THE EGOIST

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PASSING PARIS

The conferring of the Nobel (so easily spelt "Noble") prize on M. Romain Rolland has not been taken as a compliment on the literature of France by all his countrymen. As typically voicing the two parties who, the one, approve and, the other, disapprove, I will quote two newspapers—Les Hommes du Jour and L'Echo de Paris. The latter heralded the news with disgust:

"It appears that the committee of the Nobel prize has chosen M. Romain Rolland for its literary reward. It had been rumoured some time, but it was not easy to believe such information which seemed to savour of a coarse joke... . The extremely pacifist commission which solemnly distributes the legacy of Mr. Nobel, the famous war manufacturer, is most scrupulous about its neutrality. No doubt it endeavoured to avoid recompensing, during the war, a man of science or of letters belonging to a belligerent nation. But the whole of Europe is in flames. In these circumstances the neutral has become a rarity of price. The point was to discover the most remarkable neutral. Thus it was that M. Rolland occurred to the committee, of all neutrals the most neutral, and not merely a neutral by chance of birth, but neutral by free choice: neutral while the country in which he was born suffers invasion and which, for its deliverance and salvation, has spared no effort. The only Frenchman who has the sorry fatuity to keep aloof of the medley... ." and so on from the pen of one who has, apparently, since he is among us to write this un-noble article, the luck to keep himself if not "aloof" at least on one side of the medley, in that worthy army of soldiers, I mean goaders, of the tongue and pen.

The paragraph in Les Hommes du Jour might have been written in another planet:

The news of the conferring of the Nobel prize for 1915 on Romain Rolland is given out as ascertained. The decision was foreseen. It has earned sufficient insults to our friend to remove all doubts on his part that the surest honour had been conferred on him. He deserves it for a work of which it may be said that it is Truth and Beauty; he deserves it, too, for the incomparable courage which induced him from the early days of the war to keep burning, above instincts run riot, the light that shall not fail. We cannot here exhaust our gratification at having been among the first to protest against the stupidity which barked at his heels and the infamous Press whose only purpose it is to calumniate the pure and to soil the beautiful. As often as we could, but not as often as we should, we have cried: "Romain Rolland has remained the exemplary man, the enviable man, because his conscience has not vascillated, and for this reason he is of all Frenchmen the one who most draws love to France. The future will endorse this opinion," etc.

I do not say that either of these views is the equitable one, for the first is couched in such a form as to exclude consideration; while the second, by the superiority in tone over the other, tends to win the cause rather by its comparatively alluring advocacy than by the unexceptionable wisdom of its plea.

Like so much that is over- or under-rated Au-dessus de la Mêlée is neither as good nor as evil, neither as black nor as white, as it is painted. Bursting with passion, animated by quite other motives, its partisans and critics merely use it as a bone of contention, as a peg on which to hang their politics. Many have not read it at all, passing their judgment on hearsay or the title; others who have, read it through the distortions of their temper. In the discussions Romain Rolland is rather the pretext than the object for the display of preferences, politics, and prejudices.

The views of the French branch of the Red Cross Society to which M. Romain Rolland has handed over the entire value of his prize remain to be heard.

* * * *

From the standpoint of the Nobel prize clauses Mr. Clutton-Brock might have been, it would seem, a likely candidate, and some of us might have cared to elect Mr. G. K. Chesterton, whose Crimes of England, for instance, shows what ought to be said at this time rather than what ought to be left unsaid (as in Au-dessus de la Mêlée). This book, which has just
received a faultless rendering by M. Charles Grolleau at the firm of Crès et Cie, may quite well be compared with M. Rolland’s far more discussed and yet far less defined essay, for both are distinctly war essays and quite otherwise than bellicose. M. Rolland has not, as his detractors would have, turned his head away from the battle, rather has he tried to consider it from a sufficient distance to grasp it. And he has probably not succeeded. It is the chief grievance one may nurse against his book.

But Mr. Chesterton, being a great lyricist with a most practical mind, while M. Rolland is a fluent prosaist with an idealistic mind, M. Rolland is taken far more seriously than Mr. Chesterton. Here again the form deludes. Mr. Chesterton is always in the right because he is a poet, but M. Rolland is not necessarily either right or wrong because he is not.

* * * *

The deaths of Sinkiewicz and Verhaeren, both of international fame, each of peculiarly national character, followed close upon each other. They illustrate the theory that nationalism (in its racial and artistic, not political or social, expression) at its supremest joins the universal. The production of a national writer is so powerful, so insistent and irresistible that it cannot fail to reach far. Sinkiewicz personified Poland, and the world claims him (his most popular book was not his greatest), and Verhaeren’s tune was Flemish, yet the French are proud to claim his genius in part theirs.

Those who set out with universal aims fall into “No Man’s Land.” And they are flavourless like forced fruits.

