THE LITTLE DEMON

By Richard Aldington

THIS book of Sologub's is not a kindly one; it is harsh, bitter, and a little contemptuous. The author is not a blissful optimist—on the contrary. He sees that there is evil in men and in their relationships, especially in those small aggregations of men in provincial towns, where the familiarity of each person with every one else's affairs gives the widest scope to evil instincts.

In great towns there is evil, but it is so vast that it becomes impersonal, unreal: one passes through the horrible lanes of East London, one catches glimpses of its perverted, sordid life, but it is all like a dream. We do not know these outcasts; these drink-sodden, filthy features are strange to us; we may feel horror or poignant disgust or deep sympathy, but the faces pass, we leave these noisome alleys, and the impression fades, the evil becomes fantastic and unreal.

Again, in the open country, where villages are no more than a church and a few cottages or farms, where men are exclusively occupied all day and every day in rough, out-of-doors work there is less opportunity for general petty depravity. The country has indeed its annual crop of illegitimate children and incests—result of scanty population—there is, perhaps, a murderer once in ten years, but there is no widespread little viciousness. People are too healthy and too tired after their work to be evil-minded; great exertion in the open air makes one stupid; all their neighbours are so well known to them that backbiting, silly slanders, exaggerated rumours are useless because so easily and so speedily contradicted; and there is no inordinate ambition, for there is little chance of gratification.

But in a small provincial town, where there are just so many people that there is a chance for one man to get above some of the others, and just so few that each person knows something, though not everything, of every one else's life and business—there, if anywhere, the evil instincts that are in men do flourish and do create a miniature hell. It would, of course, be absurd to say that everything and every one in a small provincial town are evil, but any one who has lived, and kept his perceptions from atrophy, in a provincial town will admit that these towns are not ideal places of residence for a sensitive personality. Sologub's "Little Demon" is set in a small Russian provincial town—about the worst kind, presumably. In England and France such towns are still comparatively near the capital; they are not isolated by vast distances and icy, prolonged winters. We, who live in a milder climate and under better material circumstances, are yet the witnesses of much petty evil, slander, and selfish cruelty in our provinces. I know this is true for I have lived in such places. And there are Mr. Hardy's novels. Need one go beyond Flaubert and Maupassant for a somewhat pessimistic view of provincial France? But, though we need not take Sologub's "Little Demon" as a materially true picture—true as an accurate piece of journalism is true—of Russian provincial life, of all provincial life, we may yet take it that it is spiritually true, in that the book gives us, symbolically almost, as much of the truth as an artist needs to give.

People object to this book; it disagrees with their human vanity. They say: "But no man is wholly evil; no man is wholly unfortunate. Didn't Pere­donov ever think of any one else? Didn't he ever give a beggar a sixpence or see the beauty of a flower? Didn't he ever have a piece of good fortune which made him grateful to something or somebody?" But Pere­donov is "an expression of the all-human tendency towards evil," and just as it would be out of place to show Jocasta enjoying a hearty meal when she learns that she is incestuously married to a parricide, just as it would be out of place to give Sir John Falstaff religious scruples when he is successfully stealing a purse, so it would be out of place to give Pere­donov generous impulses, a sense of beauty, tenderness, gratitude, or sympathy. It may not be ideal—we are daily reminded by the headlines in the newspapers that this is not an ideal world—for people like Pere­donov and the evil which he typifies to exist, or for Sologub to present such a person for
our contemplation and, let us hope, betterment; but it is perhaps less distant from the truth than the somewhat vague and roseate optimism of clerics, "bourgeois," and simpering critics. These, indeed, are the people who ignore fundamental and physiological facts; these are the people who tell us that if we wish to marry we must be good. It is better that if we are starving we must thank God and the parish beadle for permission to do so; that because some men are debauchees the beauty of a naked body is sinful; that because ugliness is a condition of their sterile "virtue" we must hate beauty and human loveliness and the pleasure of the flesh, and must never hold before the world a true picture of their untruth and the ugliness caused by their blind, perverse theories.

You say that "The Little Demon" is an unpleasant book? Look about you, look carefully about you at what is happening—is life so very much more pleasant, is it so much less petty? If Sologub is wrong in showing us the petty evil of Skorodosh, then Flaubert was wrong to show us the evil of the little towns round Rouen, and Germinie Lacerteux and how many more great books of France and Russia and England are poisonous libels on the human race.

Take the book at its crudest—as a rough homily, a kind of inverted "Pilgrim's Progress." Is not the sight of evil and the ignoring it pitiful? Is not the close unsentimental analysis of the evil that is in men and that is caused by them, a finer thing than the ignoring of such evil, the pretence that it does not exist? It is easy to say that Sologub is a liar but it is not easy to believe. His picture of life may not be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—which is a fiction of lawyers—but it is truth in a larger sense, in an abstract sense, in the ideal sense of a work of art. We know that the physical strength and loveliness of the figures on the Parthenon are an exaggeration, an idealization, an abstraction of human physical goodliness; we know that the horror of Edipus and the sorrow of Lear—though horror and sorrow are unfathomable—are yet beyond human endurance, are exaggerated, an idealization, an abstraction of human woe. Yet we do not claim that the first is over-lovely, or the others over-horrible, over-tragic. Not all servant-girls, perhaps not any, descend to the sordid degradation of Germinie Lacerteux, yet who dares deny the tragic power, the abstract truth of the de Goncourts' great novel? Why must we assume that the delineation of a tragic ignobility is ignoble, any more than that the delineation of a tragic criminality is criminal; that a study in evil is more despicable than a study in beauty or in horror or in sorrow; that a portrait of an evil man and of the evil he creates is unworthy and—supreme ineptitude—inane?

In "The Little Demon" those who persecute Peredonov are most like him—Varvara and Grushina; those who love him are more like him because they are lesser personalities. I do not propose that Peredonov should be imitated or loved, but that he should be studied. It is childish to object to a work of art because its characters are immoral and unpleasant—as well refuse to live because many immoral and unpleasant people exist. In Sologub's novel, the caricature, the abstract truth of mankind are studied not indeed disparagement but with a passionate interest and almost breathless hatred.

If you approach a work of art as an artist, I tell you that in "The Little Demon" you have a tragic symbolist novel, original in thought and characters, with a vivid atmosphere; it is a romantic and "modern"—nor anything like as horrible—as "Charles-Louis Philippe," but it is as finely patterned, as ironic as a good Steinlen. If you approach a work of art as a moralist, I first of all politely deprecate your existence, and then tell you to despise and sneer at "The Little Demon" when, and only when, you are quite sure that you have no affinities with its leading character.

[Note.—Miss Marsden is still unable to resume her work in The Egoist as she had hoped this month to be able to do. We hope that next month she will find it possible to do so.—Ed.]

PASSING PARIS

The most noteworthy occurrence independent of war-events since these began has been the donation to the country by M. Rodin of his life-work. Without anticipated publicity of any kind the news was announced when the contract between the Government and the donor had been duly signed. The arrangement was made in the business-like, straightforward way characteristic of a great man. M. Rodin leaves the clay casts of all his sculpture to the State on condition it be displayed in the circumstances and order he has chosen. He undertakes the expense of its presentation at his own cost, the State providing the housing in the eighteenth-century mansion in the Rue de Varenne M. Rodin has been occupying these last few years. M. Rodin stipulates, moreover, that he be allowed to continue living there until his death, and that the museum he leaves, comprising also his drawings and collections, bears his name.

