. A crow flies by the window, and there is a whiff of tulips and narcissus in the air.

BREAKFAST TABLE

In the fresh-washed sunlight the breakfast table is decked and white. It offers itself in flat surrender, tendering tastes, and smells, and colours, and metals, and grains, and the white cloth falls over its side, draped and wide.

Wheels of white glitter in the silver coffee-pot, hot and spinning like Catherine-wheels, they whirl, and twirl—and my eyes begn to smart, the little white, dazzling wheels pricking them like darts.

Placid and peaceful the rolls of bread spread themselves in the sun to bask. A stack of butter-pats, pyramidal, shout orange through the white, scream, flutter, call: “Yellow! Yellow! Yellow!”

Coffee steam rises in a stream, clouds the silver tea-service with mist, and twists up into the sunlight, revolved, involuted, suspending higher and higher, fluting in a thin spiral up the high blue sky. A crow flies by and croaks at the coffee steam.
The day is new and fair with good smells in the air.

WALK

Over the street the white clouds meet, and sheer away without touching.
On the sidewalk boys are playing marbles. Glass marbles, with amber and blue hearts, roll together and part with a sweet clashing noise. The boys strike them with black and red-striped agates. The glass marbles spit crimson when they are hit, and slip into the gutters under rushing brown water. I smell tulips and narcissus in the air, but there are no flowers anywhere, only white dust whipping up the street, and a girl with a gay spring hat and blowing skirts. The dust and the wind flit at her ankles and her neat, high-heeled patent-leather shoes. Tap, tap, the little heels pat the pavement, and the wind rustles among the flowers on her hat.

A water-cart crawls slowly on the other side of the way. It is green and gay with new paint, and rumbles contentedly sprinkling clear water over the white dust. Clear zigzagging water which smells of tulips and narcissus.

The thickening branches make a pink “grisaille” against the blue sky.

Whoop! The clouds go dashing at each other and sheer away just in time. Whoop! And a man’s hat careers down the street in front of the white dust, leaps into the branches of a tree, veers away and trundles ahead of the wind, jarring the sunlight into spokes of rose-colour and green.

A motor-car cuts a swath through the bright air, sharp-beaked, irresistible, shouting to the wind to make way. A glare of dust and sunshine tosses together behind it, and settles down. The sky is quiet and high, and the morning is fair with fresh-washed air.

MIDDAY AND AFTERNOON

Swirl of crowded streets. Shock and recoil of traffic.

The thickening branches make a pink “grisaille” against the blue sky.

Whoop! The clouds go dashing at each other and sheer away just in time. Whoop! And a man’s hat careers down the street in front of the white dust, leaps into the branches of a tree, veers away and trundles ahead of the wind, jarring the sunlight into spokes of rose-colour and green.

A motor-car cuts a swath through the bright air, sharp-beaked, irresistible, shouting to the wind to make way. A glare of dust and sunshine tosses together behind it, and settles down. The sky is quiet and high, and the morning is fair with fresh-washed air.

NIGHT AND SLEEP

The day takes her ease in slipped yellow. Electric signs gleam out along the shop-fronts, following each other. They grow, and grow, and blow into patterns of fire-flowers, as the sky fades. Trades scream in spots of light at the unruffled night. Twinkle, jab, snap, that means a new play; and over the way: pop, drop, quiver is the sideling, silver of a watchmaker’s sign with its length on another street. A gigantic mug of beer effervesces to the atmosphere over a tall building, but the sky is high and has her own stars, why should she heed ours?

THE EGOIST

May 1, 1915
I leave the city with speed. Wheels whirl to take me back to my trees and my quietness. The breeze which blows with me is fresh-washed and clean, it has come but recently from the high sky. There are no flowers in bloom yet, but the earth of my garden smells of tulips and narcissus.

My room is tranquil and friendly. Out of the window I can see the distant city, a band of twirling gems, little flower-heads with no stems. I cannot see the beer glass, nor the letters of the restaurants and shops I passed; now the signs blur and all together make the city, glowing on a night of fine weather, like a garden stirring and blowing for the Spring.