* * * *

I have begun these notes with quotations of some nonsense and some semi-sense. I will conclude them with some full-sense by Rachilde as she expresses herself in La Vie for December. “I don’t very well understand French as she is being spoke just now,” she writes. “For instance, I always hear about embusqués. . . . Now I can never accustom myself to this mingling of public malignity in people’s private life [or do you mean private malignity in their public life, Madame Rachilde?]. Every other minute a well-informed—if ill-formed, on account of the fashion—a well-informed lady whispers into my ear: ‘His cousin is the brother of the wife of the Minister’s secretary,’ and then adds: ‘D’you catch? I don’t catch anything, for if he’s there, that young man, he is no doubt obeying instructions, and even though the Minister himself were his cousin, he must stay there.’

One said, “War changes no one: the sensible remain sensible; the fools, fools.” I fear the war makes fools more foolish and of the wise fools too. . . . For think of all the folly we have all said and written—since the war, while what might have been sense once is not necessarily sense now. Perhaps it is a war against sense?

M. C.

P.S.—Three books: Le Vent des Cimes by Isabelle Kaiser (Perrin, Paris, 3 fr. 50). Every one knows Switzerland but few know the Swiss. These clean-cut stories will introduce them and are worth attempting.

Un Roman Civil en 1914 by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus (Pasquelle, Paris, 3 fr. 50.) An oblique view of the war, lively and touching.

Almanach Crès (Crès, 3 fr. 50). “Specimens” in prose and picture.

NOTICE

Chapter V of the “Lingual Psychology” series by Miss Marsden, “Seven Related Definitions,” will be continued in the next issue of The Egoist.

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TWO POEMS

BY H. D.

THE GOD

I

ASKED of your face:
is it dark,
set beneath heavy locks,
circled with stiff ivy-fruit,
clear,
cut with great hammer-stroke,
brow, nose and mouth,
mysterious and far distant from my sense.

I asked:

can he from his portals of ebony
carved with grapes,
turn toward the earth?

I even spoke this blasphemy
in my thoughts:

the earth is evil,
given over to evil—
we are lost.

II

And in a moment
you have altered this.

Beneath my feet, the rocks
have no weight
against the rush of cyclamen,
fire-tipped, ivory-pointed,
white.

Beneath my feet the flat rocks
have no strength
against the deep purple flower-embers,

cyclamen, wine-spilled.

III

As I stood among the bare rocks
where salt lay,
peeled and flaked
in its white drift,

I thought I would be the last
you would want,
I thought I would but scatter salt
on the ripe grapes.

I thought the vine-leaves
would curl under,
leaf and leaf-point
at my touch,

the yellow and green grapes
would have dropped,
my very glance must shatter
the purple fruit.

I had drawn away into the salt,
myself, a shell
emptied of life.

IV

I pluck the cyclamen
red by wine-red
and place the petals
stiff ivory and bright fire
against my flesh.

Now I am powerless
to draw back
for the sea is cyclamen-purple,
cyclamen-red, colour of the last grapes,
colour of the purple of the flowers,
cyclamen-coloured and dark.

ADONIS

Each of us like you
has died once,
each of us like you
has passed through drift of wood-leaves,
cracked and bent
and tortured and unbent
in the winter frost—
then burnt into gold points,
lighted afresh,
crisp amber, scales of gold-leaf,
gold turned and rewelded
in the sun-heat.

Each of us like you
has died once,
each of us has crossed an old wood-path
and found the winter leaves
so golden in the sun-fire
that even the live wood-flowers
were dark.

Not the gold on the temple-front
where you stand,
is as gold as this,
not the gold that fastens your sandal,
ner the gold reft
through your chiselled locks
is as gold as this last year's leaf,
not all the gold hammered and wrought
and beaten
on your lover's face,
brow and bare breast
is as golden as this.

Each of us like you
has died once,
each of us like you
stands apart, like you
fit to be worshipped.

THE SCENE-MODELS OF NORMAN MACDERMOTT

I t is possible to go round all the theatres in
London without being alarmed by any sugges-
tion of modern ideals in stage decoration.
Once at the Savoy a play resembling A Midsom-
mer Night's Dream was staged in a fashion resem-
bling modern ideas in the setting of plays. This
has been done not only by the walling-up of those four
or five doors through which wives and maids retreated
madly into bedrooms, but by attempts to suggest an
illusory perspective in the place of the stark abur-
dities of the back drop. But while the master
craftsmen of the Russian Art Theatre have produced
some beautiful and some impressive settings, this
effort after naturalness does not promise the greatest
things, and has not achieved the finest. That is not
to be expected from imitation, however skilful.