M. Rodin, who had of late years added prose to his plastic and graphic expressions, has only raised his voice, or pen rather, on one occasion in comment on the war. He seems to have realized, for others, that the time is not for preaching. The few words he has said were to the point, as is everything he says or does. In Rodin are united the qualities of the French peasant and of the master-man. He has the sagacity and shrewdness of the one, the critical gifts of the other. He is sparing of speech like a peasant, lucid like a poet; tenacious and wary like the former, intuitive, tactful, feminine like the latter. He has a sense, too, of timeliness as his last deed shows, for it is, in its way, a patriotic deed. He was himself timely in his appearance in the artistic cycle; some come too soon, others too late; some fall completely outside of the natural environment; they are out of tune with their contemporaries. Rodin suffered from none of these errors of selection. Some are great artists, but not great, or even good, influences. Rodin's influence has been as vast as his genius. It was necessary, it was welcome, it has borne fruit. And there is no waste in his life. Effort has been proportioned to result, result to effort. He has, as far as can be judged, always given, or been able to give, form to his intentions; he has not aimed beyond or on one side of his possibilities of realization. His qualities have not been strained to the point of becoming faults. His idealism, for instance, has never developed into ideology.

Rodin is still the greatest of living artists, not only because he is the greatest artist, but because, simply, he is a world-wide influence. He is in himself a monument of the best in his time and race. * * * *

What other sculptor has France to offer to-day—France, where sculpture is, so to speak, a product of the soil? Italy has not given birth to a sculptor of importance for centuries; England never had but one; Spain has had none; the Netherlands and Flanders, fertile in painters, were sterile of sculptors; Germany alone, reviving an old tradition, had begun to form a presentable school.

The most eminent, that is, powerful, sculptors in
France to-day after Rodin are, no doubt, Bartholomé, Bourdelle, and MailloL. The first-named is celebrated for his "Monument aux Morts." A nude at the Luxembourg is also familiar. As far as competence goes, M. Bartholomé's skill is uncontested, but he has endeavoured to put more into sculpture than it can give, or something it should not be called upon to render. The dramatic expression in his work is somewhat artificial, by which word I mean that it is introduced from without instead of bursting from within itself (as in Rodin's). However, he is an artist, a genuine artist. What a grand name his, by the way!

M. Bourdelle's technique is characterized by roundness, placidity. In Emile Bourdelle is always a touch of the exotic; he can produce a work of stupendous effort and achievement; for instance, his "Hercules," a subject to which his temperament invited him, and which might be the symbol of his artistic nature. M. Bourdelle is not proof to influence, but never dominated by it. And his work is pure of the faintest suggestion of sentimentality or even sentiment.

Amongst a sheaf of interesting publications just issued by G. Crès et Cie is a reprint of Remy de Gourmont's notes in the Mercure de France, from its revival in April last year to within a few days of the writer's death. (How numerous are the writers who die writing!) These little thumb-nail essays appear in the Mercure in the form of "Bellum," reprinted at 1 fr. 50. They have been prefaced by M. Jean de Gourmont, who tells us that each morning his brother would go to his desk and there, granting one hour of his marvellously methodical life to the "day's idea" he would write the page which among the moments' hundred, nay, thousand impressions and sensations, was the one which dominated or which he wished to dominate over the rest, for he had committed over enterprises. And his work is pure of the faintest suggestion of sentimentality or even sentiment.

He wrote, having considered life as an astronomer considers the sky on a stormy night; "War has increased sensibility at the expense of intelligence." Or this: "Irony has vanished from the written word [how true this!] and irony is the sign of intellectual senility." He never lost this intellectual senility, even in the declining hours, and this irony, which had always served as the weapon of a too sensitive soul, he directed against himself in self-mortification.

Of my own accord I select the following aphorisms, the very first, and which open the little text-book. Commenting upon the reappearance of the Mercure, as not to be taken as indicating that it had by any chance grown accustomed, resigned to the war, M. de Gourmont observes: "but when one has chosen to live, one must live as it presents itself to us. One can only struggle for a limited time with waves as strong as those in which the present storm is tossing Europe and the world. One must go under or accept to follow the current wherever it carries us." The most necessary wisdom is contained in these words applicable to life in general and to the bewildering existing circumstances in particular when the fate that spares must be accepted with the same stoicism, resignation, and simplicity as the fate that sacrifices.

There is some analogy between "Sous la Tourmente" and Mr. Clutton-Brock's meditations, but there is more edge in Gourmont's. Among the latter's peculiar merit is a certain liberty of thought in his work which is a consequence of the war. The pharisaism, respectability, and that distrust of irony, mentioned by M. de Gourmont, prevalent in journalism and among quite a number of writers—many of whom had never been so much heard before—justify this apprehension. The bourgeois may have his day again. Prudently and patriotically, it is better that the country should not go under or accept to follow the current wherever it carries us; they are latent in most countries in some form or other, and are prevalent according to the power and influence of certain classes. In France they keep more in the background than in countries where art and thought have a narrower field of action, and the war, far from stamping them out, seems to set them free. For war is favourable to evil, always. * * * *

In the same attractive series appears "Le Cœur au Loin," wherein, as in a tiny casket, that "complicated" writer, M. Marcel Boulanger, has stored personal impressions beginning in August 1914 and ending in October 1915. The first part is in diary form. (The French public—this by the way—is not yet satiated with war-literature, for it is only just beginning to indulge in it. The war was taken seriously at first to perennial effect of an extensive literature of comment, and now too seriously for everything affecting it not to arrest attention and respect.) I have not read and shall not read, I know, more exquisitely recorded memoranda. M. Boulanger was at Chantilly, his habitual residence, when the war broke out. First his horse left—commandeered; then his greyhounds, which had to be poisoned; meanwhile he attended the separate departure of handsome Alec Carter, the jockey, and his winner, "Lord Loris" (each of whom fell to the enemy), and the emptying of all the racing stables; finally M. Boulanger himself left—mobilized. It is a minute story of leave-takings, abrupt breaches of habit: in a word, a one-man story of the war. The author of this little perfection of a book was invalided on active service, and now occupies a post at the rear.

* * * *

In "Une Française en Argentine" (portrait by Ciolkowski; preface by Yvonne Sarcey; Crès; 3 fr. 50), Mme. Marguerite Moreno, the actress, improves upon fiction by description and criticism, and on the tiresome travel record by animating it with dramatic personae. There is no part of the globe Europeans are more vague about than the new Republics of South America, and Mme. Moreno by telling us exactly what is interesting about one of them, excites a desire to learn more. As becomes the widow of Marcel Schwob—one of the last generation's most distinguished, most erudite men of letters, who helped Wilde in his "Salome"—the book is thoroughly artistically written, and the story and mask do not disfigure the more important features. Mme Moreno invites to a welcome and to a successful voyage and one does not feel that one is committing an unseemly frivolity by allowing it to be a temporary relief from the one monopolizing preoccupation, for as Remy de Gourmont said: "We must live life as we can and life is not all war even now." Muriel Ciolkowska.

**DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE**

**ALEXANDER AND PHRINE**

Phrine. You could learn it from all the Thebans who lived in my time. They will tell you that I offered to restore at my own expense the walls and the houses which you had reputed and provident men had inscribed as follows: Alexander the Great had cast down these walls, the courteous Phrine rebuilt them.

Alexander. Were you so afraid that future ages would forget what profession you followed?