The night is fresh-washed and fair and there is a whiff of flowers in the air.

Wrap me close, sheets of lavender. Four your blue and purple dreams into my cars. The breeze whispers at the shutters and mutters queer tales of old days, and youths leaping their horses down marble stairways. Pale blue lavender, you are the colour of the sky when it is fresh-washed and fair . . . I smell the stars . . . they are like tulips and narcissus . . . I smell them in the air.

AMY LOWELL.

TO WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS ON TAGORE

It is made clear by the phrase, Even the mood—by virtue of which he says The thing he thinks—that it pays, To cut gems even in these conscience-less days ;

But the jewel that always Outshines ordinary jewels, is your praise. MARIANNE MOORE.

AFTER THE RETREAT

If I could only see again
The house we passed on the long Flemish road That day;

When the Army went from Antwerp, through Bruges, to the sea ;

The house with the slender door, And the one thin row of shutters, grey as dust on the white wall. It stood low and alone in the flat Flemish land, And behind it the high slender trees were small under the sky.

It looked Through windows blurred like women's eyes that have cried too long.

There is not anyone there whom I know, I have never sat by its hearth, I have never crossed its threshold, I have never opened its door, I have never stood by its windows looking in ;

Yet its eyes said : "You have seen four cities of Flanders ;

Ostend, and Bruges, and Antwerp under her doom, And the dear city of Ghent ;

And there is none of them that you shall remember As you remember me."

I remember so well, That at night, at night I cannot sleep in England here ;

But I get up, and I go ;

Not to the cities of Flanders, Not to Ostend and the sea, Not to the city of Bruges, or the city of Antwerp, or the city of Ghent, But somewhere In the fields Where the high slender trees are small under the sky—

If I could only see again The house we passed that day.

MAY SINCLAIR.

THE “IMAGISTS” DISCUSSED

BY HAROLD MONRO

THE “Imagists” have apparently become reduced in number since the publication of their first Anthology* in March 1914. The Preface to this new volume explains: “Differences of taste and judgment, however, have arisen among the contributors to that book; growing tendencies are forcing them along different paths.” Most conspicuous among absentees are Ezra Pound and Ford Madox Hueffer. The anonymous preface-writer repudiates leadership for the present group of six . . . Instead of an arbitrary selection by an editor, each poet has been allowed to represent himself by the work he considers his best.” Further, “The poets in this volume do not represent a clique . . . they are united by certain common principles, arrived at independently.” We are not told who formulated these principles, here set down to the number of six. Some of the poets of the other anthology must certainly have contributed towards them, or at least have taken part in the discussions which, as has already been more than once publicly admitted, led to their original formulation. These newly stated principles differ, however, to some extent from the first Imagiste “Don’t’s,” which were published in the Chicago magazine Poems, and from other records of the nature and aims of the original Imagiste school. In justice it should be noted that no particular novelty is claimed for them. They “are not new . . . They are the essentials of all great poetry,” we are told, and with this, when I read No. 5 (“To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite”) and No. 6 (“Finally, most of us believe that concentration is of the very essence of all poetry”), I am certainly in agreement. The four remaining principles may be summarized as follows: To avoid cliché; to abandon absolutely all forms of the rhetorical and grandiose; to insist on precision of language; to create new rhythms.