The significant work in the theatre is being done
by the men who have another ideal than that of
producing a successful illusion. They have under-
stood that in setting a scene from Macbeth it is not
enough to build a castle that does not obviously flap
in the wind from the wings, with a few men-at-arms
in the correct costume of the period. Such a setting
is at best not disagreeably obtrusive. At worst, it
becomes the horrid medley of the production of
Ibsen's Pretenders at the Haymarket, which with its
noisy warriors and feudal trappings suggested nothing
more than a cinematograph film of Beowulf. When
the craftsmen of the new ideal designs a setting for
Macbeth he attempts to express through it the spirit
that broods and mutters in the words and actions of
the two drive murderers. He attempts and achieves
simplicity—because simplicity, that is, the insistence
on essentials, the creation of a clear, significant
image, is the first condition of art. He attempts
and achieves beauty, because form and line are
beautiful even in the service of tragedy and sin. But
more than this, he attempts, by means of his setting,
to concentrate eye and ear on the dominant mood
emotion of the scene, or to fashion a symbol of the
spirit beneath the external action. He attempts, in
fact, to create a rhythm of which words, action, and
setting are all parts. From a mass of conflicting
emotions he selects—by virtue of intellect and of
intuition, which is the intellect of the heart—the
dominant emotion, the soul of the action.

Mr. Macdermott's setting for the Courtyard scene in
Macbeth has simplicity, as it has beauty; but beyond this it
expresses and interprets the mood of the scene.
From the cold grey-blue spaces of the Courtyard, steps
lead up to a great open door, through which dark
figures pass into a fierce flamelike glow—even
as they are passing from the calm of reason to their
passionate resolve to murder the king.

There is a danger in this insistence on line and
beauty of form—danger from the selfishness of
the artist. It is always possible that the setting created
to express and emphasize the spirit of a drama
action may end in swallowing up the whole of the
emphasis, reducing the action to a mime, and the
words to an echo sent back from the hollow vaults
of space. Even as in Mr. Craig's well-known design,
the colossal door swallows up the anger and the
fierce-flung vengeance of Elektra, until she seems
a puny wretch, mouthing and ranting to the air.

It would be unwise to leave unnoted its dangers. At
the end Mr. Craig, not content that his settings
should interpret the drama, would have drama
written to fit his artistic vision. His characteristic
designs do not merely dwarf the actors, as those vast
spaces of the Court yard scene in Macbeth
would be difficult to overestimate the strength of the
impulse given to stage decoration by Mr. Craig.
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the end Mr. Craig, not content that his settings
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written to fit his artistic vision. His characteristic
designs do not merely dwarf the actors, as those vast
for *Macbeth* holds the balance between action and setting, and achieves a perfect dramatic harmony. Further, Mr. Macdermott’s work shows a delight in colour and light. The electric light, the electric coloration. In his lighting, the radiant face of a moonlight, the myriad-shaded darkness of a summer night—all these are in his models; and as well as these, a deft use of colour to produce a pictorial beauty, something after the manner of George Fuchs of Munich. There are two models for Andrei’s *A Merry Death*. One is the grey curtain before which Pierrot, in grey and lemon-yellow, speaks the Prologue to *Hamlet*. The other is Harlequin’s house. Here, all is a vivid elfin-green, at once subdued and emphasized by a subtle use of black. The bed, set in a recess at the back, has a green coverlet with the gaunt mask stencilled in black. The black mask stars from the green curtain. The right and the green door on the left. The slender, black lines of a grandfather clock thrust upwards against the curtain, two chairs, a table, all starkly black and simple of line, complete the balance of colour. In a scene for a Salome dance is the same conventional beauty with more of audacity in the colouring. Again black is the unifying motif of a vivid light. A shadow plays behind the black pillars of the door at the back, and the black of the two thrones set at the left, repeated in the black and white mosaic of the floor, gives weight and depth to the deep orange curtains with which the whole is hung.

There is another danger in the path of the modern theatre artist. He is in the attempt to transport to the stage the charm of the pictured scene. In its more fantastic forms this has led to the creation of such scenes as Bakst’s design for *Hélène de Sparte*. Crazy shrines, and rocks full of grinning human and animal faces start in barbaric colours from the back drop. In its more conventional forms it has prompted various devices for giving life and naturalness to the painted canvas by the dexterous use of lighting. Now it is clear that colour painted on canvas—whatever beauty it may have of its own—can never have either the depth or the flexibility of colour produced by light thrown on a neutral surface. It is equally a mistake that a theatrical craftsman should study intimately the nature of the materials in which he must work—silks and cloths, colour and light. Mr. Macdermott draws no designs for his settings: he works direct in the actual material of his art, so that his scene-models, with their extraordinary illusion of space and depth, give a clear and accurate idea of the dexterous use of black in the larger spaces of the theatre. And further, in his recognition of the tremendous possibilities of light in stage settings, he stands in the foremost line of European producers. He says of his work:

"In my own scene-models colour has to a great extent deserted the actual canvas, cloth, etc., of the scene, and given the main outlines in the light thrown thereon. There is one which, unlit, is ivory-white even to the door. "..."In a scene for a Salome dance is the same conventional beauty with more of audacity in the colouring. Again black is the unifying motif of a vivid light. A shadow plays behind the black pillars of the door at the back, and the black of the two thrones set at the left, repeated in the black and white mosaic of the floor, gives weight and depth to the deep orange curtains with which the whole is hung."