Phrine. I excelled in it, and all extraordinary people, of whatever profession, have been mad about monuments and inscriptions.

Alexander. It is true that Rhodope preceded you. The use she made of her beauty enabled her to build the palace in Thespis which you had ruined, provided that they...
a famous pyramid still standing in Egypt, and I remember that when she was speaking of it the other day to the shades of certain French women who supposed themselves well worth loving, they began to weep, saying that in the country and ages wherein they had so recently lived, pretty women could not make enough to build pyramids.

Phriné. Yet I had the advantage of Phrodope, for by restoring the Theban walls I brought myself into comparison with you who had been the greatest conqueror in the world; I made it apparent that my beauty had sufficed to repair the ravages caused by your valour.

Alexander. A new comparison. Were you then so proud of your galantries?

Phriné. And you? Were you so well content with having laid waste a good half of the universe? Had there been but a Phriné in each of the ruined cities, there would remain no trace of your ravages.

Alexander. If I should ever live again I would wish to be an illustrious conqueror.

Phriné. And I a lovable conquerress. Beauty has a natural right to command men, valour has something but a right acquired by force. A beautiful woman is of all countries, yet kings themselves and even conquerors are not. For better argument, your father Philip was valiant enough and you also; never have the slightest fear it.

Demosthenes, who during the whole course of his life did nothing but make violent speeches against you; yet when another Phriné (for the name is a lucky name) was about to lose a case of considerable importance, her lawyer, having used his eloquence all in vain, snatched aside the great veil which half covered her, and the judges who were ready to condemn her, put aside their intention at the sight of her beauties. The reputation of your arms, having a great space of years to accomplish the object, could not keep one orator quiet, yet a fair body corrupted the whole severe Areopagus on the instant.

Phriné. Though you have called another Phriné to your aid, I do not think you have weakened the case for Alexander. It would be a great pity if—

Phriné. I know what you are going to say: Greece, Asia, Persia, the Indies, they are a very fine shopful. However, if I cut away from your glory all that does not belong to you, if I give your soldiers, your captains, and even chance what is due to them, do you think your loss would be slight? But a fair woman shares the honour of her conquests with no one, she owes nothing save to herself. Believe me, the rank of a pretty woman is no mean one.

Phriné. No. I will be perfectly frank with you. I exaggerated the rôle of a pretty woman, you strained over hard against yours. We both made too many conquests. Had I had but two or three affairs of gallantry, it would have been all quite in order, there would have been nothing to complain of; but to have had enough such affairs to rebuild the Theban wall was excessive, wholly excessive. On the other hand, had you but conquered Greece, and the neighbouring islands, and perhaps even part of lesser Asia, and made a kingdom of them, nothing would have been more intelligent nor in reason; but always to rush about without knowing whither, to take cities without knowing why, to act always without any design, was a course that would not have pleased many right-minded people.

Alexander. Let right-minded people say what they like. If I had used my bravery and fortune as prudently as all that, I should scarcely ever be mentioned.

Phriné. Nor I either, had I used my beauty so prudently. But if one wishes merely to make a commotion, one may be better equipped than by possessing a very reasonable character.
and plebian; circus dogs and lap-dogs, dead and live butterflies, tigers, panthers, leopards, squirrels, snakes, owl—gold-fish—and—most precious of all—the Bel-Gazou, whose species shall not be revealed. But it is, especially, the Book of Cats of every sort and kind, and as one may surprise oneself saying of a "still-life" painting that it is full of life, so one is tempted to find these animals "very human," which is as much as to say that the extreme "human nature" of the author has permitted her to discover the link which binds them to man and of every peculiarity we share in common with them.

Mme. Colette knows so many things. She knows, for instance, the despotism of love, and that each is bound to submit to its sway, both man and beast; she knows that love is not the diversion it is supposed to be, and never does she laugh on its account; she would no more think of doing so than of laughing about death, to which it is akin.

One of Mme. Colette's great attractions is her naturalness, and the art she possesses to her fingertips of making rare observations without preciousness. This naturalness is due to the fact that she has never, to write, ever attempted to write the artistry it demands—is that of a woman of the world, of a "lady," if you will allow me to use the old French word, always at her ease, free from mannerisms and affectations—an unusual quality at a time when an irritating naïveté, or naivism, is the fashion in literature.

Not only the critics and the public are equally enthusiastic about her work, but two such differing tastes as those of men and women are united in their praise of Mme. Colette. The latter find feeling, sensibility, and even more wit than they want in her writings; but men, while awake to these features, also of course, take and enjoy the particular delight in the actual quality of the workmanship, for men like not the cheap. The firm, clear, supple style, the extremely varied but always aptly-used vocabulary, the matching—when necessary technical—similes, the tidy, concise, well-balanced phrasings, in a word, first-class, never bungled work, form the most perfect example in prose we possess in France to-day.

The approximate, the "good-enough," are qualifications unknown to Mme. Colette. Her language is such that her thought is a well-cut "tailor-made" fits her thought as a well-cut "tailor-made" fits a woman who is always at her ease, tips of making rare observations without preciousness. This master of style can tune her prose to every key, and some of these pages, for instance in prose we possess in France to-day.

"Mais le radieux paon-de-jour, en velours cramoisi, criard et les ailes ouvertes, avec un doux battement sur la même fleur où je puis le cueillir encore, car il butine, goulu, content, déjà rassuré, la trompe long, mordoré, qui se soulève à mon souffle, les sombres pattes fragiles et tremblantes, les yeux frais que la plus fraîche fleur, attend, confiant, la "Tentateur" et "Les Papillons," which one is never tired of reading, and which closes on this magic onomatopoeia of rhythm:

"Voici l'eau froide dont on se rafraîchit en enfer"

Cholowskii.

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THE EGOIST
May 1, 1916

A LIFE

He was a peasant boy.
With sharp eyes and a beaked nose;
His hair was too long, ragged
And a little greasy.

He was generous, indifferent to comforts,
Lived on bread, onions and apples—
Worked in a shed under a railway arch—

Very witty and a little violent.
His red shirt was none too clean;
When he got hot he stank.
With marble-dust and clay.

In all his sketches and statues
He made you see something fresh—
An unsuspected beauty, a new strength,
The clear line of a naked woman's body,
The lightness of a stag,
A new grotesqueness or hideousness.

He had the blithe intolerance of the very young
But there was nothing petty in him;
He worked hard, had no obvious vices.

Then the war came.
He went off with a joke:
"I'll be back safe in three months:
I'll steal the Picassos from Düsseldorf!"

He was away three months
And another three months;
Was wounded, promoted, went back,
Accepted things cheerfully,
"Without arrogance" (his own phrase).

A few more weeks—
He was shot in the head.
Quenched that keen, bright wit,
Horribly crushed the wide forehead,
Limp and useless the able hands
Of our one young sculptor.
I wish he were not dead;
He was wholesome, his dirt and his genius.
So many "artists" are muffs, poseurs, pifflers.
I sit here, cursing over my Greek—
Anacreon says:
"War spares the bad, not the good."
I believe him.

Richard Aldington.

"VOICI L'EAU FROIDE DONT ON SE RAFRAÎCHIT EN ENFER"

The flame of a candle in an airless dome was not more quickly put out than her intelligence was swamped by too early unhappiness. It was like whipping rose-petals with wire, or beating uncovered and skinless flesh.

This is the first definite memory.

