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## IV. THE VERBAL FORM "BE"

BY D. MARSDEN

### I

(1) THE defining of the term "Ego" prior to that of "Be" was undertaken to avoid being faced with two unfamiliar conceptions simultaneously. Since no definition of "Be" can ignore Berkeley's formulation on the subject, and since acceptance of its substance forces the conception of "Ego" to the forefront immediately, with a resultant confusion which has been only mildly described as the "Ego-centric-predicament," it is a plain counsel of discretion to deprive this last term of its disturbing potency by discriminating in regard to it well in advance. The argument as far as we have carried it stands thus:

(2) If we interpret Berkeley's position as being rightly represented in the form of the equation *esse = percipi*, then the signification of "Ego" will be that of "Universe." This will comprise within itself at least two terms: (a) the living Body (hereafter called the Self), and (b) the Not-Self: that is to say, the External World. The distinctions thus laid down are arbitrary, but they are also reasonable—and it is of the essence of good definition that they shall be both. If a logical distinction is all-comprehensive as to its subject, and mutually exclusive as to its parts, it possesses all that is necessary to inform us just where we stand at any particular point of an argument.

(3) Having brought the terms Ego, Self, and External World under logical control by defining them, we can now revert to the "Be" term and the Berkeleyan formula. The accuracy of this latter when put into the shape of an equation seems to us irrefutable, and the question which rises in reference to it is not whether or no it shall be accepted, but rather, "To what implications, as its necessary logical consequences, have we lent ourselves in accepting it?"

(4) It will clear the situation greatly if we show just what this equation may be considered to assert. For instance, does *esse = percipi* present itself as a definition of "esse"? Berkeley, though his phraseology is vague and ambiguous, seems to have

considered it as such, and his exponents and commentators likewise. They do not appear to have been conscious of the need for reducing the situation to such a form of statement as would force into evidence an answer to this important question once for all.

(5) Accordingly the two statements, (a) *esse = percipi* and (b) the definition of *esse = percipi*, Berkeleyans have either regarded as identical or have neglected to discriminate from one another. Actually, they are wholly dissimilar. Not only do they differ as regards signification: they differ as regards accuracy. While the first appears irrefutable, the second bears no relation whatever to actual fact. That is, the assertion "To Be = To Be Perceived" can be true, and we think is, but it goes no step of the way towards furnishing a definition of the "Be" term contained in it. It does not define "Be." What it does is to give us significant information regarding a formal idiosyncrasy of the verb Perceive, to wit: that the latter very commonly makes a docketed appearance in its passive form, so that "To Be Perceived" appears "for short" as "To Be." Hence on our reading of it there is no "Doctrine of Esse" implicit in Berkeley's position. The latter yields nothing in any positive sense towards the formulation of such a doctrine. The doctrine (an ambitious word!) it sheds light on is that of "Perceive," though only by way of an isolated observation. This single observation, however, is of such first-rate importance that it must constitute the germ of any "Doctrine of Percipi" which may be formulated in the future.

### II

(6) Our immediate task then is twofold. We have to show, in the first place, why, if Berkeley's formula is without positive reference to the term "Be," the contrary conviction has imposed itself so firmly upon its promulgator and his followers and critics alike. In the second place, we have to produce a definition of the function of the "Be" term.

(7) The argument which we think meets the first

case runs on the following lines: The master-problem of philosophy is to secure an adequate definition of the term "Perceive." Attempts to arrive at such definition have been pretty bad failures. The result is a state of doubt as to the meaning of "Perceive." Coexistent with this state of doubt is a fixed belief in a negative proposition concerning it. Both before Berkeley and since, the most deep-seated of the intellectual convictions of mankind has been that whatever the activities labelled as those of "Perceive" may be, they do not penetrate to the rock-bottom of our experience. Men hold that there is something deeper and more fundamental to be asserted in a definition of things than that which can be ascribed to them in terms of perception. They hold that a thing is representative of a fact which is prior to any one's perception of it. They would express all this by saying that things have a something they call "BEING," which they assume to mean "something" which is deeper than things' perceived characteristics. Another variation of the same statement would be that things have a "Reality" which is deeper than, and independent of, any one's perception of them. The characteristics which they consider things owe to the perceptual activity they would characterize as "Mere Appearance," by which they would intend to imply a sort of superficialities overlaying the deeper and more "real" BEING.

(8) The question arises: "Why should BEING have been the chosen term to which to attach this significance which is indescribable save as "other-than-perceivedness"? Since the conception with its label had secured a firm foothold at the very outset of philosophic history, the answer can only be conjectural. We venture a hypothesis, however, and one of which the obvious childlikeness strengthens the probability and establishes its kinship with all other great philosophic "beliefs."

(9) Grant the following elements in the situation: (a) That the definition of the term "Perceive" is beset with difficulties of a bewilderingly subtle character. (b) A resultant inclination to run away from them if only by saying that the master-difficulties reside elsewhere. The question arises—where? In giving answer it has to be constantly borne in mind that before Berkeley's discovery—and indeed in almost equal degrees since—there was no suspicion that "To Be" was merely "short" for "To Be Perceived." Accordingly, there stood the "Be" term, mysterious and ubiquitous, yet apparently with no correspondingly "deep" significance. Obviously the suggestion would urge itself that these two sets of phenomena were made for each other. On the one hand, there is a conception which was nameless save as something deeper than, and prior to, Perceivedness, and on the other a term which seemed to carry on its existence independently of "Perceive," whose importance was suggested, if not confirmed, by the frequency of its appearance, and which, oddly enough, in its appearances alongside "Perceived" obtained a priority of order. What more obvious than that the two cases should combine to meet each other's necessities, and that "Be" and its variants should become the name for the negative conception, unnameable save as that which Perceivedness was not competent to name.

(10) From the time of this union (whenever it was!) their connexion has seemed indissoluble. The initial negative conception "other-than-perceivedness" has fructified and largely increased its connotation under the sheltering label of BEING. In addition to its own ghostly but formidable suggestiveness, it has absorbed into itself much of the meaning of Perceivedness. We could say that whenever the relations of perceived terms one with another have become so complex that their perceptual base has tended to be lost sight of, BEING has pushed out its tentacles and secured them as its own. The term has, in fact, evolved something of a stock-pot character: become a sort of verbal

receptacle towards which all undefined terms, and those only vaguely so, make their contribution.

From among this welter of indefiniteness the term whose contributions have lent to it greatest prestige is that of the obscure term "Real." So closely amalgamated have the vaguenesses of both become that the two terms have acquired a common significance, and ordinarily Reality and Being appear as synonyms. Actually there is no logical connexion between the two, but the linguistic habit of identifying them has made its effects felt so widely, and has eaten so deeply into our ways of thinking that we shall take the precaution of clearing the term from our path in our next chapter, before making the attempt to define "Perceive."

(11) We should run no risk of being over-appreciative if we claimed that this term, so airily poised on a support of subtle verbal inconsequences, has conferred on civilization a new pleasure. It is a pleasure, however, the continuance of which lies under a condition, i.e. that no rude hand shall be permitted to violate the sanctity which veils its source. If "Being" as a term is protected from the devastating spirit of definition, we can continue to draw the exquisite pleasure of delicately toned melancholy from out of the "Mystery of Being" which ensues; and we have only to call to mind to what extent our poetry, religion, and philosophy are dependent upon this source for their pleasurable element to realize what strong human emotions have an interest in keeping it inviolate. So, on the one hand, the keenest pleasurable interests—with which other subsidiary but powerful interests have become allied—combine to place the defining of "Be" under taboo; on the other, the defining of "Perceive," with its outstanding importance obscured by the false position of the "Be" term presents no aspect of urgency, and lags in consequence. The situation so created is one very well able to make its own handsome contribution to the "Mystery of Being" in the shape of "problems" surrounding the theory of Knowledge.

(12) It is now easy to understand the sensational bearing of Berkeley's formula apart from the nonsense of wits and more solemn people about the Immateriality of Matter. Its implication was to divest Being of its assumed significance, thereby snatching the supports from under men's oldest and most revered conceptions. Rancour apart (this was missing because the implications were not developed), the reaction of the philosophic world to the Berkeleyan discovery parallels that of the theological world to that of Darwin. Both found that interest was focused on the old positions, which they jeopardized, rather than on the new of which they were to lay the foundation. The Darwinian case, however, had this advantage over the Berkeleyan: its contentions were based on evidence of a concrete character whose stubborn tangibility could not be got rid of by dint of much talking. It had at its disposal the kind of evidence which can press for a swift decision. Berkeley's proposition, on the contrary, being purely logical had just those characteristics which suffer to the point of extinction from an assault by many words. In relation to this particular proposition such assaults were competent to achieve confusion in foes and friends alike, not excluding its author. The effects of these differences show up plainly in the sequel. It is just a good half-century since *The Origin of Species* scandalized the theologians, yet it is surely a long time since we heard of any one being excitedly on the defensive in reference to the Mosaic account of creation. It is, however, a couple of centuries since the publication of *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, yet the philosophers upon whom Berkeley's mantle may be supposed to have fallen are still producing impressive tomes on the nature of Being, and acute critics still expound for us the "Doctrine of Esse."

(13) That it should be so was inevitable. The

assumption regarding BEING, in addition to being allied with strong pleasurable interests, are entrenched in the remotest fastnesses of language. Their removal makes very heavy demands, not only of an intellectual, but also of a moral kind; and all for a logical consideration. And philosophy is still only in its nonage, and though its genuine subject-matter is actually that of an extended LOGIC, no other intellectual sphere is hostile and inhospitable to logical demands in a degree equal to that of philosophy. So it is not abnormal that those very philosophers who have said "Yes" to the formula which wipes out BEING's old-time large significance, should continue to be engrossed in the work of supporting and expounding it. They are genuinely unconscious that they themselves have dealt the stroke which leaves it bereft and undone.