One scene there is which for beauty and power of suggestion surpasses the others. It is the setting for a night scene in *The Vikings at Heligoland*. On the edge of cliffs above the sea a group of pines stands out against the dusky blue of a night sky. They are not black, but a deep living brown. Beyond them the darkness goes out to the edge of the world: below them lies the unseen verge of the sea. I do not know a more impressive or a more beautiful setting in the work of any European producer. It is in his masterly use of lighting, and his sense of artistic balance and harmony, Mr. Macdermott comes at once into line with the forward movement throughout Europe. This movement towards a finer and nobler dramatic rhythm is seen most clearly of all in the work of the stage decorator. Among the dramatic artists who have attempted it only two have achieved a measure of success. The words and action of Chekov’s plays form—imperfectly, it is true—a rhythm through which his characters and his concept of life struggle for expression. And in the changing verse of his *Edipus und die Sphinx*, Hofmannsthal attempts to create a dramatic form responsive to every change of mood and action. There are, on the one hand, the brightly lit scenes of such great artists who have done more than dream of harmony in stage-setting: they have achieved it. At the last it may be said that when the great dramatist of the future reaches the theatre he will find the artists waiting for him, already in possession of a supple and highly expressive means of interpreting his vision. And among these artists, England—for all the banality of their scenes—may hope, by virtue of the work of two men, of Mr. Craig and Mr. Macdermott.

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HELEN AND FULVIA

HELEN. I must hear your side of a story which Augustus told me a little while ago. Before it is true, Fulvia, you too looked upon him; with some favour, but that, when he did not respond, you stirred up your husband, Mark Antony, to make war upon him?

Fulvia. Very true, my dear Helen, and now that we are all ghosts there can be no harm in confessing it. Mark Antony was daft over the comedienne she was; but Augustus was fuzzy about his mistresses, he found me neither young enough nor sufficiently pretty, and though I showed him quite clearly that he was undertaking a civil war through default of a few attentions to me, it was impossible to make him agreeable. I will even recite to you, if you like, some verses which he made of the matter, although they are not the least complimentary:

Because Mark Antony is charmed with the Gaphira,
It was by that name that he called Citherida.
Fulvia wants to break me with her eyes,
Her Antony is faithless, what? Who cries:
Augustus pays Mark's debts, or he must fear her.
Must I, Augustus, come when Fulvia calls
Merely because she wants me?
At that rate, I'd have on my back
A thousand wives unsatisfied.
Love me, she says, or fight. The fates declare:
She is too ugly. Let the trumpets blare.

Helen. You and I, then, between us have caused the two greatest wars on record?

Fulvia. With this difference: you caused the Trojan War by your beauty, I that of Antony and Augustus by the opposite quality.

Helen. But still you have an advantage, your war was much more enjoyable. My husband avenged himself for an insult done him by loving me, which is quite common, yours avenged himself because a certain man had not loved you, and this is not ordinary at all.

Fulvia. Yes, but Antony didn’t know that he was making his war on my account, while Menelaus with all the Greeks behind him besieged Troy for ten years to tear you from Paris's arms yet if Paris had insisted on giving you up, would not Menelaus, instead of all this, have had to stand ten years siege in Sparta to keep from taking you back? Frankly I think your Trojans and Greeks deficient in humour, half of them silly to want you returned, the other half still more silly to keep you. Why should so many honest folk be immolated to the pleasures of one young man who was ignorant of what he was doing? I cannot help smiling at that passage in Homer where after nine years of war wherein one had just lost so many people, he assembles a council behind the enemy lines to ask if they should surrender you, I should have thought there was scant cause for hesitation, save that one might have regretted not having thought of this expedient long before. However, Paris bears witness that he mislikes the proposal, and Priam, who was, as Homer tells us, peer to the gods in wisdom, being embarrassed to see his Cabinet divided on such a delicate matter, not knowing which side to choose, orders every one to go home to supper.

Helen. The Trojan War has at least this in its favour, its ridiculous features are quite apparent, but the war between Augustus and Anthony did not show its reality. When one saw so great a number of Imperial eagles surging about the land, no one thought of supposing that the cause of their mutual animosity was Augustus’s refusal to you of his favours.

Fulvia. So it goes, we see men in great commotions, but the sources and springs are for the most part quite trivial and ridiculous. It is important for glory of great events that their causes be hidden.

FRENCH POEMS

UNE ROSE

UNE rose pour la douce, un sonnet pour l'ami,
Le battement de mon cœur pour guider le rythme des ronds;
L'ennui pour moi, le vin des rois pour mon ennui
Et pour consoler mon secret, le son
Des rouets qui tissent la robe des moribonds.

Un quart d'heure et une bague pour la plus rieuse,
Un sourire et une dague pour le plus discret;
Et pour la fin de mon secret
D'illusions et de vins dans les miroirs couleur de pluie,
Des vieilles qui grelottent au seuil des mausolées.