The Imagistes, or Imagists, as, dropping the affectation of the “e,” they now, I am glad to find, prefer to be called, show themselves in agreement with most of the more important English theorists of the past. Thus (to quote very sparcey) Ben Jonson already in the seventeenth century: “The true artificer . . . hath avoided faint, obscure, obscene, sordid, humble, improper, or effeminate phrase.” Dryden: “Propriety of words is the clothing of those thoughts with such expressions as are naturally proper to them.” Addison: “The great masters in composition, know very well that many an elegant phrase becomes improper for a poet or an orator, when it has been debased by common use,” and again: “He must not swell into a false sublime.” Burke: “Still it will be difficult to conceive how words can move the passions which belong to real objects without representing those objects clearly.” Samuel Johnson: “Words too familiar or too remote defeat the purpose of the poet.” Coleridge, too, several times mentions the points emphasized in the Imagist principles. Wordsworth (if Christ was a Socialist) might almost be called an Imagist in theory. Even Matthew Arnold was no enemy of free verse, and must frequently have recommended accuracy of vision, precision of language, and concentration—though I cannot check this at the moment.

There have been some misconceptions about the Imagists, partly on account of their fixed principle of admitting only their obligations to nature, with their drastic self-detachment, and with their insistence on the necessity of an absolutely fresh start in poetry. I think, however, they would gain a larger measure of public confidence if they more freely admitted themselves not among the first to discover poetry as an Art, and would probably benefit in their own production by recognizing themselves more clearly as

* “Des Imagistes: an Anthology” (Poetry Bookshop, 2/6 net).
one of the latest groups in the forward movement of English poetry—not the only one. They have not at any time taken much trouble to make themselves clear. Mr. Pound has offered us several illuminating, though not entirely lucid, restatements of theory; interspersed among the writings of Mr. Haeffer are many allusions, direct or indirect, to the Imagist position, with more particular reference to the first of the new groups. He has cared, in what particular respects they may be considered innovators, and the very term Imagist is sufficiently mystifying to alienate the sympathies of the general public, though its exotic sound may attract small, inquisitive, detached groups of the wrong people.

An advance copy of the present anthology has reached me; and the first of the new groups to which I refer is the Imagist movement, and am acquainted with a majority of the poems it has so far produced.

II

If I were to attempt an account of the Imagist movement to some stranger to English literature, I should do it somewhat on these lines:

Certain younger American and English poets made the discovery that a greater proportion of the English-speaking public remained under an impression that poetry had ceased with the reign of Queen Victoria. (Most other people, who had thought about it at all, knew this also, but did not bother much.) They found, too, that a large number of very feeble poets were fostering that false public impression by continuing to work in the obsolete Victorian forms; a powerful Italian school also existed which was having made of them veritable moulds for their clichés. A large number of the French younger poets, they discovered, had long ago abandoned the traditional verse-forms; a powerful Italian school also existed which was working one of the most violent revolutions in the history of literature. They hastened to study first these new French, later these new Italian, poets. "Eurekas," they cried. They imitated them; many of their first poems were, or, at any rate, read like, translations. One of them had studied Provencal; others knew Greek; they examined Japanese and Chinese poetry; they threw away most of their early compositions and experimented in every new style they could find. They took every possible opportunity of preparing themselves a public. The Americans, they found, were too interested in magazine verse, and were also developing a dangerous habit of writing in an inflated manner about these cosmic matters usual without having made of them any thing whatever that not even the most ignorant or sentimental public in the world could possibly have been duped by it. The Imagists were indignant. "This," they cried, "is not poetry; you are being misled." Unlike the Italian Futurists, they remained uncertain how much of the past had to be abandoned; indeed, I don't think they ever came to an agreement on this point. Most of them soon, however, rejected the sonnet, and the conventional stanza forms which appeared to have been imported or manufactured to serve the requirements of a certain limited epoch or period, and had now, also, become tainted beyond all further use by those feeble poetasters having made of them veritable moulds for their clichés. Some Imagist Poets, * as an anthology, records a transitionary point in the Imagist movement. All the poets here represented figure as people who have fully recognized the difficulties of their art and are now on the point of deciding whether it intends to be taken * "Some Imagist Poets," *as an anthology, records a transitional point in the Imagist movement. All the poets here represented figure as people who have fully recognized the difficulties of their art and are now eventually ready for a decision how to deal with them.