## III

(14) After this long preoccupation with that which is *not* pertinent to "Be" we have to state what in our opinion *is* pertinent to it. The statement will be short, because though the use of the term is extensive, its intrinsic signification is the reverse of profound.

(15) "Be" is a grammatical particle subserving those ends of precise, economical, and flexible expression which it is the object of a grammar to achieve. Its significance is purely formal. It is an auxiliary form helping to make recognizable certain conventionally determined forms of expression. Neither it nor any of its variants is the label of a primary psychological image. It has significance and relevance only within the prescribed limits of syntactical order, within which it acts as a sign, indicating that certain relationships are holding good as between one grammatical term and another, or others.

(16) Its function is comparable to a symbol of arithmetic, say, to that of the line separating two figures, one of which is placed directly over the other in the arrangement we call a fraction. Inside the convention, i.e. among those who mutually allow to it meaning as so-and-so, it indicates that the upper figure is regarded as divided into the number of parts represented by the lower. So, inside the grammatical convention, "Be"—and its finite variants—obtains meaning. As to what that meaning is the grammars are the adequate guides. As a matter of fact it possesses two main significations, and we have to rely upon its context as to which of them we have to read into any given appearance.

(17) Under one signification, its function is that of auxiliary helping to create what is called the passive form. Its presence in this capacity indicates that, without affecting the import on the context, two things may be understood: (a) That an inversion of order has been made by which the object of the sentence has been made into the subject; and (b) that the term appearing as the subject of the verb combined with "Be" (or its variants) can be turned into its object provided that (i) the "BE" particle be removed; (ii) the principal verb be slightly adjusted; and (iii) a resubstitution is made of a subject which in the passive version had either been expressed in the form of an extension of the predicate, or had been omitted altogether as already sufficiently understood.

(18) Its second conventionally constituted function is formal likewise, i.e. that of auxiliary helping to eke out certain of the verbal forms expressive of Time.

(19) The definition which indicates the function of "Be" will also indicate that of "Being," since the difference between the verbal and substantival forms of terms cuts no deeper than the convenience of grammatical procedure in its efforts to attain flexibility and economy.

(20) Were it not for the imputed meaning of "Be," there would be nothing to explain why a term of

its purely formal character should have been accorded the dignity, so to speak, and independence of a substantival form. What is its status in such form can be understood by conceiving what effect would be produced were a like dignity to be bestowed on a similar formal particle—for example, on that of "to." One of the significations of the term "to" is that of indicator of a special verbal form. Its appearance in such a connexion indicates that the verb to which it is attached is to be understood as being used in accordance with the conventions which grammatical procedure has labelled as those of its Infinitives. If then we can imagine "to" attaining to substantival form, and a term "To-ity" being coined as representing it, we shall possess a parallel to the term "Being." Or we might have adopted for the analogy the auxiliary "Have," and coined a term "Haveness." "Be," of course, is saved from such seeming grotesqueness in form, inasmuch as the form which it has adopted for the substantival is one with which we are already familiar in its auxiliary character; but though "Being" has this advantage as to form, it stands on an identical footing with them as regards significance.

## IV

(21) The gratefully prosaic statement of Berkeley's position by Prof. Lloyd Morgan which appeared in our last issue comes in apt illustration of the foregoing contentions. In traversing a brief section of it we shall accept the account as it stands and shall not concern ourselves with the question how far it truly represents Berkeley, and how far it is rather the writer's own individual interpretation of him. Berkeley himself was never able to reduce his "Doctrine of Esse" to a coherent system, or even clear its main positions of ambiguity; while of the difficulties presented in the interpretive superstructure he raised upon it he was probably far less acutely aware than his later commentators. In the main, Berkeley's interpretive work is not important, and its points need not be seriously debated. His basic contentions, however, are of supreme importance and their reduction to a form in which their import shall be unmistakable must have far-reaching effects on philosophy.

(22) As we have already said, Berkeley's discovery was that whenever we make the assertion "Things are" we mean actually "Things are perceived." Our interpretation of that we have already enlarged upon, to wit, that "To Be" is "short" for "To Be Perceived." Berkeley's obscure phrase, however, "Their esse (i.e. of things) is percipi," lays the genius of his discovery open to total misconception. It leaves it open to the assumption that *esse* has somehow been defined, and that being so, its use in conjunction with other and undefined terms will assist in wresting a definition from them. This is illustrated by the manner in which the term is used in Prof. Morgan's account of Berkeley's position. In the brief space occupied by his study there are assembled, in addition to the phrase the *esse* of things, those also of the *esse* of *percipere*; the *esse* of *causari*; the *esse* of *causare*; the *esse* of *substance*; and the *esse* of *external existence*. What can a term so used be intended to imply? Plainly the old anti-Berkeleyan (despite Berkeley!) connotation of BEING, and under a guise which allows it to perpetrate its sins of indefiniteness in an even intensified degree, i.e. under that of *Nature*. If *Nature* be substituted for *esse* in each of the above cases they immediately take on the familiar ring. Now our conception of philosophy excludes the use of the term BEING in this sense because it is indefinable. It excludes it no less when it is cloaked in Latin as *esse* or in obscure English as *Nature*. In the above case our method would substitute in place of these terms the straight-forward and clean-cut word *Definition*; whereupon the account would run, "The *definition* of things is percipi; the *definition* of percipere," etc. Answering

to this procedure the immediate yield of the Berkeleyan formula is threefold, namely :

- (a) An assertion about a peculiarity of form in the use of "To be perceived."
- (b) The definition of "Thing," (i.e. "That which is perceived.")
- (c) The annulling of certain misconceptions relating to Be and Being.

(23) With this yield we have to compare that which is presented in Prof. Morgan's account. In this Berkeley's starting-point is a formula  $ER^cT$ , called the Primary Relational Formula in Cognition. For an understanding of this formula we are referred to its constituent items, E (Ego)  $R^c$  (the cognitive relation) and T (a thing or things). Of these three items the definition of only one, however—that of T—is indicated. That is to say, T is defined if we first divest *esse* of its disguise by substituting for it *definition*. T then defines as *percipi* ("That which is perceived"). The  $R^c$  term is left alone severely, but the E term is made to perform various exercises before it is finally abandoned as undefinable. Thus : Ego is first identified with Mind, and then Mind is defined as *percipere*. Therefore  $E = \text{percipere}$ . But Things = *percipi*, and Things are described as being "in Mind," that is to say "in Ego." Therefore, "*percipi* is in *Percipere*," which (so it is asserted) is impossible. Hence the abandonment of the definition  $E = \text{percipere}$ , and in its place we are given this :

In Mind (Ego) = Within that which the formula  $ER^cT$  expresses.  
 $\therefore$  Ego = That which the formula  $ER^cT$  expresses.  
 $\therefore$  E =  $ER^cT$ .

That is, the part equals the whole, which, as Euclid would have said, is absurd.

(24) Although at the outset *one* of the three terms T is defined independently of the formula the argument does not proceed far before it is infected by misgivings, and ominous changes of phraseology appear. Thus (§8) a question is couched in these terms :

"What, if any, is the status of T when it is not within the formula? Is it then non-existent?" It is to be noted that the term *status* appears where we should have expected *description*; *within the formula* takes the place of *perceived*; and *non-existent* the place of *no-thing*. What is the purpose of these changes? Apparently so to soften and gloze the argument that Berkeley's conception, the "Mind of God," will be enabled to effect an entry. Plainly the purpose of the passage is to throw into the form of a question what as the negative of the proposition " $T = \text{That which is perceived}$ " should follow as a necessary assertion, i.e. that "That which is *not* perceived is *no-thing*." But the "Mind of God" conception requires the contrary assertion. Hence these writhings of form. It is the function of this conception to accord hospitality to "Nothings" inasmuch as these are excluded from the formula! The subject is engagingly childlike and on it little need be said. It will be sufficient to note that the conception "Mind of God" itself only *is* inasmuch as it is *perceived*. And inasmuch as it is perceived it becomes a thing within the scope of the definition. It therefore takes its place like any other T—a Table or a Toothache—*inside the formula*. Hence an integral part of the formula is presented as the permanent abiding-place of the "No-things" excluded by definition from the formula!

(25) In illustration of the points just raised we quote for contrast two extracts both taken from the account :

"A crucial question of great difficulty here arises. Grant that the *esse* of  $TR^cT$  is independent of either  $ER^c$  or  $'ER^c$ , is its [*sic*] *esse* none the less dependent on  $R^c$  Relatedness? Now whether the thing, or some relatedness of things is, apart from actual  $ER^c$  or supposed  $'ER^c$ , just the same as it is within the

field of cognitive relatedness, we cannot directly determine, for *it is obviously impossible to compare the thing (or relation) as known or knowable, with the thing (or relation) as neither known nor knowable.* (§§ 20, 21) (*The italics are ours.*) Side by side with which compare § 101. "Of course, too, the development of the egg as knowable forms no part of the supposal as such. Eggs developed quite effectually long before there were any supposals having reference to that development, and they *continue to do so independently of any actual cognitive process*" (*italics ours*). Now how does the writer *know* they do, if he *doesn't* know? Surely every supposal is an "arrangement" of that which the supposer *knows*: just that and no more.