Le rubis d'un rire dans l'or des cheveux, pour elle,
L'opale d'un soupir, dans le clair de lune, pour lui;
Pour la moue des ancêtres ma forme qui chancelle
D'illusions et de vins dans les miroirs couleur de pluie,
Pour la croix du blason, une parole pieuse.

Mon saut pour la révérence de l'étrangère,
Ma main à baiser pour le confident,
Le rubis d'un rire dans l'or des cheveux, pour elle,
Pour la croix du blason, une parole pieuse.

La complainte, pour mon secret, dans le lointain,
Levez-vous, j'ai dévoilé le beau visage sévère
Qui haletez dans le chaleur des hameaux endormis
Sur mes genoux,
Levez-vous, j'ai dévoilé le beau visage sévère

LE CHANT DE LA MONTAGNE

Comme la féconde aux larges hanches ensoleillées
De midi,
Comme la grande et fière moissonneuse dans la paix
Et pour la fin de mon secret
Un grand sommeil de pauvre dans un cercueil doré.

Comme la grande et fière moissonneuse dans la paix
De midi,
Comme l'épouse aux bras puissants du laboureur,
L'opale d'un soupir, dans le clair de lune, pour lui;
Le vin des rois pour mon ennui,
Pour la croix du blason, une parole pieuse.

Hommes de la ville couchée à mes pieds de granit
Les vieilles qui grelottent au seuil des mausolées.

Levez-vous, j'ai dévoilé le beau visage sévère
Qui haletez dans le chaleur des hameaux endormis
Sur mes genoux,
Levez-vous, j'ai dévoilé le beau visage sévère

Dix monnaies d'or pour chaque mot de prière
Des fossoyeurs ; pour l'évêque luisant
Le soupir d'une jeune fille pour son amant
Pour la croix du blason, une parole pieuse.

Des foisonnantes, pour l'évêque luisant
La complainte, pour mon secret, dans le lointain,
Mon orgueil pour la vanité de tout le monde,
Le vin des rois pour mon ennui,
Pour la croix du blason, une parole pieuse.

Mon saut pour la révérence de l'étrangère,
Ma main à baiser pour le confident,
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THE DEATH OF FUTURISM

By JOHN COURNOS

Art is the expression of one's desire. When that desire is fulfilled in life, that is to say when it has ceased being an imaginative expression and has passed into actuality, the art which had been its prophetic expression is dead as an art.

Art is not life. An art when it has passed over into life has ceased being an art. An art fulfilled is an art dead, just as a fulfilled prophecy is dead.

Nothing is easier to prove than that Futurism is dead—as an art. And not alone Futurism, but also Vorticism and all those "brother" arts, whose masculomanic spokesmen spoke glibly in their green-red-and-yellow-becushioned boudoirs of "the glory of war" and "contempt for women," of the necessity of "draughts," "blasts," and "blizzards,

of "maximum energy" and "dispersed energy," etc. etc.

I am quite well aware that the Futurists and the Vorticists offer different theories as to the application of "energy," but that one energy is "dispersed" and the other "stationary" is of small present concern. If these two schools disagree on the adjective, they agree at least on the noun: energy was the great cry of both schools. And WAR was in the minds of both.

Marinetti openly talked War. And one has but to look through the pages of the first number of Blast to read praises of modern invention, and see pictures entitled "Plan of War" and "Slow Attack"—curiously abstract representations of modern warfare, which now seem like wonderful prophecies. And the Vorticist manifesto even speaks of a "laugh like a bomb." To talk of a laugh like that was all very well in times of peace, even very natural. Even we who are not the artists, like the rest of the world, are always a reaction from environment. Only little opposite is nearer the truth: great art is nearly always a reaction from environment. What Futurist, either in the trenches or at home, honestly desires war to continue? What Vorticist?

At least one English Futurist, judging from his new pictures, answers my question in the only way it can be answered. It is Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson, whose fine war pictures exhibited recently at the Leicester Galleries are, it is generally agreed, the best pictorial protest against war that has yet been shown, and Mr. Nevinson has seen the war at first hand. And this protest is effective precisely because the artist has expressed it in unfuturist terms. I do not want to overstate my case, or do injustice to Mr. Nevinson, who, except for a half-dozen purely abstract pictures, preserves just enough of the geometric touch to give poignancy to the mechanical nature of our age and to the machine-like qualities of our armies. It is a question whether he means to raise that, though it is true he finds decorative values in wire entanglements and in the busy docks at Southampton. It is also true that he has made a Bursting Shell look like a glorified catherine-wheel, and an Explosion like the sharp rays of a sunrise: had not the artist supplied a name to this picture it might just as easily have been taken to represent "Peace on earth," solemn to meditation, rather than the introduction to the catalogue, Sir Ian Hamilton, ascribes all sorts of mystic qualities to Mr. Nevinson's paintings—but what Futurist ever wanted to be connected with mysticism?