The writer of the preface declares: "This school (of Imagists) may be divided into two main classes: a strain of bad English; vain exaggeration. The fact is that it is on the point of deciding whether it intends to be taken

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Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1915).
seriously. The fruit of this decision will depend on whether its poets reconcile themselves to bringing imagination to the support of intellect. The only reference in the Principles to the name of the school is in No. 4: "To present an image (hence the term 'Imagiste')"—which, even with the qualifying sentences which follow, means nothing. The references to free-verse are, however, much more explicit; and it may be hoped, I think assumed, that, as innovators, they will busy themselves with the formation of new rhythmic word-groups, while the idea of presenting an image will take a place of secondary importance. Symptoms of this development are conspicuous in the present anthology, and for this reason I call it transitional.

All these poets are primarily impressionists. I will take them singly. Richard Aldington in his "Childhood," the longest poem in the book (some 120 lines), records the effects on a sensitive child of the civilization of a modern small town:

"I hate that town; I hate the town I lived in when I was little; I hate to think of it. There were always clouds, smoke, rain in that dingy little valley. It rained; it always rained. I think I never saw the sun until I was nine—and then it was too late. Everything's too late after the first seven years."

And the consequence:

"I don't believe in God. I do believe in avenging gods Who plague us for sins we never sinned But who avenge us."

He contributes several shorter poems. I quote the opening lines of "The Poplar":

"Why do you always stand there shivering Between the white stream and the road?"

"The people pass through the dust On bicycles, in carts, in motor-cars; The waggoners go by at dawn; The lovers walk on the grass path at night."

"Stir from your roots, walk, poplar! You are more beautiful than they are."

Such lines would seem to belie some of my remarks in the last paragraph of Section II. For this very reason they may be considered the most auspicious ones in the anthology. "The Faun sees Snow for the first Time" is a delightful conceit. Richard Aldington and the lady who writes under the initials H. D. both are content to derive most of their subjects from Greek origins. Mr. Aldington's rhythms, though arbitrary, are smooth. He does not use rhyme.

H. D. writes short poems which may be considered representative substitutes for the Sonnet. Here she presents one image:

OREAD

"Whirl up, sea— Whirl your pointed pines, Splash your great pines On our roads, Hurl your green over us, Cover us with your pools of fir."

That is all. It can be said in the one minute before lunch. There is no mould to be filled, no risk of padding, no fear of words being exploited to complete a rhyme. Yet I remember the sentence of Lowell: "Imagination, as it is too often misunderstood, is mere fantasy, the image-making power, common to all who have the gift of dreams." It is petty poetry; it is minutely small: it seems intended to be. Such images should appear by the dozen in poetry. Such reticence denotes either poverty of imagination or needlessly excessive restraint.

She can exert a vigorous cadence, as in these lines from "The Garden":

"O wind, rend open the heat, cut apart the heat, rend it sideways."

H. D. is the truest "Imagist" of the group. But its future work will scarcely develop along the lines of her example. Her poems have a slight flavour of brine; they are as fragile as sea-shells. If I came too near them I should be afraid of crushing them into the sand with my clumsy feet.

Mr. John Gould Fletcher is typically the modern poet discussed above. His "Blue Symphony" consists appropriately of a series of word-patterns grouped together with the object of producing one whole impression on the reader, creating one definite sensation. There was an "Orange Symphony" in a number of The Egoist correspondence which I liked so much that I cannot reconcile myself to this poem. Nevertheless it is an interesting piece of work on a larger scale than most of the others hereabouts; and its effects are obtained without much strain.

But the nine short poems entitled "London Excursion" illustrate the whole series of Imagist difficulties in their most pronounced form. He beats the awful bounds of their new freedom. Is it surprising that the tortures of those difficulties appear in every word he writes?