(26) The backboneless readiness with which this formula—the supposed starting-point of Berkeley's doctrine—succumbs under the attack, makes it desirable to look more closely into its origin. Does it, as a matter of actual fact, represent anything essentially Berkeleyan? We think not. It is no implication of his discovery, which, indeed, faithfully adhered to, would make short work of it. The source from which it seems to have been culled and to which it is indebted for its shape and its superficial speciousness is not Berkeleyan, nor, strictly speaking, even psychological. It is to be looked upon rather as a sort of trap which the grammarians have unconsciously laid for the philosophers to fall into. The features the formula has seized on are those of the Subject-Predicate-Object arrangement adopted in grammatical construction. But while this arrangement represents the primary syntactical type it does not represent the primary psychological one. The grammatical type, whose underlying aim is essentially that of economy of expression, seeks to compress within its primary relational form a minimum of at least three psychological images. The primary psychological type (when we find it!) has not this paramount interest in economy. It is concerned to give, if possible, an explanation of the "mode of hanging-together" which obtains in a single image. Hence the syntactical type which "the Man Kills the Dog" would illustrate is not comparable with the psychological one which, adopting—at the risk of its own confusion—the form analogous to the syntactical one is represented by "I (i.e. Ego) perceive something." In the first instance three terms express three images; in the second one image appears to be given duplicate and (if  $I = \text{Ego}$  as here stated) triplicate expression. This difficult and subtle aspect of the question encroaches considerably on the account of "Perceive" and we shall not pursue it further here. It is enough to say that the ultimate grammatical order is not necessarily akin to the ultimate psychological one, and an account which relies implicitly on the former for an explanation of the latter must end in the confusion which, in our opinion, has overtaken the formula  $ER^cT$ .

(27) Faced with the situation resulting from these—and other—dubious premisses, the account goes on to say that "We are forced back on general considerations." Surely not. When an argument has engineered itself into an impossible position what is required is not less stringency but more. The habit of "falling back on general considerations" in such circumstances is the creeping sickness which consumes philosophy's vitality. The traffic in definitions can be carried on only in an All-or-Nothing spirit. Definitions and mercy should be strangers to each other, and a philosophy worth the name would maintain them as such. One can indeed conceive the perfected philosophy: its substance definition; its procedure bald and rigid like that of Euclid; its rhetoric, all the diletantism of pulpit and drawing-room banished; its joys born of the chaste precision already found at laboratory bench and in the mathematical study. When it appears philosophy will be established as a science.

## THE TRIBUTE

By H. D.

## I

SQUALOR spreads its hideous length  
 through the carts and the asses' feet,  
 squalor coils and reopens  
 and creeps under barrow  
 and heap of refuse  
 and the broken sherds  
 of the market-place—  
 it lengthens and coils  
 and uncoils and draws back  
 and recoils  
 through the crooked streets.

Squalor blights and makes hideous  
 our lives—it has smothered  
 the beat of our songs,  
 and our hearts are spread out,  
 flowers—opened but to receive  
 the wheel of the cart,  
 the hoof of the ox,  
 to be trod of the sheep.

Squalor spreads its hideous length  
 through the carts and the asses' feet—  
 squalor has entered and taken our songs  
 and we haggle and cheat,  
 praise fabrics worn threadbare,  
 ring false coin for silver,  
 offer refuse for meat.

## II

While we shouted our wares  
 with the swindler and beggar,  
 our cheap stuffs for the best,  
 while we cheated and haggled and bettered  
 each low trick  
 and railed with the rest—

In a trice squalor failed,  
 even squalor to cheat  
 for a voice  
 caught the sky in one sudden note,  
 spread grass at the horses' feet,  
 spread a carpet of scented thyme  
 and meadow-sweet  
 till the asses lifted their heads  
 to the air  
 with the stifled cattle and sheep.

Ah, squalor was cheated at last  
 for a bright head flung back,  
 caught the ash-tree fringe  
 of the foot-hill,  
 the violet-slope of the hill,  
 one bright head flung back  
 stilled the haggling,  
 one throat bared  
 and the shouting was still.

Clear, clear—  
 till our heart's shell was reft  
 with the shrill notes,  
 our old hatreds were healed.

Squalor spreads its hideous length  
 through the carts and the asses' feet,  
 squalor coils and draws back  
 and recoils  
 with no voice to rebuke—

For the boys have gone out of the city,  
 the songs withered black on their lips.

## III

And we turn from the market,  
 the haggling, the beggar, the cheat,  
 to cry to the gods of the city  
 in the open space  
 of the temple—  
 we enter the temple-space  
 to cry to the gods and forget  
 the clamour, the filth.

We turn to the old gods of the city,  
 of the city once blessed  
 with daemon and spirit of blitheness  
 and spirit of mirth,  
 we cry :  
 what god with shy laughter,  
 or with slender winged ankles is left ?

What god, what bright spirit for us,  
 what daemon is left  
 of the many that crowded the porches  
 that haunted the streets,  
 what fair god  
 with bright sandal and belt ?

Though we tried the old turns of the city  
 and searched the old streets,  
 though we cried to the gods of the city :  
 O spirits, turn back,  
 re-enter the gates of our city—  
 we met  
 but one god,  
 one tall god with a spear-shaft,  
 one bright god with a lance.

## IV

They have sent the old gods from the city :  
 on the temple-step,  
 the people gather to cry for revenge,  
 to chant their hymns and to praise  
 the god of the lance.

They have banished the gods  
 and the half-gods  
 from the city streets,  
 they have turned from the god  
 of the cross-roads,  
 the god of the hearth,  
 the god of the sunken well  
 and the fountain source—  
 they have chosen one,  
 to him only  
 they offer paean and chant.

Though but one god is left in the city,  
 shall we turn to his treacherous feet,  
 though but one god is left in the city,  
 can he lure us  
 with his clamour and shout,  
 can he snare our hearts in his net,  
 can he blind us  
 with the light of his lance ?

Could he snare our spirit and flesh,  
 he would cast it in irons to lie  
 and rot in the sodden grass,  
 and we know his glamour is dross,  
 we know him a blackened light,  
 and his beauty withered and spent  
 beside one young life that is lost.

## V

Though not one of the city turned,  
not one girl but to glance  
with contempt toward us  
that our hearts were so faint  
with despair and doubt,  
contempt for us that our lips  
could not sing to the god of the lance—

Though not one of the city turned  
as we searched through the city streets,  
though the maidens gathered their veils  
and the women their robes  
as we passed :—

Though not one of the city turned—  
as we paused at the city gate,  
a few old men rose up  
with eyes no fear or contempt  
could harden—with lips worn frail  
with no words of hate—

A few old men rose up  
with a few sad women to greet and to hail us,  
a few lads crept to welcome  
and comfort us, their white brows  
set with hope  
as light circles an olive-branch.

## VI

With these we will cry to another,  
with these we will stand apart  
to lure some god to our city,  
to hail him :  
return from your brake,  
your copse or your forest haunt.

O spirit, still left to our city,  
we call to your wooded haunt,  
we cry :  
O daemon of grasses,  
O spirit of simples and roots,  
O gods of the plants of the earth—

O god of the simples and grasses,  
we cry to you now from our hearts,  
O heal us—bring balm for our sickness,  
return and soothe us with bark  
and hemlock and feverwort.

O god of the power to strike out  
memory of terror past,  
bring branch of heal-all and tufts  
of the sweet and the bitter grass,  
bring shaft and flower of the reeds  
and cresses and meadow plants.

Return—look again on our city,  
though the people cry through the streets,  
though they hail another,  
have pity—return to our gates,  
with a love as great as theirs,  
we entreat you  
for our city's sake.

## VII

As we lift the bright heads  
of the wild flowers,  
compare leaf to leaf,  
as we touch the hemlock and poppy,  
may our spirits released,  
forget this despair and torture,  
this terror and doubt.

As we lift the bright heads  
of the wild flowers,  
may we know that our spirits are kept  
as they are, folded and wrapped  
apart in a sheltering leaf.

We are veiled as the bud of the poppy  
in the poppy-sheath,  
and our hearts will break from their bondage  
and spread as the poppy leaf—  
leaf by leaf, radiant and perfect  
at last in the summer heat.

May we know that our spirits at last  
will be cleansed of all bitterness—  
that no one god may trample the earth,  
but the others still dwell apart  
in a high place  
with our dead and our lost.

## VIII

That the boys our city has lost  
and the gods still dwell apart  
in a city set fairer than this  
with column and porch—

That the boys still dwell apart  
and laugh in their gladness and shout  
their challenges each to each  
for the foot race or the wrestling match—

They stand in a circle and laugh  
and challenge each other to meet  
with jest that no shield or shape  
of banner or helmet or dress—

That no banner or shield or shape  
or colour of tunic or vest  
can divide now or rend their hearts  
as they leap toward the wrestling match,  
as they strip for the race—

That the boys of the cities keep  
with the gods apart,  
for our world was too base  
for their youth,  
our city too dark,  
our thoughts were too dull for their thoughts,  
our hearts for their hearts.

## IX

We will choose for each lad of the city,  
a flower or a spray of grass—

For the lads who drew apart,  
the scholar and poet we place  
wind-flower or lily or wreath  
of ivy or crocus-shaft,  
and the lads who went to slay  
with passion and thirst,  
we give roses and flowers of bay.

That the lads in that city apart  
may know of our love and keep  
remembrance and speak of us—  
may lift their hands that the gods  
revisit earth.

That the lads of the cities  
may yet remember us,  
we spread shaft of privet and sweet  
lily from meadow and forest,  
and the wild white lily,  
and the wood-lily  
and the red shaft from the mountain-side.