* * * * *

A sudden awakening in the night. Sleep burst like a bubble and left her senses shocked and dissipated as a feeble gas. The blackness waved about her like the hair of sea mortals—beings that moved effortlessly in the liquid dark and made mouths; impalpable but with grasping hands that might clutch at any moment. She shrank from one dark shadow into the arms of another, buffeted in imagination.

But the worst horror pierced up the stairs through the stifling darkness like a flame through smoke. A
voice, cracked and clashing out from a throat choked with rage and contempt, shrieking in a kind of hysteria, over and over again, but every time with a different intonation of pain.

"He's killing me! He's killing me!"

The breaking sounds of furniture falling—hollow, wooden noises; the almost pretty, peevish suddenness of splintering glass; and the child, who knew strangely, with dreadful precision, that it was her father and mother that caused these disturbances, saw in her mind the little body of the woman being thrown about—tender skin broken on sharp corners, delicate sides crushed dangerously against some enormous and callous piece of carving.

Her breath felt like ice in her nostrils. If only the night had not erased her in immobility! Something was being battered down there, fighting for itself; and she, pressing her paralysed will against the unknown inhibition of fear, was as powerless to move as a flower in quicksand.

A faint step came down from the servants' quarters. One could hear sobs, little explosions of sound—ugly and painful with the moan of effort in them. A door closed gently. Lord and his heavier tread came up. Everything in the child grew stiff with apprehension. Was this terror coming even closer to her? It walked past, and another door closed.

All was quiet with a dry and ironical stillness.

Seeing that she was too exhausted to feel any more, the child lie with hearing stretched taut like an endless wire, and terror of people, their hideous potentials for destructiveness and their all-powerful elders.

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All was quiet with a dry and ironical stillness.

Seeing that she was too exhausted to feel any more, the child lie with hearing stretched taut like an endless wire, and terror of people, their hideous potentials for destructiveness and their all-powerful elders.
created fresh values. And since art is in essence an intellectual and spiritual expression, the new heroic impulse has created a new interior value in artistic creation, which, even in works which are presented in the common terms and media of the various arts, informs them with a spirit entirely new. This new spirit of heroism, while obtaining general recognition, and where it finds acceptance in two ways, which correspond broadly to the two general divisions of human sensibilities and sympathies. Thus there are two contemporary types of heroic artist: the one, perceiving the general aspects of operation, and effects of the group-forces of the period, seeks to express these objectively in their cumulative form; the other, more subjective, centres attention on the complex conditions of the period, is more subtle in source and individual in impulse. The heroism of the past was more simple, more external and more obvious in nature than that of to-day, and its operation was almost invariably confined to acts of physical daring or strength, such as those with which the ancient hero-epics deal. But the complications of to-day go greatly beyond the simple conditions of old times. Every incident in the modern individual's experience involves numberless psychological associations, correspondences, and complications, the outcome of inherent sensibilities produced by evolution, and the involved aspect of contemporary existence: every act holds the possibility of incalculable consequences. Only by the most perfect independence of being, the most alert, imaginative and subtle consciousness, the most complete cog-nizance of mental and emotional potentialities, can the new type of heroism attain full achievement. Warfare, the old channel for heroic feeling, has become but one of myriad organizations, nor does personal heroism dominate it to-day. Its conduct is a matter of intellect, not heroic impulse, and the units of a modern army are but component parts of a huge machine, the direction of which is a matter of material resources and practical skill. The hero of the past achieved his purpose with the sword, and trusted in the strength of his arm and the keenness of his sight; the forces which he encountered were human as himself. The heroic struggle of our day is of vaster proportions; mankind encountering forces of dimensions still unknown. The new hero of forces achieves his purpose with his mind and spirit, relies in the strength of his nervous force and the keenness of his sensibility and imaginative vision. The struggle of mankind to comprehend and dominate the forces of the present, in all their aspects, and through them those of the present has awakened the spirit of individual championship which constitutes the essence of heroism.

It is this quality of spirit which especially distinguishes the compositions of Nikolaus Medtner. Possessed of a widely radiative and penetrative intellect, he combines with it a forceful temperament, fed by powerfully sensitive nerves. His music is visibly the outcome of what Nicolas Beauduin, in his remarkable "Essai de Synthèse," terms "un état riche de la personne." The indomitable and purposeful spirit with which it is filled occasionally renders it rough in expression, but it is always convincing and never swept into bathos or hysteria by the force of the composer's impulses. There is nothing realistic in his music; spiritual in source, it is purely interpretive and expressive in content. His work as a whole is that of one who conceives life on an immense scale; one who discerns its elements in their group aspects—complex and dynamic in their movements and rhythms, stark in outline, but involved and subtle in operation. He realizes their tremendous force, but, refusing to be absorbed or submerged by them, impells from his own personality correspondingly powerful impulses to encounter and subdue them. The effect of such influences is always apparent in his work, but their operation serves but to bring out in strong relief the composer's independent character. He is never subservient to their direction or overwhelmed by their force. The only tribute which they exact is that of continual combat, and in the spiritual lists Medtner encounters them as an equal, with the full force of a temperament which, ruthless and turbulent as they, transcends them by reason of the directive force of the mind controlling its action.

Ruhleben, Germany, 1915.
Leigh Hunt.

(To be continued)

TWO POEMS

"HE WROTE THE HISTORY BOOK," IT SAID

THERE! You shed a ray
Of whimsicality on a mask of profundity so Terrible that I have been dumbfounded by It oftener than I care to say. The book? Titles are chaff.

Authentically
Brief and full of energy, you contribute to your father's Legibility and are sufficiently

Synthetic, Thank you for showing me Your father's autograph.

YOU ARE LIKE THE REALISTIC PRODUCT OF AN IDEALISTIC SEARCH FOR GOLD AT THE FOOT OF THE RAINBOW

Hid by the august foliage and fruit of the grape vine, Twice
Your anatomy
Round the pruned and polished stem,
Chameleon.

Fire laid upon
An emerald as long as The Dark King's massy

One

Could not snap the spectrum up for food as you have done.

MARIANNE MOORE.

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SOUTH NORWALK - CONN. U.S.A.
PART I (continued)

CHAPTER IV

The new summer heat drew heavy pleasant ghosts out of the ground, like plants disappearance in winter; spectres of energy, bulking the hot air with vigorous dreams. Or they had entered into the trees, in imitation of Pagan gods, and nodded their delicate distant intoxication to him. Visions were released in the sap, with scented bulking the hot air with vigorous dreams. Or they followed by one of strawberries at a fruiterer's shop. Tarr felt the street was a pleasant current, setting from some immense and tropic gulf, neighboured by Floridas of remote invasions. He ambled down it piously, shoulders shaped like these waves; a heavy-sided drunken fish. The houses, with winks of the shocked clockwork, were grazed, holding along their surface thick soft warmth. It poured weakly into his veins. A big dog wandering on its easily transposable business, inviting some delightful accident to deflect it from maudlin and massive promenade. In his mind, too, as in the dog's, his business was doubtful—a small black spot ahead in his brain, half puzzling but peremptory.

The mat heavy light grey of putty-coloured houses, like thickening merely of hot summer atmosphere without sun, gave a spirituality to this deluge of animal well-being, in weighty pale sense-solidarity. Through the opaque atmosphere sounds came lazily or tinglingly. People had become a Balzacian species, boldly tragic and comic: like a cast of "Comédie Humaine" humanity off for the day, Balzac sleeping immensely in the cemetery.