Mr. Fletcher makes an excursion to London, let us suppose with the object of writing a poem. There would have been several old-fashioned ways of treating the subject. Possibly he reviewed them in his mind; more probably he has now long trained himself not even to consider them. He finds things distinctly unlike their representation in old-fashioned poetry, yet, at the same time, tantalizingly like. However like they be, he must write something different. He is resolved too, on accuracy of observation, of rhythm, and of expression. But each hampers the others. His observations land him in a series of crude statements. These should be modified by their rhythm. Rhythm is found to embarrass their accuracy. His expression, again, must precisely reproduce his observation. It cannot, however, because what he has observed cannot be reproduced in poetry. His nearest approach to poetry is in lines of reflective anticipation such as these:

"Lost amid greenness We will sleep all night; And in the morning Coming forth, we will shake wet wings Over the settled dust of to-day."

Hardly any of his statements of fact are anything like poetry:

"A clock with quivering hands Leaps to the trajectory-angle of our departure."

is not. The more indefinite

"Bulging outerush into old tumult; Attainment, as of a narrow harbour, Of some shop forgotten by traffic With cool-corridored walls."

may be more like it.

"An arch under which we slide Divides our lives for us: After we have passed it We know we have left something behind We shall not see again."

is imaginative, but here rhythm and poetic expression have both failed him. The reader is so held by the contortions of Mr. Fletcher battling with his difficult art that the emotional values of the poem almost escape him. "London Excursion" remains more interesting as experiment than effective as poetry. The old poetry was cliché-ridden: this new will be even more forbidding to the general public. Yet if the design of art be to represent accurately, this poem, in being as ugly as what it represents, is true to that design.

As not much space remains at my disposal, and it is not easy to write with brevity on this stimulating
subject, I shall dismiss D. H. Lawrence in a few words. Strictly speaking he is not an Imagist. For one thing he is a rhymber, even to the extent of "whither" and "dither"; in none of his seven poems is the ornament of rhyme absent. "The Mowers" is at the same time "dither": in none of his seven poems is the ornament conspicuous defect of Imagism. "Labour to appear skilful" represent the most recollected in tranquillity."

His eccentricities are irritating, being only half ones. I cannot think him a natural growth of the movement, and I consider that I may be pardoned for dismissing him on the present occasion with these few remarks.

IV

The two poets who still remain for discussion are F. S. Flint and Amy Lowell. The one seems to have yoked the difficulties of the Imagist position on to his shoulders; the other to have succeeded in shirking them. Mr. Flint turns the eccentricities of the school to his own advantage. He writes like a man who almost hates poetry, but can't help loving it. I find in him free-verse with a rhythm so definite that it seems fully to warrant the typographical device of the division into lines. For instance:

"Have I performed the dozen acts or so that make me the man men see?"

"The door opens, and on the landing—quiet! I can see nothing: the pain, the weariness!"

His "Fragment" is delightful. "Accident" is a startlingly impressive little chip of experience. "Eau-Forte" is a carefully designed piece of realism—with an unfortunately weak ending. He performs contortions with more happiness than Mr. Fletcher. His instinct for accuracy does not ask too much of the object. One feels him inquiring, "What does this mean?" and answering in as plain terms as an Imagist can.

"The root of the steamers on the Thames is plain," he remarks, and no one can suspect him, for the moment, of thinking in terms of poetry. Yet he is willing to use his imagination.

Miss Lowell, when she exerts her imagination, resigns the attitude of the poet, and passes helplessly into prose. It is a noteworthy peculiarity of this anthology that its sincerest, most imagastic, and most successful poem is in prose. Surely no subtleties of argument can be applied to the subject. "The Bombardment" is a very fine piece of careful and concentrated prose. The point is indifferent—except that verse only, or prose written down like verse, might have been expected in the book. Miss Lowell, never presumably having experienced a bombardment, was obliged to imagine it, and there is no doubt she has done so remarkably well. Yet the piece is a confession of failure, since she appears in the volume as a poet. Her contributions in verse beginning

"Why do the lilies goggle their tongues at me?"

and

"My thoughts Chink against my ribs,"

and

"Little cramped words scratching all over the paper Like drugged fly's legs," bring me reflectively back to Wordsworth's declaration:

"I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility."