## X

And this we will say for remembrance,  
speak this with their names :

Could beauty be done to death,  
they had struck her dead  
in ages and ages past,  
could beauty be withered from earth,  
they had cast her forth,  
root and stalk  
scattered and flailed—

They had trod her to death with sneers,  
they had bartered her  
for a piece of thin money tossed up  
to fall half alloy,  
they had stripped her and sent her forth.

Could beauty be caught and hurt,  
could beauty be rent with a thought,  
for a thrust of a sword,  
for a piece of thin money tossed up  
then beauty were dead,

Long, long before we came to earth,  
long, long before we rent our hearts  
with this worship, this fear  
and this dread.

## XI

Could beauty be done to death—  
though the swirl of the thousands cross  
and eddy and fall away,

though the crowd of the millions meet  
to shout and slay,

Though the host of the people pass  
and famish in bitterness,  
state by state, people by people,  
and perish—we cry :

Could beauty be caught and hurt,  
could beauty be rent with a thought,  
could beauty be beaten out,  
O gold, stray but alive  
on the dead ash of our hearth—

Could beauty be caught and hurt  
they had done her to death with their sneers  
in ages and ages past,  
could beauty be sacrificed  
for a thrust of a sword,  
for a piece of thin money  
tossed up to fall half alloy—  
then beauty were dead  
long, long before we saw her face.

*Could beauty be beaten out,—  
O youth the cities have sent  
to strike at each other's strength,  
it is you who have kept her alight.*

## SOLOGUB'S "CREATED LEGEND"\*

BY JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

IT is a pleasure to be able to congratulate Mr. Cournos on having brought to a close a difficult enterprise. To introduce an author such as Sologub to the English public demanded not only a great expenditure of time and energy, but also a personal renunciation of hope that this expenditure would ever be adequately rewarded. For Sologub is never likely to become a popular author outside his own country, although by mind and temperament he is far less "Russian," in the narrow sense, than many another Russian writer whose name has been bruited to the four winds of the earth.

It has recently become the fashion to declare publicly that Russian literature, since Chekhov, has lost its vitality and become decadent. I recall a statement from a recent book of criticism :

"The French novelists used life to perfect their art—the Russian novelists used art to liberate their passion for life. That at this moment in Russia the novel has lost that zest, that the work of Kuprin, Artzibashev, Sologub, Merezhkovsky, Andreyev, shows exhaustion and sterility, means nothing; the stream will soon clear again."

Now there are several objections to be made to this statement. In the first place, we do not class novelists such as Flaubert and De Maupassant as decadents simply because they respected form in their work. And if art must liberate a passion for life in order to be healthy, then Dickens was a greater novelist than Henry James, Fielding and Walter Scott are preferable to Conrad and Hardy. The function of criticism is not to set up these moral judgments, but to understand first of all what an artist has set out to do and then to ask oneself whether it is done ill or well. The difficulty that has hampered the influx and interchange of thought between English literature and any foreign literature has always been precisely that England persists in being twenty years behind the times. Twenty years ago England still pictured Russia as accurately depicted in novels such as *Michael Strogoff*: castles in the snow, serfs, wolves, plots, Siberia, bells of the Kremlin, and ikons. To-day they insist that Russia is composed altogether of wandering beggars, tramps, pilgrims, peasants of the "holy fool" type, Brothers Karamazov, buffoons, idiots, and Bazarov-like supermen. And when we are offered the real Russian of yesterday—the Russian of Sologub's *Little Demon*—the public is revolted and screams "decadent!"

It seems never to occur to any one that Russia has to change, like any other country; and that the business of her artists is to reflect that change. Even in the hey-day of Chekhov and Gorky—long before the Japanese War—Russia had become an industrial nation and had set about creating a bourgeoisie of the Western type. Since the creation of the Duma, this process has gone on apace. But along with the life of the new industrial communities has gone the old life, little altered. Russia is the land of survivals of the past. So Russia as she stood before the war was even more decentralized, more of a welter of confused tendencies behind which loomed the atavistic reactionism of the East. And it is this Russia that Kuprin, Artzibashev, Sologub, etc., have tried to depict.

Sologub alone, so far as I know, seems to me to have succeeded at this severe task of creating a new type of novel to display the transition that has been taking place in Russian life and in the Russian soul.

\* *The Created Legend*, by Feodor Sologub, authorized translation by John Cournos, Martin Secker,

## Peasant Pottery Shop

41 Devonshire Street, Theobald's Road, W.C.  
(Close to Southampton Row)

Interesting British and Continental  
: Peasant Pottery on sale :  
Brightly coloured plaited felt Rugs.

And the reason that he has succeeded where others have failed again brings us face to face with another paradox of the Russian character. The Russians are not by temperament realists in the Western sense, in spite of the fact that the greatest Russian novels are all supreme documents of realism. The Russian mind sees not only the mud of the earth, but also the skies above it; and the fouler and nastier that mud becomes, the bluer and fairer and more unearthly must the skies be. No Russian could ever write novels of the Zola type, and in comparison to De Maupassant, Chekhov becomes almost a sentimentally monastic type of chastity. After the revolution and counter-revolution of 1905, Russia became a sadder country than ever: the hope of a generation had vanished, and in its place stood Stolypin fawning on the Black Hundred and flouting the Duma. It is out of this chaos of despair and misery that Sologub's *Created Legend* was born. And it is successful precisely because it is a terrific effort of the will and the imagination to refute and deny the "real world"—the world of appearances—and to put in its place a world of ideal fantasy.

Unlike the *Little Demon*, which is all of a piece—with the exception of the much-discussed Sasha and Liudmilla episode, which seems to me to have been an unwarrantable intrusion—this *Created Legend* is something that has scarcely beginning or ending. Unlike the *Little Demon*, which is grey throughout, the scarlet threads of symbolism are here so completely interwoven with the grey threads of life that one cannot detect one from another. Unlike the *Little Demon*, which is a masterpiece of sardonic humour, there is scarcely any humour here except in the chapter about the dead rising again on St. John's Eve—which Mr. Cournos rightly declares a masterpiece—and in the chapter about the inspection of Trirodov's school, which might have come out of the *Little Demon* itself. The *Little Demon* is almost unbearably painful to read because the author has used every device to give cumulative effect to Peredonov's sordidness. The *Created Legend* is a delight to read because the author has used the Russia of pogroms, hooligans, Cossacks, Black Hundred, as a background to a legend of unearthly beauty.

Doubtless some people will be shocked by this book, as some were shocked by the *Little Demon*. But if it is true that we have bodies, and that certain impulses exist in those bodies, and that we also have souls, then it must be also true that, in Browning's phrase:

Nor soul helps flesh here more than flesh helps me.

Granted all this, Sologub's idea is not only perfectly logical, it is the only logical position. "See here," he says to us, "there are some people who are ashamed of the necessity of their bodies, who cover them up, who won't admit that the body has its rights, and so their souls are filled with nasty thoughts"—and here he shows us Peredonov of the *Little Demon*. "There are others who admit the necessity of bodies, who overcome the flesh by not being ashamed or afraid of what it will do and who thereby keep their souls clean"—and here he shows us Trirodov's colony. "The first set of people I call followers of Aisa, that is to say, chance. The mere chance facts of shame, bourgeois hypocrisy, etc., are allowed to condition their lives. The others rise above chance into the region of Ananke, that is to say, necessity, where they create a world of which they are masters, not slaves." Again and again Sologub hammers home the contrast between the brutality and degradation of ordinary life, and the nobility and beauty of life that is controlled by the imagination when it sees soul and body with equal clearness. The whole book is a protest, a fierce, flaming protest against the pornography of so-called respectable people, parents who beat their children, school-inspectors with impure thoughts, paragons of

morality who find in the relationship of pupil to teacher only the most debased and meaningless of the vices, suppressors of facts, people who cannot look on a nude body without thoughts of sexual gratification. Sologub swings the lash of the moralist in this book, and if it has a fault, it is that he swings it too fiercely. He is not always just to his victims, and perhaps this is why he shocks people at times.

How all this is accomplished—this setting up of two ways of life—the life of hypocrisy where the body is veiled and the soul is base, and the life of the imagination where the body is naked and the soul is enlightened—is, to my mind, the finest thing about this novel. I wish I could quote to show how well Mr. Cournos has done his work of translation, but space will not allow of it.

No reader, satiated with over-"documented" novels, no lover of the beauty "which has a touch of strangeness," no admirer of Poe, Hawthorne, Hoffman, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, or Gérard de Nerval, ought to neglect reading this novel, in which the real and the inexplicable are so strangely wedded.

## PASSING PARIS

CONCENTRATION on artistic subjects awakens, in most quarters, protestations hardly less indignant than those met with by the unhappy emissary of peace. The efforts of both artist and pacifist are, each in their way, considered with suspicion: those who would make an end of the war are openly called traitors, without any circumlocution; the others are simply silenced for meddlesome untimeliness. If concentration on the war were absolutely realized or even possible the attitude might be defensible but, considering that numerous activities not directly assisting in its pursuit are tolerated, the opposition made to war-independent literary and artistic manifestations is unwarranted. Worse, it is unwise. For by closing access to all derivative the war becomes a dangerously monopolizing topic of thought tempting to indefatigable criticism and head-breaking. Between the war on the one hand and popular futilities, which far from repressing the circumstances seem by a strange reactionary effect even to favour, there is no escape.