Tarr stopped at a dairy. He bought saladed potatoes, a *petit suisse*. The coolness, as he entered, felt eerie. The dairyman, in blue-striped smock and black cap, peaked and cylindrical, came out of an inner room. Through its glasses several women were visible, busy at a meal. This man's isolation from the heat and mood of the world outside, impressed his customer as he came forward with a truculent "Monseur!" Tarr, while his things were done up, watched the women. The discreet voices, severe reserve of keen business preoccupations, showed the usual Paris *commerçante*. The white, black, and slate-grey of dresses, extreme neatness, silent felt over-slippers, make their commercial devotions rather conventional. With this purchase followed by one of strawberries at a fruitier's opposite—his destination was no longer doubtful.

He was going to Bertha's to eat his lunch. Hence the double quantity of saladed potatoes. He skirted the railings of the Luxembourg Gardens for fifteen yards. Crossing the road, he entered the Rue Martine, a bold expanse of uniformly coloured rosy-grey pavement, plaster, and shutter. A large iron gate led into a short avenue of trees. At its end Bertha lived in a three-story house.

The leaden brilliant green of spring foliage hung above him, ticketing innumerable the trees, sultry smoke volumes from factories in Fairyland. Its novelty, fresh yet dead, had the effectiveness of an unnecessary mirage. The charm of habit and monotonous had he come to affront seemed to have coloured, chemically, these approaches to its home.

He found Bertha's eye fixed on him with a sort of humorous indifferent query from the window. He smiled, thinking what would be the veritable answer! On finding himself in the presence of the object of his erudite discussion, he felt he had got the focus wrong. This familiar life, with its ironical eye, mocked at him too. It was aware of the subject of his late conversation. The twin of the shrewd feeling embodied in the observation, "One can never escape from oneself," appeared.

This ironical unsurprised eye at the window, so vaguely apropos, offended him. It seemed to be making fun of the swaggering indifference he was bringing to bask in the presence of its object. He became slightly truculent.

"Have you had lunch yet, my dear?" he asked, as she opened the door to him. "I've brought you some strawberries."

"I didn't expect you, Sorbet. No, I've not had lunch. I was just going to get it." (Sorbet, or in English, Sherbert, was his *nom d'amour*, a perversion of his strange second name, Sorbert).

Bertha's was the intellectually fostered Greek type of German handsomeness. It is that beauty that makes you wonder, when you meet it, if German mothers have replicas and photographs of the Venus of Milo in their rooms during the first three months of their pregnancy. It is also found in the pages of Prussian art periodicals, the arid, empty intellectualism of Munich. She had been a heavy baby. Her body now, a self-indulgent athlete's, was estranged to heavy motherhood.

A great believer in tepid "air-baths," she would remain, for hours together, in a state of nudity about her rooms. She was wearing a pale green striped affair, tight at the waist. It looked as though meant for a smaller woman. It may have belonged to her sister. As a result, her ample form had left the fullness of a score of attitudes all over it, in flat creasings and pencillings—like the sanguine of an Italian master in which the leg is drawn in several positions, one on top of the other.

"What have you come for, Sorbet?"

"To see you. What did you suppose?"

"Oh, you have come to see me?"

"I brought these things. I thought you might be hungry."

"Yes, I am rather." She stopped in the passage, Dryad-like on one foot, and stared into the kitchen. Tarr did not kiss her. He put his hand on her hip—a way out of it—and led her into the room. His hand remarked that she was underneath in her favorite state of nakedness.

Bertha went into the kitchen with the provisions. She lived in two rooms on one side of the front door. Her friend, Fräulein Vamber, to whom she sub-let, lived on the other side of it, the kitchen promis-
and that could only be got rid of by breaking.

strange stuff—that twist of the head that was him, shade on to it, the features overgrown with this inside had on the surface, his face. A set sulky stagnation, every violence dropping an imperceptible position on her writing-table, just as he was preparing to vanish for good.

on his arrival with considerable noise. Would under other circumstances have been produced in it with tireless ingenuity. These photographs thudding answer, heavy German reproach concealed he asked at the present moment would draw a softly opening the door, Bertha had appeared distinctly from the shadowed windows. Ten days previously it had been taken from the shining metal in his hand scurried about made.

A consciously pathetic ghost of a smile, a clumsy sweetness, the energetic sentimental claim of a rather rough but frank self.

There was a photograph of her in riding habit. This was the best of them. He softened. Then came a photograph of them together. How strangely that twist of his, or set angle of the head, fitted in with the corresponding peculiarities of the woman’s head and bust. What abysms of idiocy! Rubbishy hours and months formed the atmosphere around these two futile dolls!

He put the photographs down and looked up. She was sitting on the edge of the table. The dressing-gown was open, and one large thigh, with ugly whiteness, slid half out of it. It looked dead, and connected with her like a ventriloquist’s dummy with its master. It was natural to wonder where his senses had gone in looking at these decorous photographs. This explanation appeared to be her explanation of the matter. The face was not very original. But a thing of the same hue! He gazed surly. Her musing expression at this moment was supremely absurd. He smiled and turned his face to the window. She pretended to become conscious suddenly of something amiss. She drew the dressing-gown round her.

“Have you paid the man yet? What did he charge? I expect—”

Tarr took up the packet again.

“Oh, these are six francs. I forget what the big ones are. I haven’t paid him yet. He’s coming to photograph Miss Vamber to-morrow.”

They sat without saying anything.

He examined the room as you do a doctor’s waiting-room.

He had just come there to see if he could turn his back on it. That appeared at first sight a very easy matter. That is why he so far had not succeeded in doing so. Never put on his mettle, his standing back on it. That appeared at first sight a very easy matter. That is why he so far had not succeeded in doing so. Never put on his mettle, his standing back on it. That appeared at first sight a very easy matter.

She handed it to him.

“Yes, they came yesterday!”

“Yesterday” he had not been there! Whatever he asked at the present moment would draw a softly thousand years from twenty years away! German self-control concealed in it with tireless ingenuity. These photographs would under other circumstances have been produced on his arrival with considerable noise.

Tarr had looked rather askance at this portrait and Bertha’s occupation. There was his photograph, calmly, with an air of permanence, taking up its position on her writing-table, just as he was preparing to vanish for good.

“Let’s see yours,” he said, still holding the photographs.

What strange effects all this complicated activity inside had on the surface, his face. A set sulky stagnation, every violence dropping an imperceptible shade on to it, the features overgrown with this strange twist of the head that was him, and that could only be got rid of by breaking.

“They’re no good,” she said, closing the drawer, handing her photographs, sandwiched with tissue-paper, to Sorbert. “That one”—a sitting pose, face yearning from photograph, lighted, not with a smile, but a sort of sentimental illumination, the drapery arranged like a poster—“I don’t think that’s so bad,” she said slangly, meant to be curt and cheeky.

“What an idiot!” he thought; “what a face!”

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times thought he enjoyed these ceremonies.

Away at her, and claimed an image from her gentle conversations, and made its hive. So her senses were presented with the image that was to satisfy and rule them. They flung themselves upon it as she had flung herself upon Tarr.

This image left considerable latitude. Tarr had been the first to fit—rather paradoxically, but all the faster for that. The “high, standard Aryan female,” as Tarr described her, had arrived, with him, at the full and rule condition we agree to name “love.” The image, or type, was thrown away. The individual took its place.

Bertha had had several sweethearts before Tarr. The image, or type—image, or type—was thrown away. The individual took its place.