"Some poets," wrote Thomas Rymer, "labour to appear skilful with that wretched affectation. The words "Labour to appear skilful" represent the most conspicuous defect of Imagism.
The phenomenon known as late maturity is not common among artists, but whenever it occurs it is always a happy augury. Youthful prodigies only too frequently make a brilliant start, and soon find that they have exhausted their vein. A great many years of study, experience, and experimentation are necessary before even the foundations of work of permanent value can be laid down. Shakespeare and Gauguin are diverse examples of this late maturity which enables its fortunate possessor to gauge fully his capacities at the outset, and to develop them with each succeeding year of activity.

The subject of this notice may well be admitted one of the foremost Imagists for the reason that she allowed many years of study and silence to elapse before she made her bow to the public, than any one of us. Also it may be said of her that the scope of her technique

MR. LAWRENCE'S work is full of contradictions; he is both crude and subtle, rough and tender; but these opposing elements are welded into a whole by a vitality so great as to be always arresting; a burning aliveness which has something of the qualities of fire—wildness, remorselessness, and beauty. In the

"And I in the fur of the world, and you a pale fleck from the sky,
How we hate each other to-night, hate, you and I,
As the world of activity hates the dream that goes on
high,
As a man hates the dreaming woman he loves, but
who will not reply."

There are three little poems which I do not think I am wrong in calling "imagist," for they each contain two "images," one superimposed upon the other. I have only space to quote "Aware," which is perfect from beginning to end. "Reminiscence" and "A White Blossom" both lapse into a banality in the last line:

"A tear which I had hoped even hell held not in store"

...and..."She shies, the one white love of my youth, which all sin cannot stain."

"Aware"

"Slowly the moon is rising out of the muddy haze,
Divesting herself of her golden shift, and so
Emerging white and exquisite; and in amaze
See in the sky before me a woman I did not know
I loved; but there she goes and her beauty hurts my heart;
I follow her down the night, begging her not to depart."

The influences which have formed Mr. Lawrence are not obvious; here and there a line reminds me of Browning—the last two lines, for example, of "Fooled;" a fine poem which has appeared in The Egoist:

"She clung to the door in her haste to enter, opened,
And quickly cast
It shut behind her, leaving the street aghast."

He is simpler, less concerned with technical experiments than most of his contemporaries; his manner and his matter are inevitably one, especially in the poems in dialect, which are the finest in the book.

"The Drained Cup" is a masterpiece of passion and understanding; it is written with straight naked simplicity, and is realistic in a true sense—that is to say, it does not deal with external realities only. I cannot quote from "The Drained Cup," "Whether or Not," or "A Collier's Wife" without spoiling them as a whole, for each is a little drama in itself, tragic and full of irony.

I end by suggesting—I hope without obscuring my appreciation of Mr. Lawrence's work—that if he could add two qualities to it he would be a great writer indeed; I mean the quality of "strangeness," which some one has declared to be a necessary part of beauty, and that of "distinction"—so difficult to analyse, which is perhaps the indirect expression of a philosophy of life which rejects everything but essentials.

O. SHAKESPEAR.
is less limited. How wide that scope is, may be judged when I say that it embraces sonnets, narratives in rhymed stanzas, rhymed *vers libre*, rhymless *vers libre* of the cadenced type, and at least one altogether new form which I have called elsewhere Polyphonic Prose.* The poem in question is, in fact, a narrative in the form of a letter. Miss Lowell, such virtuosity would have been impossible. Even in her case it has been found impracticable to employ so many forms simultaneously. The sonnet, for example, no longer claims her allegiance, and possibly she may discard others. But along with this process of elimination goes another of experimental development in new fields, which makes her work extremely fascinating for lovers of poetry to follow.