In every direction artistic initiative is discouraged. The one art-review which had managed to publish a few special numbers is at its last gasp; music is almost reduced to mutism; literature may not take a step off the battlefield without exposing itself to the accusation of seeking ambush, yet pornographic print has never been more conspicuous, and the question which sometimes arises whether to "dress" in war time is patriotic is answered by displays of the extremest luxury. The consequence of expenditure in this direction being so obviously beneficial it meets with but the faintest disapproval and, in general, with approbation. Why is not the same simple and direct principle allowed in other spheres? Because the coquette always dares step in where angels fear to tread. When some one attempts a protest a hundred exclamations are heard: "What about the little seamstresses? What about the most typical of French industries? What about the silk trade, etc. etc. What shall become of them if asceticism in dress is advocated?" And all applaud and add even that it is a duty towards the heroes on furlough, tired of trench mud, to wear pretty frocks. So madame, in an extra fit of charity, goes and orders another.

All of which may be very honestly pleaded.

But why these privileges? Since nothing can (or, as we are told, should) suppress the enthusiasm evinced in the purchase of finery, in the attendance at cinematograph shows (crowded daily and nightly), and indulgence in every luxury (and trash), why these



restrictions in regard to art? Why is its practice more incompatible with war and patriotism than the wearing of boots at 350 francs the pair, or the eating of oysters at 10 francs the dozen, or the attendance at picture-palaces at 2 francs the seat? Why are little seamstresses more interesting than tragedians, boot-makers than writers, fishmongers than violinists? Why are the feeble, the greedy, and the coquette allowed their foibles, as little children their fun, while the strong must be bound up to the eternal war-misery?

We are told that the country's industry must be centred on the manufacture of ammunition in view of bringing the war to the speediest possible conclusion. In that case the manufacture of a single pair of boots, except for soldiers, is a sin. We would all of us willingly go barefoot for a month if that could hasten peace. And if we *would* not we should be made to.

France and the other belligerent countries keep their industries smouldering for good reasons, but a country's prosperity and prestige do not depend more upon what it manufactures than upon what it creates. The champions who have gathered round France, the numerous volunteers from abroad in her army, for instance, have been attracted to her for her pre-eminence in the latter sphere only. If the former advantages counted for anything Germany would have more easily drawn them to her. Consciously or sub-consciously every foreigner who volunteered under the flag of France was drawn to it by the superiority for which it stands in spiritual domains. Therefore it is in her interest to continue to give every encouragement to her countrymen's efforts both intellectual and artistic. Two or three years' stagnation is too long and means a set-back which is not easily regained.

There is no more reason for silencing an artist on the grounds that he is taking advantage of a privileged position while his confrères' activities in the same sphere are perforce arrested, than for preventing a "reformed" or exempted shoemaker from making shoes while his brother-cobbler of military age and constitution is fighting at the front.

It should be remembered that the artist strives not only for art, or his own person, but also for his country.

\* \* \* \*

When a certain set indulges in abuse of so representative a personality as M. Rodin, not merely the man and his work are insulted but all they typify of France in the world. M. Rodin in France may be but a great artist, a great craftsman, whose degree of genius is still the object of discussion as is just now his entitlement to residence in State-provided quarters and to a pro-mortem museum; but abroad he is a bit of France, an aspect of France. To him, as to others of his kind, France owes so many allies, so many volunteers, so many supporters. Were it only for this reason he should, especially at the present moment, while the world's eyes are fixed on the country, be the object of peculiar consideration.

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"Just now," I read in *Le Carmel*, a new review published at Geneva (Keller, 11 rue de Lausanne), "the best manifestations of French literature must be sought for in Switzerland, while women, perhaps, give us the best pages on the war" (in noticing *Le Vent des Cimes*, by Isabelle Kaiser; Paris, Perrin).

If favourable conditions were pregnant in great results then women, for whose economic victory men would seem to be fighting, should be on the point also of triumphing artistically.

*Le Carmel*, similarly to THE EGOIST, treats of philosophy, art, and literature. The essays by A. Charles-Baudouin furnish the element Miss Marsden supplies in these pages, while MM. Emile Verhaeren, Han Ryner, Paul Brulat, and the great Swiss (he called himself "European") writer, Carl Spitteler, have been

drawn upon for original and translated prose and poetry. Pacifist, and such movements as strive for reconciliation after the war as well as different international war-works, find an organ in this publication. Its price is 50 c. in Switzerland, 60 c. abroad. A single criticism: a more characteristic form would have better justified its claim to artistic representation. The war leaves one hungrier than ever for modern, *i.e.* new, manifestations and expressions.

M. C.

## TWO POEMS

### THE DAYS PASS

#### I

PRINT,  
 Dirty black marks  
 Ruining the paper,  
 Masses of squirming little insects,  
 I hate you,  
 What do I care  
 Though it was Aldus himself made you  
 In the year of God 1513?

A great flight of pigeons across the sun  
 Makes the light of my window  
 Twinkle and flash;  
 The roses in the blue-patterned jug  
 Are austere and indifferent;  
 The trees are not worried with learning.

Let us loaf;  
 Leave Aldus and his kind on the shelf,  
 Soothe our eyes and brains  
 In sunlight and idleness.

#### II

Useless!

Those who dropped us here,  
 Like rats in a stone courtyard,  
 Should know how useless.

A thousand years of youth  
 Were not enough.

There must be a million  
 Lovely women in the world—  
 Can we love them all  
 In fifty years?

Why, all the summers  
 And the cities of the world,  
 All the solitudes of grey hills,  
 All betwixt sea and sea,  
 Useless!

### R. V. AND ANOTHER

VAGABONDS of beauty,  
 Wistful exquisite waifs  
 From a lost, and a forgotten, and a lovely land,  
 We cannot comfort you  
 Though our souls yearn for you.

You are delicate strangers  
 In a gloomy town,  
 Stared at and hated—  
 Gold crocus blossoms in a drab lane.

We cannot comfort you;  
 Your life is anguish;  
 All we can do—  
 Mutely bring pungent herbs and branches of oak  
 And resinous scented pine wreaths  
 To hide the crown of thorny pain  
 Crushing your white frail foreheads.

RICHARD ALDINGTON

## DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

## VII

AGNES SOREL—ROXELANE

**A**GNES. To tell you the truth, I don't understand your Turkish gallantry. The beauties of the seraglio have a lover who has only to say: I want it. They never enjoy the pleasures of resistance, and they cannot provide the pleasures of victory, all the delights of love are thus lost to sultans and sultanas.

*Roxelane.* How would you arrange it? The Turkish emperors being extremely jealous of their authority have set aside these refinements of dalliance. They are afraid that pretty women, not wholly dependent upon them, would usurp too great a sway over their minds, and meddle too greatly in public affairs.

*Agnes.* Very well! How do they know whether that would be a misfortune? Love has a number of uses, and I who speak to you, had I not been mistress to a French King, and if I had not had great power over him, I do not know where France would be at this hour. Have you heard tell how desperate were our affairs under Charles VII, to what state the kingdom was reduced, with the English masters of nearly the whole of it?

*Roxelane.* Yes, as the affair made a great stir, I know that a certain virgin saved France, and you were then this girl, La Pucelle? But how in that case were you at the same time the king's mistress?

*Agnes.* You are wrong. I have nothing in common with the virgin of whom you speak. The king by whom I was loved wished to abandon his kingdom to foreign usurpers, he went to hide in a mountainous region, where it would have been by no means too comfortable for me to have followed him. I contrived to upset this plan. I called an astrologer with whom I had a private agreement, and after he had pretended to scan my nativity, he told me one day in Charles's presence that if all the stars were not liars I should be a king's mistress, and loved with a long-lasting passion. I said at once: "You will not mind, Sire, if I leave for the English Court, for you do not wish to be king, and have not yet loved me long enough for my destiny to be fulfilled." The fear which he had of losing me made him resolve to be king, and he began from that time to strengthen his kingdom. You see what France owes to love, and how gallant she should be, if only from recognition.

*Roxelane.* It is true, but returning to La Pucelle. What was her part? Was history wrong in attributing to a young peasant girl what truly belonged to a court lady and a king's mistress?

*Agnes.* Were history wrong on this point, it were no great wonder. However, it is true that La Pucelle greatly stirred up the soldiers, but I before that had animated the king. She was a great aid to this monarch, whom she found armed against the English, but without me she would not have found him so armed. And you will no longer doubt my part in this great affair when you hear the witness which one of Charles VII's successors has borne to me in this quatrain:

Agnes Sorel, more honour have you won in  
the good cause, our France, her restoration,  
than e'er was got by prayer and close cloistration  
of pious eremite or devout nun.

What do you say to it, Roxelane? Will you confess that if I had been a sultana like you, and had I not had the right to threaten Charles VII as I did, he would have lost his all?

*Roxelane.* I am surprised that you should be so vain of so slight an action. You had no difficulty in

gaining great power over the mind of your lover, you who were free and mistress of yourself, but I, slave as I was, subjugated the sultan. You made Charles VII king, almost in spite of himself, but I made Soliman my husband despite his position.

*Agnes.* What! They say the sultans never marry.

*Roxelane.* I agree, and still I made up my mind to marry Soliman, although I could not lead him into marriage by the hope of anything he did not already possess. You shall hear a finer scheme than your own. I began to build temples, and to do many deeds of piety, then I appeared very sorrowful. The sultan asked me the reason over and over again, and after the necessary preliminaries and crochets, I told him that I was melancholy because my good deeds, as I heard from our learned men, would bring me no reward, seeing that I was merely a slave, and worked only for Soliman, my master. Soliman thereupon freed me, in order that I might reap the reward of my virtuous actions, then when he wished to cohabit with me and to treat me like a bride of the harem, I appeared greatly surprised. I told him with great gravity that he had no rights over the body of a free woman. Soliman had a delicate conscience: he went to consult a doctor of laws with whom I had a certain agreement. His reply was that the sultan should abstain, as I was no longer his slave, and that unless he espoused me, he could not rightly take me for his. He fell deeper in love than ever. He had only one course to follow, but it was a very extraordinary course, and even dangerous, because of its novelty; however, he took it and married me.