But the good impression Mr. Nevinson makes with his paintings he somewhat spoils with his "note" in the catalogue. To quote a few sentences:

"Every artist of living force has always and must be an outgrowth and spokesman of his time. It is impossible to express the scientific and mechanical spirit of this twentieth-century war with the languishing or obsolete symbolism of Medieval or Classic Art. . . . Already long before the war young English artists in Latin countries and England were seeking wider inspiration than in the sickly worship of the nude and the over-sensual broodings of our elders which showed themselves in the literature and art of the Yellow Book, in "advanced dramas," and in some of the Pré-Raphaelites, a tendency largely due to trivial lives possessing no other conception of adventure or emotion than sex . . . . The intensity of the present time is producing a vital art in England . . . ."

All this is very sweeping, very confusing, a mixture of half-truths. As for the last statement I quote from Mr. Nevinson I defy any one to prove that there is any truth in it at all.

In the first place, Mr. Nevinson assumes that all art falls in with life, moreover that life imposes its will upon art and the artist, and that art at best can only serve as a handmaiden to life. That is an old quarrel which Oscar Wilde has answered handsomely in his Decay of Lying. The plausible theory set forth in this essay is that art is greater than life, that art—the world of the imagination created by the artist's will—projects itself into life, the world of reality, to which it gives colour and in which it inspires a spirit of emulation.

But what is Mr. Nevinson's ideal? It is that this is a scientific age, and that art must therefore adopt a scientific formula. To say this is to imply that art is always the result of environment, whereas the opposite is nearer the truth: great art is nearly always a reaction from environment. Only little
The sketches are an analysis of the successive influences which he voluntarily underwent; the portrait is the praise of his last book, Lustra.

There has been an odd insistence in the way Pound has invoked the domination of the great writers. With the exception of those old writers who influenced his youth, he has treated other poets with a savage familiarity. I can believe that some of his inspirers might have found him disturbing, rather intemperate, often impertinent.

Ezra Pound is the bite of the champagne. It is not the best part of the wine, but the most important. It is the charm of the wine, its piquant though superficial spirit. I spend a few seconds the foam has something which the full-bodied wine can never have. The foam shows what the wine is like. That is how Pound's intelligence does with the wine of his work.

I mean, for instance, that when he imitated the Troubadours he did not take their genius from them, but assumed the characteristics of a sort of fixed expression. He is a Troubadour, but in spite of meaning to be faithful he is freer than his old models of the south.

Even while trying to obey a foreign inspiration his mind was always noting a thousand modern resemblances of thought and word, and one finds traces of this in every work of his. There is a contempt does not imply indifference, but the worst that can add to a work of art, that Pound adds. He is the translator essentially unfaithful. His active intelligence goes beyond mere bookish imitation. When he brings the old wine out of the bottle, the atmosphere in which he lives, his quick mind, naturally bites in its methods, in a word, the ardent quality of his whole personality, are fused in the old wine.

The wine itself, however, almost disowns this sparkle. Pound does not interfere with the genius of foreign work; but whatever intelligence and liberty of thought, the destructive spirit, and imagination can add to a work of art, that Pound adds. One can only regret one thing, that the poet should have used this, so personal an effervescence, on work that is not his own; but one regrets it only in the long poems, in the Troubadour manner, which overshadow the cloistered romance of Petit Jehan de la Saintre.

An unfaithful translator! Nevertheless no other esse has given himself so generously up to influence. Pound thinks it is a good thing to submit to it in full awareness of the fact.

This is, no doubt, true for many of us, as it is certain that copying the best drawings of the masters is good for the pupil. One must choose between Michelangelo and Alma Tadema, between Dante and Milton. At about seventeen Pound admires Dante, for must one not first admire God and the Mystery? Before becoming united, he thinks that one must worship it as an external thing. We cannot take a young man seriously who has not adored some formal God quite simply. It is easy to guess that Pound's depth of thought led him to find more human and approachable masters. In any case it showed him Milton. But the encumbered, heavy rhetoric of Paradise Lost must certainly have driven him to the hardness, the incisive form of the Divin
Comedy. Moreover the clearness and strength of precision struck his imagination from the first. He was always thinking about freeing himself from any indirect construction of phrase, and with a view to this he translated Guido Cavalcanti. He wanted to examine the crude, sincere manner of the poet, and enjoyed studying his keen method of expression; he admired the way in which this Italian wrote of love and reality, and though there are many images in Guido's translations, they are never Petrarchian metaphors, pretty enough, but with no claim to be anything but metaphor.

I should be invading the province of the critic if I here analysed the way in which Pound was influenced,—and what were those influences?—if I told all the accidents and adventures of his literary life. I could not, and I do not wish to do it. Here a poet speaks of a poet. Still, Ezra Pound’s past is very near his present; his last books are very near his first. That is why I must speak of them rapidly, leaving it to good critics of the future to make impartial judgments and comparisons, and to build up the whole structure of the poet’s work—adorned, defended, qualified, and commented.