The special qualities which Miss Lowell possesses are these. She has a sense of the irony of existence, particularly of the artists’ or students’ existence amid ungenial surroundings and in face of the loud-mouthed insolence of the mob. This was expressed in her first book, in the poem on Huysmans. She has developed it further, until she is able to expose pitilessly the gangrenes of our civilization. “The Precinct, Rochester,” “The Cyclists,” “Ely Cathedral,” “The Bombardment” all show examples of her power in this respect. There are many others scattered about her books.

Next, she visualizes. She sees her image before she sets it down. She has a horror of vagueness, of the cliché, of the abstract. Here she shows her Imagist tendencies. She is not ashamed to make pictures of anything, even her own imagination, because she knows she can make good pictures. This power has in it one element of danger. She sometimes seems inclined to split the complete image into too many subsidiary uncorrelated cameos. One loses the wood, for the tropic exuberance of the trees. But this is no mere technique. It is, to my mind, the very index to her genius. She is as English as the Elizabethans. “Le gout pour la mesure,” that most difficult of all French disciplines, is sometimes rebelled against.

Finally, she has a sense of narrative. This she has so far confined wholly to poetry, though I have no doubt that she could do excellent short stories if she chose. But she has wisely realized that prose demands a technique and range of ideas which poetry does not possess, and that very few can hope for perfection in both. Besides, her narratives fit better into poetry, for the reason that this gift of hers is allied with another, her precocious precociousness and her gracefulness. One element in which course of events to treat a fantastically horrible theme in such a way as to accent its fantasticality and horror. But she is no more morbid than a modern physician who studies some terrible disease, or the Gothic stone-masons when they put gargoyles on their cathedrals.

Perhaps I have over-accented the masculine traits of my subject. It is a pardonable error. It should be remembered that Miss Lowell is a New Englander, with her share of the aggressive, enterprising spirit, not of the Pilgrims, who were mostly stagnating agriculturists, but of the merchants who gave to America, before the Civil War, the greatest mercantile marine then in the world. Be it also remembered that she has had to fight all her life against the intellectual paralysis of the “s梓vir” who still shields himself under the fiction that the last word of English literature was written by Emerson or Longfellow, and that no other language has a literature worthy of the name.

Let anyone read her “Bombardment,” perhaps one of the best poems that this war has called forth, with its fine jest of drunken incendiaries, keeping time in the uproar of gun fire, moving with sublime casualness, failing, decaying aristocracy, and fine poetic visioning, and patient experimental research, into the dust. One would almost say that “Amy Lowell” was a pseudonym, and that such an arrangement of warfare could only have been written by a man. But then turn to such a poem as this, with its delicacy, its freshness, its completely feminine sense of intimacy:

See! I give myself to you, Beloved! My words are little jars For you to take and put upon a shelf. Their shapes are quaint and beautiful, And they have many pleasant colours and lustres Recommended them. Also the scent from them fills the room With sweetness of flowers and crushed grasses. When I shall have given you the last one, You will have the whole of me, But I shall be dead.

Amy Lowell’s range is something almost unique in modern English and American Literature. Long may she keep that inner youth that is hers, and which she has preserved unaltered, and out of which she draws so many treasures! A little more breadth, a more assured mastery of detail, some pruning of occasional exuberance, all this she should inevitably come, and we shall soon have to concede her a permanent place in English literature.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

CORRESPONDENCE

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS.—While quite willing to publish letters under such terms as we may think fit, it is only really as a matter of publication that the name and address of each correspondent should be supplied to the Editor.—Ed.

THE MEANING OF THE TERM “ARCHISTIC”

To the Editor, The Egoist.