*Agnes.* I confess that it is fine to subject those who stand so on their guard 'gainst our empery.

*Roxelane.* Men strive in vain, when we lay hold of them by their passions, we lead them whither we will. If they would let me live again, and give me the most imperious man in the world, I would make of him whatever I chose, provided only that I had of wit much, of beauty sufficient, and of love only a little.

## TARR

BY WYNDHAM LEWIS

## PART IV

## A JEST TOO DEEP FOR LAUGHTER

## CHAPTER VIII

**D**ESTINY has more power over the superstitious. They attract constantly bright fortunes and disasters within their circle. Destiny had laid its trap in the unconscious Kreisler. It fixed it with powerful violent springs. Eight days later (dating from the Observatoire meeting), it snapped down on Bertha.

Kreisler's windows had been incandescent with steady saffron rays, coming over the roofs of the quarter. His little shell of a room had breasted them with pretence of antique adventure. The old boundless yellow lights streamed from their abstract El Dorado. They were a Gulf Stream for our little patch of a world, making a people as quiet as the English. Men once more were invited to be the motes in the sunbeam, to play in the sleepy surf on the edge of remoteness.

Now, from within, his windows looked as suddenly harsh and familiar. Unreasonable limitation gave its specific colour to thin glass.

The clock was striking eight. Like eight metallic glittering waves dashing discordantly together in a cavern, its strokes rushed up and down in Bertha's head. She was leaning on the mantelshef, head sunk forward, with the action of a person about to be sick. She had struggled up from the bed a moment

before—the last vigour at her disposal being spent in getting away from the bed at all costs.

“Oh schwein! schwein! Ich hass es—ich hass dich! Schwein! Schutzer! hässlicher mensch!”

All the hatred and repulsion of her being, in a raw, indecent heat, seemed turned into this tearful sonority, gushing up like blood. An exasperated falling, deepening singsong in the “hässlicher mensch!” something of the disgusting sound of the brutal relishing and gobbling of food. Hatred expresses itself like the satisfaction of an appetite. The outrage was spat out of her body on to him. As she stood there she looked like some one on whom a practical joke had been played, of the primitive and physical order, such as drenching, in some amusing manner, with dirty water. She had been decoyed into swallowing something disgusting. Her attitude was reminiscent of the way people are seen to stand bent awkwardly forward, neck craned out, slowly wiping the dirt off their clothes, or spitting out the remains of their polluted drink, cursing the joker.

This had been, too, a desperate practical joke in its madness and inconsequence. But it was of the solemn and lonely order. At its consummation there had been no chorus of intelligible laughter. An uncontrolled Satyr-like figure had leapt suddenly away: Bertha, in a struggle that had been outrageous and extreme, fighting with the silence of a confederate beneath the same ban of the world. A joke too deep for laughter, parodying the phrase, alienating sorrow and tears, had been achieved. The victim had been conscious of an eeriness.

A folded blouse lay on the corner of Kreisler's trunk. Bertha's arms and shoulders were bare, her hair hanging in wisps and strips, generally—a Salon picture was the result. For purposes of work (he had asked her to sit for him), the blouse had been put aside. A jagged tear in her chemise over her right breast also seemed the doing of a Salon artist of facile and commercial invention.

Kreisler stood at the window. His eyes had a lazy, expressionless stare, his lips were open. Nerves, brain and the whole body were still spinning and stunned, his muscles teeming with actions not finished, sharp when the actions finished. He was still swamped and strung with violence. His sudden immobility, as he stood there, made the riot of movement and will rise to his brain like wine from a weak body. Satisfaction had, however, stilled everything except this tingling prolongation of action.

The inanity of what had happened to her showed as her unique, intelligible feeling. Her being there at all, her eccentric conduct of the last week, what disgusting folly! Ever since she had known Tarr, her “sentiment” had been castigating her. A watchful fate appeared to be inventing morals to show her the folly of her perpetual romancing. And now *this* had happened. It was senseless. There was not a single atom of compensation anywhere. She was not one of those who, were there any solid compensation of sentiment and necessity (such as, in the most evident degree, was the case with Tarr), would draw back from natural conclusions. Then conclusive physical matters were a culmination of her romance, and not a separate and disloyal gratification. It never occurred to her that they could be arrived at without traversing the romance.

Was this to be explained as the boulevard incident had been explained by her? Was she to proceed with her explanations and her part? But this time it would be to herself that the explanations would have to be made. That was a different audience; a dim feeling found its way into her, with a sort of sickening malice. She had a glimpse too of Kreisler's Bertha—the woman that you couldn't shake off, who, for some unimaginable reason, was always hanging on to you. She even had the strength to admit, distantly, the logic of this act—what had happened to her—still

more disgusting and hateful than its illogic. The only thing that might have been found to, in some sense, mitigate the dreary, sudden madness of it, was that she felt practically nothing at all for Kreisler. It was like some violent accident of the high road, the brutality of a tramp. And—as that too would—it partook of the unreality of nightmare.

A few minutes before he had been tranquilly working away at a drawing, she sitting in some pose she had taken up with quick ostentatious intelligence. Startled at his request to draw her shoulders she had immediately condemned this feeling. She had come to sit for him; the mere idea that there was any danger was so repulsive that she immediately consented. He was an artist, too, of course. While he was working they had not talked. Then he had put down his paper and chalk, stretched, and said:

“Your arms are like bananas!” A shiver of warning had penetrated her at this. But still he was an artist: it was natural—even inevitable—that he should compare her arms to bananas.

“Oh! I hope you've made a good drawing. May I see?” She intended to emphasize the reason of this exposure.

He had got up, and before she knew what he was doing caught hold of her above the elbow, chafing her arm, saying:

“You have pins and needles, Fräulein?” The “Fräulein” used here had some disquieting sound. She drew herself away, now serious and on the defence.

“No, thank you. Now I will put my blouse on, if you have finished.”

They had looked at each other uncertainly for a moment, he with a flushed rather silly fixed smile. She was afraid, somehow, to move away.

“Let me rub your arm.” Then with the fury of a man waking up to some insult, he had seized her. Her tardy words, furious struggling and all her contradictory emotions disappeared in the whirlpool towards which they had, with a strange deliberateness and yet aimlessness, been steering.

He was standing there at the window now as though wishing to pretend that he had done nothing; she “had been dreaming things” merely. The long silence and monotony of the posing had prepared her for the strangeness now. It had been the other extreme out of which she had been flung and into which, at present, she was again flung. She saw side by side and unconnected the silent figure drawing her and the other one full of blindness and violence. Then there were two other figures, one getting up from the chair, yawning, and the present lazy one at the window—four in all, that she could not bring together somehow, each in a complete compartment of time to its own. It would be impossible to make the present idle figure at the window interest itself in these others. A loathsome, senseless event, of no meaning, naturally, to that figure there. It had quietly, indifferently, talked: it had drawn: it had suddenly flung itself upon her and taken her, and now it was standing idly there. It could do all these things. It appeared to her in a series of precipitate states. It resembled in this a switchback, rising slowly, in a steady insouciant way to the top of an incline, and then plunging suddenly down the other. Or a mastiff's head turning indolently for some seconds and then snapping at a fly, detached again the next moment. Her fury and animal hostility did not last more than a few minutes. She had come there, got what she did not expect, and now must go away again. There was positively nothing more to be said to Kreisler. She had spasmodic returns of raging. They did not pass her dourly active mind. There never had been anything to say to him. He was a mad beast.

She now had to go away as though nothing had happened. It was nothing. After all what did it

matter what became of her now? Her body was of little importance—ghosts of romantic consolations here! What was the good (seeing what she knew and everything) of storming against this man? She saw herself coming there that afternoon, talking with amiable affectation of interest in his work, in him (in him!), sitting for him; a long, uninterrupted stream of amiability, talk, suddenly the wild few minutes, then the present ridiculous hush.

The moral, heavily, too heavily, driven in by her no doubt German fate, found its mark in her mind. What Tarr laughed at her for—that silly and vulgar mush, was the cause of all this. Well!

She had done up her hair; her hat was once more on her head. She went towards the door, her face really haggard, inevitable consciousness of drama too in it. Kreisler turned round, went towards the door also, unlocked it, let her pass without saying anything, and, waiting a moment, closed it indifferently again. She was let out as a workman would have been, who had been there to mend a shutter or rectify a bolt.

## CHAPTER IX

BERTHA made her way home in a roundabout fashion to avoid the possibility of meeting any one she knew. The streets were loftily ignorant of her affairs. Thin walls dyked-in affairs and happenings. Ha ha! the importance of our actions! Is it more than the kissing of the bricks?

She came out with mixed feelings; gratefulness for the enormous indifference and ignorance flowing all round us; anger and astonishment at finding herself walking away in this matter-of-fact manner; suffering at the fact that the customary street scene would not mix with the obsession of her late experience.

No doubt Nature was secret enough. But not to tell this experience of hers to *anybody* also would be shutting her in with Kreisler, somehow for good. She would never be able to escape the contamination of that room of his. It was one of those things that in some form one should be able to tell. She had a growing wish to make it known at once somewhere, in some shape.