* * * *

Browning, solid, unornamented, historical, first charmed him by his frank simplicity. I think one might say that a kind of rusticity in the Camberwell poet attracted Pound’s attention, but not for long. Pound perhaps owes his early discovery of the Troubadours to a young professor, who loved their poetry.* For at the university in America, one has to discover the Troubadours, also life and art, for oneself.

In Personœ, published in the spring of 1909, and Exultations, in the autumn of the same year, the reader can find subtle traces of the Troubadour influence. Read La Fraîne, Na Audiat, A Villonaud. Ballad of the Gibbet, etc. The names of several will help the critic. The latter may be puzzled by certain strong characteristics in Exultations, work of the first year Pound spent in London; but they are not really surprising, given the way in which he was attracted by the qualities of clearness and firmness in the old writers. Further, they are less surprising if one knows the poems which he published later, and especially those of to-day. In Exultations the virile note sounds with strange and rather crude strength, and the poet was reproached for it. The Goody Fere was perhaps the finest thing in the book, with Pierre Vidal and Scénine Altaforte. Pound here shows himself in process of becoming as we now know him.

To the translation of Guido, which he undertook in order to free himself from a certain stiffness and rudeness of style with which he might be charged, we must add his third selection of verses, Canzoni. In making the translation he was thinking of the public, of the good judge, or even of those who merely make a claim to be good judges. In writing Canzoni he did the same. The love of fighting in the cause of liberty which one always finds in Pound is here very marked, and even more so in the following collection, Ripostes. In Canzoni the protest is still a latent argument; he seems to want to prove that though he writes vers libre he is still capable of writing in regular metre. It is only about five years since vers libre has ceased to be looked upon in England either as the art of a magician or a practical joker. Have not Virgil and Shakespeare both written vers libre? And yet till Swinburne, poetry was only a rigid vehicle for ideas, and nearly always for morals.

But Ripostes ought, it seems to me, to give its title to the book that follows it. Between the writing of the two, Pound has had a revelation. He sees the world in harder outline, its gin is changed. I find some “sweetness” in Ripostes which is not in Lustra. Still, the value of Ripostes lies in the poet’s point of view. His style is formed, he awaits a shock. The energy which we find all through Lustra is shown in the poem called Return; and in Doria and A Girl, out of that same Ripostes of 1912, he seems, having got his strength, to put away the old harmonies of poetry—so well, too well known to us.

Here is

**Aquarius**

Be in me as the eternal moods of the bleak wind, and not As transient things are—

As of the valley of flowers.

Have me in the strong loneliness of sunless cliffs And of grey waters.

Let the gods speak softly of us

In days hereafter.

The shadowy flowers of Orcus Remember thee.

One must add to all the successive influences which he experiences that of the Chinese poets, as we shall see later; that of the youngest French poets, and of William Butler Yeats, the great living poet to whom all the jeunes have listened. Pound, no doubt, admired him when he first came to London. Pound was then twenty-two. After having been a professor in America he embarked for Europe. He went to Venice, where he published A lume spento in 1908. He only stayed five months in Venice, but has since been back every year to Italy.

Before writing about his last book I think it is important to point out that he has published a very suggestive memoir of Gaudier Brzeska, and that he was one of the Blast contributors. It is less important to mention the studies in one volume (The Spirit of Romance) which form a sort of thesis. They contain a great deal of learning and knowledge—the work of a very good scholar. Let us go on to the very good poet.

(To be continued)
I THINK that if there is a general ground on
which the war may be congratulated, the quickening of a universal spirit of democratic individualism would be the thing. It would be the spirit breaking up large organizations and uniting men by an act of intelligence rather than of intellect, in small individualized democratic groups.

In England, which is undergoing a profound industrial transformation, we know it is the case, for there a movement towards the reorganization of National Groups composed of individualized yet socially communicative units, has actually and actively begun. In more than a theoretical way, pre-war industrial formations are being profoundly shattered, and there is, in fact, a very great promise that they soon will be replaced by others set in motion by something reminding us of a restoration of the Medieval Guild system upon an industrial ground rarely refined by present-day economic and war-time experiences. So we certainly are going to get, presently, independent and economically complete industrial communities, self-subsisting, and self-governed so far as these powers can be attracted from a totally wrong, but changing, conception of civilized life.

The case of France, where social interest is concerned just now, is somewhat similar. A desire for decentralization has set in motion a breaking-up from which individualized and economically complete group formations may be expected to emerge. The French grouping, however, is not likely to proceed precisely on the same line as the English on account of its political and social origins being so different from our own. England is, as yet, only dusting the lid of political interests, beneath which lie concealed our vast spiritual inheritances. France, on the other hand, stands uprooted from the political soil contemplating its wondrous spiritual inheritance. So one may say that in England the economic is still the end; in France it is a means.