MADAM,—Miss Marsden recognizes that “something more need be said before we can expect adoption of our term ‘archistic’ to be wholly vindicated.” I am content to wait until the lack be remedied. Thus far Miss Marsden has replied in several papers to the objection that by our common purposes we are all grouped under one caption. Nevertheless clarity demands that we be also afforded terms denoting divisions between voluntary and compulsory associations. Miss Marsden has said that I am mistaken in which the distinction between voluntary and compulsory associations was emphasized. The inference—a fair one, I submit—of Miss Marsden’s reply is that only those who are committed to compulsive association are “archistic,” which term, she assured us, “can be applied broadly to everything which possesses life in so far as one requires to keep in mind that ‘archistic’ is essentially aggressive nature of life.” Those of us who are convinced that whatever the desire, its gratification can be better secured by voluntary than by compulsive association are relegated to the realm of the lifeless, the insensible. “S’Death!” I keep alive my hope that Miss Marsden will hasten her further vindication so that the process of reusucitation may not be kept too long in abeyance.

Minneapolis, U.S.A.

HERMAN KUEHN

THE EGO AND THE DRUNKARD

To the Editor, The Egoist.

MADAM,—I am interested to have a clearer explanation of Miss Marsden’s use of the word create in its relation to the ego and its world. In particular I do not understand how what I would call a perception is transformed into a creation.

“ ‘I’ creates its own world. The world is of it. As the ‘I’ is, so the world is.” (Egoist, Jan. 1, page 3.) “The ‘I’ gives to itself, to the extent of its powers, whatever it can strike out from itself.” (Jan. 1, page 3.) I should write this sentence: “The ‘I’ perceives to the extent of its powers such images or the images of such things as are in contact with it.”

“The progress of science is but the expanding of the ‘I’ of the world of images which we call the scientist’s soul. And all that we call creative works are but so many patterns and chords—auras—thrown out by the ‘I’ itself.” (Egoist, Jan. 1, page 4.) The ego is called the creator of all the phenomena which its organs sense (April 1, page 51). There is no ‘true’ egoal existence except for itself as its sense of reality, lying ‘there’ ready-made until such time as sense-apprehension can grow in the way towards it. There is only the actual sensing of the world which is, so to say, a new appearance for itself as its sense of reality, ‘lying there’ ready-made until such time as sense-apprehension can grow in the way towards it. There is only the actual sensing of the world which is, so to say, a new appearance for itself as its sense of reality, ‘lying there’ ready-made until such time as sense-apprehension can grow in the way towards it. There is only the actual sensing of the world which is, so to say, a new appearance for itself as its sense of reality, ‘lying there’ ready-made until such time as sense-apprehension can grow in the way towards it.

MADAM,—Since Miss Marsden recognizes that “something more need be said before we can expect adoption of our term ‘archistic’ to be wholly vindicated” I am content to wait until the lack be remedied. The inference—a fair one, I submit—of Miss Marsden’s reply is that only those who are committed to compulsive association are “archistic,” which term, she assured us, “can be applied broadly to everything which possesses life in so far as one requires to keep in mind that ‘archistic’ is essentially aggressive nature of life.” Those of us who are convinced that whatever the desire, its gratification can be better secured by voluntary than by compulsive association are relegated to the realm of the lifeless, the insensible. “S’Death!” I keep alive my hope that Miss Marsden will hasten her further vindication so that the process of reusucitation may not be kept too long in abeyance.

Minneapolis, U.S.A.

HERMAN KUEHN

THE EGOIST

May 1, 1915
membering and comparing of different "sensings," the fuller the particular world becomes. I am probably more capable of perceiving wonderful and radiant worlds than is a worm, and possibly an archangel would find the same worlds more wonderful and radiant than I do, but it does not at present help my understanding to say that the worm, the archangel and myself each created that which we respectively perceive.

To illustrate further. Say that I, an intensely respectable person, present myself before Miss Marsden to-day, and a month hence turn up again, but this time as a tattered drunkard. Will Miss Marsden maintain that she created the changed image she has of me; that it denotes an expansion of her soul, a development of her own egoistic power? Or will she allow that she perceived, passively, the degeneration of mine? Josephine Wright.

[The above letter is referred to in the current issue in the article "Truth and Reality." Miss Marsden writes that the question as to the meaning of the word "create" will be dealt with more fully in an early article.—Ed.]

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