That is, at bottom, she still was inclined to *continue* things—dreams, fancies, explanations, sacrifices. Would nothing cure her? The first feeling that *this was finally the end of those things*, that there was nothing further to be said or thought, was modified. She did not definitely think of telling any one—the moral was wearing off more quickly than it should. But the thought of this simple, unsensational walking away and ending up of everything in connexion with Kreisler irked her more and more. Anger revived spasmodically. *Kreisler, by doing this, had made an absolute finishing with Kreisler perhaps impossible.*

There was nobody now in any sense on her side, or on whose side she could range herself. Kreisler had added himself to the worrying list of her women friends, Tarr, etc., in a disgusting, dumbfounding way, the list of people preying on her mind and pushing her to perpetual fuss, all sorts of explicative, defiant, or other actions. She had stuck Kreisler up as a "cause" against her friends. In a manner of his own, he had betrayed her and placed himself beside her friends. In any case, he had carried out in the fullest fashion their estimate of him. In being virtuous a libelled man can best attack his enemies; in being "blackguardly," awaken a warmth of sympathy in corroborating them. Kreisler had acted satanically for her friends.

She had seen Elsa and her sister twice that week, but none of the others. Ungregariousness, keeping to herself, was explained by indisposition. Sorbert was meant by this. Her continued seeing of Kreisler was known to all now, and she could imagine their reception of that news. Now she could hardly go on

talking about Kreisler. This would at once be interpreted as "something having happened." So, more scandal against her name. In examining likelihoods of the future she concluded that she would have to break still more with her friends, to make up for having to retire from her Kreisler positions. To squash and counteract their satisfaction she must accentuate her independence in their direction to insult and contempt.

The last half-hour of senseless outrage still took up all the canvas. Attempts to adjust her mind to a situation containing such an element as this was difficult. What could be done with it? It took up too much space. Everything must come back and be referred to that. She wanted to tell this somewhere. This getting closed in with Kreisler—a survival, perhaps, of her vivid fear of a little time before, when he had locked the door, and she knew that resisting him would be useless—must be at all costs avoided.

Who could she tell? Clara? Madame Vannier?

Once home, she lay down and cried for some time, but without conjuring any of her trouble.

Kreisler seemed to have suddenly brought confusion everywhere. There was *nothing* that would quite fit in with that ridiculous, disgusting event. He had even, in the end, driven her friends out of her mind, too. She would have said nothing had one turned up then.

Having left Kreisler so simply and undramatically worried her. *Something* should have been done. *There* would have been the natural relief. But her direct human feelings of revenge had been paralysed. She thought of going back at once to his room. She could not begin life clearly again until something had been done against him, or in some way where he was.

He had been treated by her as a cypher, as something vague to put up against her friends. All along for the last week he had been a shadowy and actually unimportant figure. He had shown no consciousness of this. Rather dazed and machine-like himself, Bertha had treated him as she had found him. Suddenly, without any direct articulateness, he had revenged himself as a machine might do, in a nightmare. At a leap he was in the rigid foreground of her life. He had absorbed all the rest in an immense clashing wink. But the moment following this "desperateness" he stood, abstracted, distant and baffling as before. It was difficult to realize he was there.

Tarr had been the real central and absorbing figure all along, of course, but purposely veiled. He had been as really all-important, though to all appearance eliminated, as Kreisler had been of no importance, though propped up in the foreground. Sorbert at last could no longer be suppressed and kept from coming forward now in her mind. But his presence, too, was perplexing. She had become so used to regarding him, though seeing him daily, as an uncertain and departing figure, that now he had really gone that did not make much difference. His proceedings, a carefully prepared anaesthesia for himself, had had its effect on her as well, serving for both.

The bell rang. She stood up in one movement and stared towards the door. She looked as though she were waiting for the bell to ring two or three times to find resolution in that, one way or the other. It rang a second and third time. She did not know *how* much persistence would draw her to the door. But she knew that any definite show of energy would overcome her. Was it Elsa? She had lighted her lamp, and her visitor could therefore have seen that she was at home.

Bertha went to the door at length with affected alacrity, in a pretence of not having heard the bell before, and opened it sharply. Kreisler was there. The opening of the door had been like the tearing of a

characterless mask off a face. Had he not been looking at her through it all the time? There did not seem room for them where they were standing. He looked to her like a great terrifying poster, cut out on the melodramatic stairway. She remained stone-still in front of him with a pinched expression, as though about to burst out crying, and something deprecating in her paralysed gesture, like a child. There was an analogy to a laugh struck dead on a child's face at a rebuff, souring and twisting all the features.

Caricatured and enlarged to her eyes, she wanted to laugh for a moment. The surprise was complete. "What, what——" Her mind formed his image, rather like a man compelled to photograph a ghost. Kreisler! It was as though the world were made up of various animals, each of a different kind and physique even, and this were the animal Kreisler, whose name alone conjured up certain peculiar dangerous habits. A wild world, not of uniform men and women, but of very divergent and strangely living animals—Kreisler, Lipmann, Tarr. This man, about to speak to her again, on the same square foot of ground with her: he was not an apparition from any remote Past, but from a Past almost a Present, a half-hour old, much more startling. He had the too raw and too new colours of an image hardly digested, much less faded. When she had last seen him she had been still in the sphere of an intense agitation. His ominous and sudden appearance, so hardly out of that, seemed to swallow up the space and time in between. It was like the chilly return of a circling storm. She had imagined that it depended on her to see him or not, that he was pensive except when persistently approached. But here he was, this time, at last, *following!*

(To be continued)

## JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

**A**N appreciation of J. Gould Fletcher as a poet would have been at any time no easy task. A prominent member of a new school of poets whose work involves the application of a new literary criterion, his importance as an artist could not have been estimated merely in terms of the value of what he had actually produced. The suggestive power and inspiration of his work, especially in the matter of technique, would have had to be taken into consideration. Recognizing clearly that it is upon emotion that all good poetry is based, he has endeavoured to develop in English a new mode of expression. Curiously enough, to this new mode the term "Imagist" ought not, strictly speaking, to be applied. His position, as expressed in his preface to *Irradiations* is fundamentally that of a "rhythmist" rather than that of an "Imagist." In this direction he has revealed such possibilities that it is unwise, in my opinion, to confuse the essential differences in form by a loose application of one term. The aim of the "Imagists" as they themselves declare, is "to present an Image"; they emphasize the plastic nature of the appeal made by poetry, though naturally not to the exclusion of the rhythmic. J. Gould Fletcher, on the other hand, accentuates the value of the rhythmic musical appeal, giving to images but a secondary place in his poetry. As he himself says: "I maintain that poetry is capable of as many gradations in cadence as music is in time. . . . The good poem is that in which all those effects (variations of tempo, etc.) are properly used to convey the underlying emotions of its author, and that which welds all these emotions into a work of art by the use of the dominant motif, subordinate themes, proportionate treatment, repetition, variation—what in music is called development, reversal of rôles and

return. This is a fundamentally different position from that adopted by the "Imagists" as such. It makes no difference to the fact to state that J. Gould Fletcher uses hard, clear-cut images frequently and beautifully. The themes of a symphony may be as definite in outline as any image, passages in the development may possess a similar clear-cut quality, but the method of treatment is essentially different. J. Gould Fletcher uses images exactly as though they were musical themes. In his sea symphony "Sand and Spray" rhythm plays the more important part, even in those poems—as "The Sands," "The Gulls" and "Night of Stars"—when the images are particularly effective, as can immediately be seen by reading them, first merely with the eye, and secondly, aloud, bringing out all the rhythmic variations. Again in the "Blue" and "Orange" symphonies, the repetition of rhythmical figures, sometimes varied slightly and developed, is more important than the images employed. Take, for example, in the second movement of the "Orange" symphony, the rhythmical repetition and contrast between:

Guns crashing,  
Thudding,  
Ululating,  
Tumultuous.

repeated later as:

Guns booming,  
Bellowing,  
Crashing,  
Desperate.

and

A leaf drops slowly in silence  
It is a long time twisting and turning on its way to earth.

repeated at conclusion as:

Like a leaf dropping slowly,  
An orange butterfly turning and twisting,  
I touch with moist passionate palms the leaden inscriptions  
Of my past, then I turn to depart.

The images in the second passage are indeed strikingly suitable and effective, but it is the rhythmical contrast that really tells. The results that J. Gould Fletcher has obtained in this form prove it to be of such value as to be worthy of consideration apart from the Imagist movement. True, for the adequate employment of such a form a knowledge of Imagist poetry is advisable if not essential; but it should always be clearly recognized that in essence the aims of J. Gould Fletcher are fundamentally different from those of the Imagist School.

This, the more formal side of his work, has been dealt with at some length because, in spite of many excellent poems, it is as pioneer that J. Gould Fletcher is chiefly important. This statement is not to be construed as implying a depreciatory criticism of his poetry. The two activities are quite distinct though they may and frequently do affect one another. In J. G. Fletcher's poetry, his innovations in form have not perhaps reached their most perfect expansion, but quite apart altogether from his novel forms, the qualities his work reveals are sufficient to place him amongst the most important of modern writers in English. These, being of a very personal nature, are somewhat difficult to define in general terms, but may perhaps be suggested by stating that the keynote to them is open responsiveness. His poems reveal that breadth of sympathy, that capacity for reacting freely to the most divergent of impressions, and that power of effective expression which stamps the true artist. Moods suggested by the sea in various aspects, by rain and fields and towns, by dancers and painted faces, moments of intense emotion—all are to be found in his work expressed with the same desire for inner truth and accuracy, if not always

with the same success. The drowsy languor of a poem like VI of his *Irradiations*—"An ant crawling up a grass-blade":

An ant crawling up a grass-blade,  
And above it, the sky.  
I shall remember these when I die:  
An ant and a butterfly  
And the sky.

The grass is full of forget-me-nots and poppies:  
Through the air darts many a fly.  
The ant toils up its grass-blade,  
The careless hours go by.