This “high, standard Aryan female,” as Tarr described her, had arrived, with him, at the full and headlong condition we agree to name “love.” The image, or type, was thrown away. The individual took its place.

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though it scented troubles in his face. It pushed to right and then to left and rocked itself. Intelligent and self-asserted, it lost this intensity.

It was of a Chinese puzzle of boxes within boxes, or of his own mood. In this impasse of Bertha's numb silence and abandon was a stupid astral baby. This baby was apt to swell. She then became a mummy-case. The husk he held was a painted mummy-case. He was a mummy-case too. Only he contained nothing but innumerable other painted cases inside, smaller and smaller ones. The smallest was not a substantial astral baby, however, or live core, but a painting like the rest. His kernel was a painting. That was as it should be!

He was half sitting on the table. He found himself patting her back. He stopped doing this. His face looked heavy and fatigued. A dull, intense infection of her despair had filled it.

He held her head gently against his neck. Or he held her skull against his neck. She shook and sniffed softly.

"Don't stop crying. I know I'm a brute. But it's fortunate for you that I am. I'm only a brute. There's nothing to cry for."

He over-estimated deafness in weepers. And when women flooded their country he always sat down and waited. Often as this had happened to him, he had needed to circumvent them. He felt: This is a person who is taking a little dog for a walk at the end of a string. His voice appeared husky and artificial near her ear.

Turned towards the window, he looked at the green stain of the foliage outside. Something was explained. Nature was not friendly to him; its metallic tints jarred. Or anyhow, it was the same for all men. The sunlight seen like an adventurous stranger in the streets was intimate with Bertha. The scrap of crude forest had made him want to be away unaccompanied. But it was tainted with her. If he went away now he would only be playing at liberty. He had been right in not accepting the invitations of the spring. The settlement of this question stood between him and pleasure. A momentary well-being had been accepted. The larger spiritual invitation he had rejected. He would only take that when he was free. In its annual expansion Nature had made a large unintermitting invitations. But Nature loved the genius and liberty in him. Tarr felt the invitation would not have been so cordial had he proposed taking a wife and family!

He led her passively protesting to the sofa. Like a sick person, she was half indignant at being moved. He should have remained, a perpendicular bed for her, till the fever had passed. With this his nature mobilized. As his will gathered force he came to the ode named "Ganymed."

"Du rings mich auslöst
Frühling, Geliebter!"

"Mit tausendfacher Liebes conne
Sich aus mein herz draügt
Deiner ewigen Wärme
Heilig Gefühlz
Unendliche Schönze!"

He put it in his breast-pocket. As soldiers go into battle sometimes with the Bible in their pocket, he prepared himself for a final combat, with Goethe upon his person. Men's lives have been known to have been saved through a lesser devotions.

He was engaging battle again with the most chivalrous sentiments. The reserves had been called up, his nature mobilized. As his will gathered force and volume (in its determination to "fling" her) he unhypocritically keyed up its attitude. It resembled extreme cunning. He had felt, while he had been holding her, at a disadvantage because of his listless emotion. With emotion equal to hers, he could accomplish anything. Leaving her would be child's play. He appeared to be projecting the manufacture of a more adequate sentiment.

Any indirectness was out of the question. A "letting her down softly," kissing and leaving in an hour or two, as though things had not changed, that must not be eschewed—oh, yes. The genuine and chivalrous heart, of which he was a section of her, of which he had a troubled glimpse, of which he had a stupid levity. He would retrieve this in the parting. He wished to do everything most opposite to his previous lazy conduct. He frowned on Humour.

The first skirmish of his comic Armageddon had opened with the advance of his mysterious and sugnernan "indifference." This dwindled away at the first onset. A new and more powerful thing had taken its place. This was, in Bertha's eyes, a difference in Tarr.

"Something has happened; he is different," she said to herself. "He has met somebody else;" had been her rapid provisional conclusion.
She suddenly got up without speaking, rather spectrally, she went over to the writing-table for her handkerchief. She had not moved an inch or a muscle until quite herself again, dropping steadily down all the scale of feeling to normal. With very matter-of-factness she got up, easily and quietly, making Sorbert a little dizzy.

Her face had all the drama wrung out of it. It was hard, clear, and garishly white, like her body.

If he were to have a chance of talking he must clear the air of electricity completely. Else at his first few words storm might return.

Once lunch had swept through the room, things would be better. He would send the strawberries ahead to prepare his way. It was like fattening a lamb for the slaughter. This idea pleased him.

He got up, obsequiously reproducing in his own movements and expression her matter-of-factness.

"Well, how about lunch? I'll come and help you with it."

"There's nothing to do. I'll get it."

Bertha had wiped her eyes with the attentiveness a man bestows on his chin after a shave, in little brusque hard strokes. She did not look at Tarr. She arranged her hair in the mirror, then went to the kitchen. For her to be so perfectly natural offended him.

The intensity of her past feeling carried her on for about five minutes into ordinary life. Her seriousness was tactful for so long. Then her nature began to give way. It broke up again into fits and starts of self-consciousness. The mind was called in, did its work clumsily as usual. She became her usual self.

Sitting on the stool by the window, in the act of eating, Tarr there in front of her, it was more than offending him. It all centred round the watch, and her interest in the time of day.

"I have found that this was only another fraud on my too credulous sensibility." He smiled with professional courtesy. "At sight of you, my mood evaporated. But what I want to talk about is what is left. It would be well to bring our accounts up to date. I'm afraid the reckoning is enormously against me. You have been a criminally indulgent partner—"

He had now got the image down to the more precise form of two partners, perhaps comfortable wine merchants, going through their books.

"My dear boy, I know that. You needn't trouble to go any further. But why are you going into these calculations, and sums of profit and loss?"

"Because my sentimental financess, if I may use that term, are in a bad state."

"Then they only match your worldly ones."

"In my worldly ones I have no partner," he reminded her.

She cast her eyes about in swoops, full of self-possessed wildness.

"I exonerate you, Sorbet," she said, "you needn't go into details. What is yours and what is mine. My God! What does it matter? Not much!"

"I know you to be generous—"

"Leave that then! Leave these calculations! All that means so little to me! I feel at the end of my strength—au bout de force!" She always heaved this out with much energy. "If you've made up your mind to go—do so, Sorbet. I release you! You owe me nothing. It was all my fault. But spare me a reckoning. I can't stand any more—"

"No, I insist on being responsible. We can't leave things upside down—our books in an endless muddle, our desks open, and just walk away for ever—and perhaps set up shop somewhere else?"

"I do not feel in any mood to 'set up shop somewhere else,' I can assure you!"

The unconditioned frankness in the situation she had allowed to develop for obvious reasons. She now resisted his dishonest attempt to set this right, and benefit first, as he had done, by disorder, and lastly by order.

"We can't, in any case, improve matters by talking. 1—I, you needn't fear for me, Sorbet. I took after the family. I can't let us wrangle, with appealing gesture and saintly smiling face, "let us part friends. Let us be worthy of each other."

"No, I just wanted what the time was. I live so vaguely."

"You are sure you are not in a hurry?"

"Oh, no!"

"I have a confession to make, my dear Bertha."

He had not put his watch back in his pocket. He had asked for the watch; he would use it. "I came here just now to test a funny mood—a quite new mood. My visit is a sort of trial trip of this mood. It was connected with you. I wanted to find out what it meant, and how it would be affected by your presence."

Bertha looked up with mocking sulky face, a shade of hopeful curiosity.