The grass-blades bow to the feet of the lazy hours:  
They walk out of the wood, showering shadows on flowers.  
Their robes flutter vaguely far off there in the clearing:  
I see them sometimes from the corner of my eye.

may be contrasted with the virile intensity of No. VIII of the same series: "The fountain blows its breathless spray":

The fountain blows its breathless spray  
From me to you and back to me.

Whipped, tossed, curdled,  
Crashing, quivering:  
I hurl kisses like blows upon your lips.  
The dance of a bee drunken with sunlight:  
Irradiant ecstasies, white and gold,  
Sigh and relapse.

The fountain tosses pallid spray  
Far in the sorrowful, silent sky.

And in his symphonies—"Sand and Spray," "The Blue," "The Orange"—he succeeds in achieving the extremely difficult task of conveying a basic mood, with its varying overtones. In this respect the "Blue Symphony" with its atmosphere of faintly regretful disillusion and calm resignation, lit up by sudden little joys, is perhaps the best of his longer poems. Here he seems to have expressed a subconscious mood with the conscious and transient emotions experienced while under its influence, and ever suggests the close relationship between the two. That which made such an achievement possible and which lends a charm to all his work is subtlety, subtlety—not in the sense of seeking and expressing new uncommon emotions, but of realizing with exactitude his own impressions and emotions, and conveying them without letting their contours be blurred by vague or general phrases. Such subtlety is the mark of the active, vital individual as compared with the man stifled by conventional ideal and habit. This is one of the dominant notes of Mr. Fletcher's work, and lines and passages produce that little stock of surprises which the accurate expression of a subconsciously realized but fairly common emotion brings.

In this connexion, of course, his power of discovering and employing the rhythm demanded by the subject, and of giving the apposite, almost inevitable image, plays a most important part. No. VIII of his *Irradiations*, for felicity of rhythm and image could scarcely be surpassed. The agitated rhythm of the opening lines; the rapid crescendo passing into the contented weariness of a soft *rallentando* of the following six lines; the *andante doloroso* of the final passage; the extraordinary effectiveness of the images and colours; all go to make the poem one of the most beautiful and adequate expressions in English of one of the intensest of human moods. Similarly, XIX of his *Irradiations*, the two movements entitled "The Gulls" and "Night of Stars" of his "Sand and Spray," "Station" of his "Londay Excursion"

and the whole of his "Blue Symphony" attain to this perfect harmony between rhythm and image and the emotion to be expressed, and will repay the most minute attention to the subtle colour contrasts and rhythmical variations which are never meaningless.

At the same time it should be noted that one of the chief reasons for their pre-eminence amongst his poems lies in the fact that in those he chooses as subjects moments of intense living, moments in which the fundamental qualities of human nature are touched. They are no vague moods of happiness or discontent, of energy or of weariness, but the culminating points of such moods, completely realized. Wherever, as in XXIX, XXX of his *Irradiations*, or in certain poems of his series, "Ghosts of an Old House," for example, Mr. Fletcher has taken a mood which is either vague or has not been completely realized, or realized, as in XXI of the same volume, in terms of the ideas connected with a mood, his work becomes distinctly weak. Such poems mark sharply the limitations of the form he advocates and employs. It is probably theoretically true that poetry is "as capable of as many gradations in cadence as music is in time," but practically, it must be admitted that few individuals at present possess the delicacy of ear and the sensitiveness of nature to the relationship between rhythm and emotion to make such gradations really expressive as soon as they become extremely subtle. Besides, on the purely theoretical basis, rhythm as such can only convey sensations and emotions built upon a definite sensational basis. Strictly speaking, an idea has no rhythmical equivalent, although its accompanying emotion may suggest one, and it is here that the advantages of a definite metrical form become more marked. It provides a definite emotional plane upon which certain ideas may be developed. It is true that the rhythmical expression of a series of sensations does give us a plane, but only a very concisely stated thought can be expressed without destroying the emotional tension created by the rhythm. The general effect of any development of ideas upon such an emotional plane is a destruction of the effectiveness of the rhythm and a reversion to prose. Yet it should be remembered that even those poems, which are the least successful of his works, are not without their value. They are always the direct expression of an intensely formal attitude to the world; they are never empty in the sense of giving nicely rounded, well-sounding phrases signifying nothing.

It is this which makes Mr. Fletcher's poetry valuable in itself as well as in the matter of technical developments—the uninterrupted note of personal expression. This, together with the capacity for realizing life in all its richness, is the essential quality of all poetry. Given these two factors, no old or outworn form can stifle poetry. New forms will inevitably be born of the new desires. It is in typifying this new spirit, as much as in developing new forms, that Mr. Fletcher is helping "to lay the foundations for a new flowering of English verse."

R. HERDMAN PENDER

*Ruhleben, Germany*  
June 1916

## DREISER PROTEST

WE regret the omission from our last issue of the name and address to which the "Dreiser Protest" should be sent by any one signing it. It should be sent to Mr. Harold Hersey, THE AUTHORS' LEAGUE, 33 West 42nd Street, New York City, U.S.A.

## THE WANDERING JEW

BY FEODOR SOLOGUB

*Translated from the Russian by JOHN COURNOS*

SOMETIMES one recalls something strange, something that does not conform at all with events and moods of the day. There is no doubt that a great movement is going on, and one feels the sacred truth of this movement, so opportunely freeing us from the oppressive bonds of stagnant existence. The creative legend\* is beginning to triumph. But one remembers now and then the image of quite another legend, long since created and not at all so blissful. The ceaseless torments of the eternal wanderer Ahasuerus again wounds the heart deeply. You reflect:

"Surely his soul is at ease by now?"

The legend has been created by evil people—would not Christ have forgiven? No, it is only men who do not forgive, and so Ahasuerus goes on roaming about the world, assuming various masks.

I recall a young litterateur, a dear, noble, gentle soul, with a pensive sparkle in his deep, dark eyes. I recall him because it is a long time since I have seen him. He is now in Berlin. About ten years ago he came to me several times during winter. I knew that he lived almost constantly in Germany and he came here only for a short time. I supposed he stopped at an hotel or with friends. But no, it proved that he dared not stop anywhere—though he was a Russian subject he had no right to live in St. Petersburg, just as now many have no right to live in Petrograd.

When he came visiting in the evening he always had a tired expression on his face.

"Have you worked hard?" some one would ask.

"Yes, a little," he would reply with a smile.

He always left when every one else left—and walked all night in the streets of the proud northern capital. He did not even dare sit down on a bench somewhere on the boulevard, in order not to attract the attention of the preservers of order. All night he had to walk from one street into another, now forward, now to the right, now to the left, never turning back, never traversing the same street twice. The magnificent spaces of Peter's city spread themselves out mightily before the eyes of the fatigued wanderer, and his footsteps resounded echoingly in the silence of dawn.

He was a Russian subject; though he lived across the borders of his native land, he was proud of being known as a Russian; he was confident that his legal and property interests, in case of necessity, would be carefully taken care of by our diplomats and consuls who are usually so attentive to Russians abroad, and that these interests would not only be looked after by local official favour, but also with all the might, all the dignity of the great empire.

But here in his native land, in the capital city of his country, this citizen, proud of his nationality abroad, trembled before every policeman—and he spent long nights in walking the streets of our beautiful but sad city. To the sound of the footsteps there responded the stone indifference of paving slabs and cobbles.

Perhaps this was necessary for some reason? Perhaps if this good and gentle man had passed the night under the roof of a human habitation it would have been to some one's injury, or some one would have fallen a victim to Jewish violence.

\* "The creative legend" is a favourite phrase of Sologub's, and a whole series of his novels are issued under that general title. Briefly, it implies the finer activity which ever goes on in life, and is perceived only by the imaginative person.

I don't know, but I think that the most essential though not the most material interest of the Russian Empire was violated by these wanderings of a Russian subject in the streets of the Russian capital—the interest of Russian dignity, and of the good name of the Russian.

Two thousand years ago the Apostle Paul bore the proud title of a Roman citizen, and this title sometimes saved him from unnecessary annoyances. Two thousand years are not sufficient for the rights of men to be established everywhere; nevertheless the name of a Russian subject should be respected in Russia as well as beyond Russia's borders.

## SEVENTEEN-SYLLABLE HOKKU POEMS

A TEMPLE by the clouds.  
Down march the days and the pains.  
What hear I, brothers?

What is Life? A voice,  
A thought, a light on the dark,—  
Lo, crow in the sky.

The seas sleep. The stars—  
They're where? Oh my loneliness!  
I gaze on my heart.

Bird-ships in the fields.  
"What news from another land, speak!"  
"A love-message, lord."

My memory-bird,  
To the night's rhythm, soft and sad;—  
O ghost, art' not tired?

Sudden pain of earth  
I hear in the fallen leaf.  
"Life's autumn," I cry.

Lift anchor, life-ship!  
Love's red seas, white fancy-birds,  
Behold,—and the blue.

Like that screen—our fate?  
Must slide open—you to left,  
And I to the right!

Won't you pity me?  
I, a dumb firefly,—tears sad  
Burn my love-heart.

The value of the seventeen-syllable Hokku poem of Japan is not in its physical directness, but in its psychological indirectness. To use a simile, it is like a dew upon lotus leaves of green, or under maple leaves of red, which, although it is nothing but a trifling drop of water, shines, glitters, and sparkles now pearl-white, then amethyst-blue, again ruby-red, according to the time of day and situation; better still to say, this Hokku is like a spider-thread laden with the white summer dews, swaying among the branches of a tree like an often invisible ghost in air, on the perfect balance; that sway indeed, not the thread itself, is the beauty of our seventeen-syllable poem.

YONE NOGUCHI

*Nakano, Japan, 1916*

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