"It was a feeling of complete indifference as regards yourself."

He said this solemnly, with the pomp with which a weighty piece of news might be invested by a solicitor in conversation with his client.

"Oh, is that all?" The little barbaric effort was met by Bertha scornfully.

"No, that is not all."

Catching at the professional figure his manner had conjured up, he ran his further remarks into that mould. The presence of his watch in his hand had brought some image of the familiar physician or gouty attorney. It all centred round the watch, and her interest in the time of day.

"I have found that this was only another fraud on my too credulous sensibility." He smiled with professional courtesy. "At sight of you, my mood evaporated. But what I want to talk about is what is left. It would be well to bring our accounts up to date. I'm afraid the reckoning is enormously against me. You have been a criminally indulgent partner—"

He had now got the image down to the more precise form of two partners, perhaps comfortable wine merchants, going through their books.

"My dear boy, I know that. You needn't trouble to go any further. But why are you going into these calculations, and sums of profit and loss?"

"Because my sentimental finances, if I may use that term, are in a bad state."

"Then they only match your worldly ones."

"In my worldly ones I have no partner," he reminded her.

She cast her eyes about in swoops, full of self-possessed wildness.

"I exonerate you, Sorbet," she said, "you needn't go into details. What is yours and what is mine. My God! What does it matter? Not much!"

"I know you to be generous—"

"Leave that then! Leave these calculations! All that means so little to me! I feel at the end of my strength—au bout de force!" She always heaved this out with much energy. "If you've made up your mind to go—do so, Sorbet. I release you! You owe me nothing. It was all my fault. But spare me a reckoning. I can't stand any more—"

"No, I insist on being responsible. We can't leave things upside down—our books in an endless muddle, our desks open, and just walk away for ever—and perhaps set up shop somewhere else?"

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"It was a feeling of complete indifference as regards yourself."
Bertha always opposed to Tarr's images her Teutonic lyricism, usually repeating the same phrases several times.

This was degenerating into their routine of wrangle. Always confronted by this imperturbable, deaf and blind "generosity," the day would end in the usual sentimentality. His words still remained unsaid.

"Bertha, listen. Let us, just for fun, throw all this overboard. I mean the cargo of inflated soul-stuff that makes us go stately, no doubt, but—haven't we quarreled enough, and said these things often enough? Our quarrels have been our undoing. A long chain of little quarrels has bound us down. We shouldn't neither of us be here if it hadn't been for them."

Bertha gazed at Tarr half wonderingly. She realized that something out of the ordinary was on foot.

Tarr proceeded.

"I have accepted from you a queer sentimental dialect of life, I should have insisted on your expressing yourself in a more logical and metropolitan speech. Let us drop it. There is no need to talk negro, baby-talk, or hybrid drivell from no-man's-land. I don't think we should lead a very pleasant married life—naturally. In the second place, you are not a girl but a woman. You have not to marry. I have been playing at fiancé with a certain pleasure in the novelty, but I experience a genuine horror at the possible consequences. I have been playing with you!"

"He said this eagerly, as though it were a point in his argument—as it was. He paused, for effect apparently.

"You, for your part, Bertha, don't do yourself justice when you are acting. I am in the same position. I feel this. My ill humour occasionally falls in your direction—yours, for its part, falling in mine when I criticize your acting. We don't act well together, and that's a fact; though I'm sure we should be smooth enough allies off the boards of love. Your heart, Bertha, is in the right place: ah, ça—"

"You are too kind!"

"But—but I will go further! At the risk of appearing outrageously paradoxical. This heart in question is so much part of your intelligence, too—"

"Thanks! Thanks!"

"—despite your execrable fatuity as an actress! Your shrewdness and goodness give each other the hand. But to return to my point. I had always till I met you regarded marriage as a thing beyond all argument and for me. I was unusually isolated from this idea, anyway; I had never even reflected what marriage was. You introduced me to marriage! In so doing you are responsible for all our troubles. The approach of this horrible thing, so surprisingly pleasant and friendly at nearer sight, caused revulsion of feeling beyond my control, resulting in sudden fanatical rejection of the idea of the womanly, too dear for her, or not wanted enough for the big price, so I philandered with the idea of marriage."

This simplification put things, merely, in a new, callous light. Tarr felt that she must naturally be enjoying, too, his points. He forgot to direct his exposition in such a way as to hurt her least. This trivial and tortured landscape had a beauty for him he could have explained, where her less developed sense saw nothing but a harrowing reality.

The lunch had had the same effect on him that it was intended to have on his victim; not enough to overthrow his resolution, but enough to relax its force.

As to Bertha, this seemed, in the main, "Sorbet, all over." There was nothing new. There was the "difference." But it was the familiar process; he was attempting to convince himself, heartlessly, on her. Whether he would ever manage it was problematic. There was no sign of his being likely to do so more to-day than any other day. She listened; sententiously released him from time to time.

Just as she had seemed strange to him in some way when he came in been through his indigestion, so he had appeared a little odd to her. This had wiped off the dullness of habit for a moment. This husband she obstinately wanted had been recognized. She had seized him round the shoulders and clung to him, as though he had been her child that some senseless force were about to snatch.

As to his superstition about marriage—was it not merely his aversion of the recent idea of Liberty, that a year or so would see in Limbo? For was he not a "marrying man"? She was sure of it! She had tried not to frighten him, and to keep "marriage" in the background.

So Tarr's disposition had no effect except for one thing. When he spoke of pleasure he derived from the idea of marriage, she wary picked up her ears.

The conviction that Tarr was a domesticated animal was confirmed from his own lips. The only result of his sortie was to stimulate her always vigilant hope and irony, both, just a little. He had intended to prepare the couch for her despair!

"His last words, affirming Marriage to be a game not worth the candle, brought a faint and "weary" smile to her face. She was once more, obviously, au bout de force.

"Sorbet; I understand you. Do realize that. There is no necessity for all this rigmarole with me. If you think you shouldn't marry—why, it's quite simple! Don't think that I would force you to marry! Oh, no!" (The training guttural uncouth accent she had in speaking English filled her discourse with natural emphasis.) "I always said that you were too young. You need a wife. You've just said yourself about your feeling for marriage. But you are so young!" She gazed at him with compassion, half-smiling moistened look, as though there were something deformed about being so young. A way she had to treat anything that obviously pointed to her as the object of pity, as though it manifested indicated, on the contrary, him."

"Yes, Sorbet, you are right," she finished briskly. "I think it is the man's misfortune for us to marry!"

A suggestion that their leisure journey towards marriage was perhaps a mistake was at once seriously, and with conviction far surpassing that he had ventured on, taken up by her. She would immediately call a halt, pitch tents preliminary to turning back. She would go and begin the return journey. Next day they would be jogging on again in the same disputed direction.

Tarr now saw at once what had happened. His good words had been lost, all except his confession to a weakness for the matronly blandishments of Matrimony. He had an access of stupid, brief, and blant laughter.

As people have wondered what was at the core of the world, basing their speculations on what deepest things occasionally emerge, with violence, at its holes, so Bertha often conjectured what might be at the heart of Tarr. Laughter was the most apparently central and distinct and in the present beginning had incontrollably appeared. She had often heard groans, grumblings, quite literally, and seem unpleasant lights, belonging, she knew, to other categories of matter. But they never broke cover.

At present this gaiety was interpreted as proof that she had been right. There was nothing in what he had said. It had been only one of his bad fits of pell-mell. But laughter Tarr felt was retrogression. Laughter must be given up. He must in some way, for both their sakes, lay at once the foundations of an ending.

For a few minutes he played with the idea of
affecting her weapons. Perhaps it was not only impossible to overcome, but even to approach, or to be said to be on the same field with, this peculiar amazon, without such uniformity of engines of attack or defence. Should not he get himself a mask like hers, and stick on it, even to the last emphatic sentence? He stared uncertainly at her. Then he sprang to his feet. He intended, as far as he could see beyond this passionate movement (for he must give himself up to the mood, of course) to pace the room. But his violence jerked out of him a shout of laughter. He went stamping about the floor roaring with reluctant mirth. It would not come out properly, too, except the first outburst.

"Ay. That's right! Go on! Go on!" Bertha's patient irony seemed to give.

This laughter left him vexed with himself, like a fit of tears. "Humour and pathos are such near twins, that Humour may be exactly described as the most feminine attribute of man, and the only one of which women show hardly any trace! Jokes are like fit of tears. "Humour and pathos are such near twins, that Humour may be exactly described as the most feminine attribute of man, and the only one of which women show hardly any trace! Jokes are like

It had lately withstood stoically a good deal, was unhungry itch to clear the plate. He had become more harm than good. The presence of the hat and stick on his knees, however, was like the holding open of the front door already. Anything said with them there could only be like words said as an afterthought, on the threshold. It was as though, on hat, on head. He had gone over and taken it up to add some trifle to a thing already fixed. He got done "looked behind him, not awaiting him at all. Present. But they had broken down, depositing it meant. Nothing was settled, he had so far done anything, about me. Really, Sorbet," (she leant nothing was settled, he had so far done anything, about me. Really, Sorbet," (she leant

Bertha. You frequently complain of my being thoughtless and spoilt. But your uncorked solemnity is far more frivolous than anything I can manage.—Excuse me, of course, for taking on this way!—Won't you come down from your pedestal just for a few minutes?" And he "sketched," in French idiom, a gesture, as though offering her his hand.

"My dear boy, I feel far from being on any pedestal! There's too little of the pedestal, if anything, about me. Really, Sorbet." (she leant towards him with an abortive movement as though to take his hand) "I am your friend; believe me!" (Last words very quick, with nod of head and blink of eyes.) "You worry yourself far too much. Don't do so. You are in no way bound to me. If you suppose, my intention being generous, would be to flatter and increase in some way this idea of herself. I should give her some final and extraordinary opportunity of being 'noble.'"

He looked at her a moment in search of inspiration. I must not be too vain. I exaggerate the gravity of the hit. As to my attempted rape—see how I square up when she shows signs of annexing my illusion. We are really the whole time playing a game of grabs and dashes at each other's fairy vestment of Imagination. Only hers makes her very fond of me, whereas mine makes me see any one but her. Perhaps this is why I have not been more energetic in my prosecution of the game, and have allowed her to remain in her savage semi-naked state of pristine balderdash. Why has she never tried to modify herself in direction of my taste? From not daring to leave this protective fanciful self, while I still kept all my weapons? Then her initiative. She does nothing it is the man's place to do. She remains 'woman' as she would say. Only she is so intensely alive in her passivity, so maestromlike in her surrender, so cataclysmic in her sacrifice, that I should be little remiss to be done. The man's position is a mere sincere.

To cover reflection, he set himself to finish lunch. The strawberries were devoured mechanically, with un hungrily itch to clear the plate. He had become just a devouring-machine, restless if any of the little red balls still remained in front of it. Bertha's eyes were bent on carrying her out of this Present. But they had broken down, depositing her, so to speak, somewhere half-way down the avenue.

Tarr got up, a released automaton, and walked to the cloth-covered box where he had left his hat and stick. Then he returned in some way dutifully and obediently to the same seat, sat there for a minute, hat on knee. He had gone over and taken it up without thinking. He only realized, once back, what it meant. Nothing was settled, he had so far done more harm than good. The presence of the hat and stick on his knees, however, was like the holding open of the front door already. Anything said with them there could only be like words said as an afterthought, on the threshold. It was as though, on hat, on head. He was standing with his hand on the doorknob, about to add some trifle to a thing already fixed. He got up, walked back to where he had picked up the hat and stick, placed them as they were before, then returned to the window.

What should be done now? He seemed to have played all his fifty-two cards. Everything to "be done" looked behind him, not awaiting him at all. That passive pose of Bertha's was not encouraging. It had lately withstood stoically a good deal, was
quite ready to absorb still more. There was something almost pugnacious in so much resignation. But when she looked up at him there was no sign of combat. She appeared still to something simple, by some fluke of a word. For the second time she had jumped out of her skin. Her heart beat in a delicate, exhausted way, her eyelids became moistened underneath, as she turned to her usual fiancée. They had wandered, she felt, into a drift of silence that hid a distant and unpleasant prospect at the end of it. It seemed suddenly charged with some alarming fancy that she could not get away from. There was something more unusual than her fiancée. The circular storm, in her case, was returning.

"Well, Sorbet?"

"Well. What is it?"

"Why don't you go? I thought you'd gone. It seems so funny to see you standing there. What are you staring at me for?"

"Don't be silly."

She looked down with a wild demureness, her head on one side. Her mouth felt some distance from her brain. Her voice stood on tiptoe like a dwarf to speak. She became very much impressed by her voice, and was rather afraid to say anything more. Had she admitted somebody too trustingly to her rooms. This fancy played on her hysteria, and she really wanted him to go.

"Why don't you go?" she repeated, in a matter-of-fact voice.

Tarr remained silent, seemingly determined not to answer further. Meantime he looked at her with a doubtful dislike. What is love? he began reasoning. It is either possession or a possessive madness. In the case of men and women, it is the obsession of a personality. He had presumably been endowed with the power of awaking love in her. He had something to accuse himself of. He had been afraid of giving up or repudiating this particular madness. To give up another person's love is a mild suicide; like a very small stock of coldness to meet these debts. Yet he had known from the first that he had not. Eventually he would have to evade them or succumb. The fascination of men had caused Bertha's mute and mournful attitude. She thought she knew him, but was amazed at his ignorance or pretence.

So he had now brought this new element into relief. For the last hour he had been accumulating difficulties, or rather unearthing some new one at every step. Impossible to tackle en masse, they were all there before him. The thought of "settling everything before he went," now appeared monstrous. He had, anyhow, started these local monsters and demons, fishing them to the light. Each had a different vocal explosiveness or murmur, inveighing unintelligibly against each other. The only thing to be done was to herd them all together and march them away for inspection at leisure.

Sudden herdsmen, with the care of a delicate and antediluvian flock; well!—But what was Bertha to be told? Nothing. He would file out silently with his flock, without any hornblasts or windings such as he customarily affected.

"I am going now," he said at last, getting up. She looked at him with startled interest.

"You are leaving me, Sorbet?"

"No. At least, now I am going." He stooped down for his hat and cane. "I will come and see you to-morrow or the day after."

Closing the door quietly, with a petty carefulness, he crossed the passage, bellitted and guilty. He did not wish to escape this feeling. It would be better to enhance it. For a moment it occurred to him to go back and offer marriage. It was about all he had to offer. He was ashamed of his only gift! But he did not stop, he opened the front door and went downstairs. Something raw and uncertain he seemed to have built up in the room he had left. How long would it hold together? Again he was acting in secret, his errand and intentions kept to himself. Something followed him like a restless dog.

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