What the French decentralizing tendency has sprung from is really an acute discontent with the Napoleonic system of central administration; a reaction against machine-age materialism; the civic renaissance which caught France on its crest some years ago; and the more recent discovery of the secret of the greatness of France. I believe the discontent was clearly described by J. C. Boucher in his remarkable volume on France. Professor Mark Baldwin has confirmed the news of the rebirth and growth of a fruitful idealism urging France forward to spiritual excellence, offering it a revaluation of individual freedom, and cancelling the opinion contained in Mr. Hallam's very significant book, "Cardinal Manning and Other Essays," that the soul of France is sinking under the dreadful weight of strengthening materialism and declining force of spiritual ideals. The civic wave lifted France in sight of the City-State idea of the early Greeks, the development of town-planning and village commonwealth ideals, where the "Ile de Age" grew out of the determinism of Le Play and its offspring, the science of human geography, as its inventor, G. R. Enoeck, describes it in "The Tropics," his important contribution to constructive economics. The said momentous discovery faced France with the requirements of its native genius, and told it how it had grown more and more inspired, in the past, and to larger constitute its vivid career in the future. Clearly, in this, France had hit upon one of the choicest phases of its eternal luck. Think what might happen to England if some one were to discover the secret of its greatness—discover its soul. Then indeed it could score off the abounding truthsayers who sit ever upon its back, like a Sindbad, exclaiming, "Bah! You have no soul—only legs." And then it could ask itself one or two straight questions and live vividly ever after answering them.

France has a life of the sort before it. Those who discovered its secret—Professor H. J. Fleure foremost among them—are inviting it to pay strict attention to vital facts of place and circumstance, and to derive sustenance and direction from them. What are these facts? In sum they reveal that France always to vital facts of place and circumstance, and to derive sustenance and direction from them. What are these facts? In sum they reveal that France always to vital facts of place and circumstance, and to derive sustenance and direction from them. What are these facts? In sum they reveal that France always to vital facts of place and circumstance, and to derive sustenance and direction from them. What are these facts? In sum they reveal that France always to vital facts of place and circumstance, and to derive sustenance and direction from them. What are these facts? In sum they reveal that France always to vital facts of place and circumstance, and to derive sustenance and direction from them. What are these facts? In sum they reveal that France always.
appointed for the most important office conceivable. So that, as I say, France might always operate as the refining agency of the Western world. It follows of course that if the diversity be not maintained, the advantage which characterizes it disappears also. So far the aforesaid central administration has failed to maintain it. Hence the reaction.

I have referred to the two streams of group development flowing side by side in England and France, not so much because I wish to indicate their fount and nature, but because I feel they mean ever so much more to us than appears at the surface. They mean a great deal more than any one has ventured to tell us. What they mean is a renewal of individual man. Perhaps I shall be better understood if I say a restoration of quality instead of quantity. Impressed upon this proposed new group formation of mankind is surely the image of the self-controlled, self-subsisting individual, the economically complete man, if we like. An image representing the reunion of all those fine parts of individual man which the gross superstitition of social service has separated. Is this vision of coming events so fanciful in the light of actual happenings? I think not. Let me say of the new groups that each group will be designed to form a unit of associated activity. This unit is an ideal conceived by the very latest industrial and economic reformer to promote the production by men in highest association of the maximum amount of energy-wealth, or quality-wealth, not money or quantity-wealth. So each unit of the group-unit represents more energy, and together the group represents the ideal sum of energy. Yet, when we come to think of it, all these units forming one unit together only represent an expanded unit, and all this energy represents but an expansion of energy. That is to say, an expansion of the ideal man and his ideal energy, or of the perfect man towards which Nature ever directs its kindest glance. So the unit of units is simply the expanded form of ideal man before servility and deputizing arose to break him into infinitesimal social pieces. Now suppose the present tendency towards contraction infects the new groups after they are formed. What then is to prevent quality squeezing and squeezing them till all quantity is squeezed out and nothing remains but one-man groups. This would be in strict accordance with the proper direction towards salvation. From State-appropriation and Social-appropriation to Self-appropriation. Higher than this no man could go—even on wings. Anyhow, it is a fascinating matter for reflection. There I leave it.

**AMERICAN POEMS**

**PORTRAIT**

LIKE an oldish wooden wall in the summer daylight
Your shadow; the shadows with their fleshy glamour are gone;
Only persistent scrutiny
Will find a bit of tremulous blue or a faint streak of orange
On the veined boards.

Your soul is like the dried and slightly crumpled petals
Which are your eyes.
Yet there is a small brook
With many little groves of corrugated sunlight
And tinged here and there with sprays of colour;
Pale trembling blue, dashes of rose, gold and purple,
Shivering, broken as in a Chinese design,
In which your soul loves to retire: to swim coyly

---

Or to raise a playful spray, to inhale the odour.
It finds there a mild inebriety
And some strength.

**TREES IN THE TENEMENT DISTRICT**

It were as though the earth
Forgiving the ugly houses they built over it
And the sidewalks and thoroughfares
And compassionate toward the men and women drudges
Had tendered them these
Strong, rugged and large flowers.

---

**OFF!**

Gon,
Over our ugly buildings
Why did you bend out
Your beautiful ravishing sky,
Take it off.
Let them jag
The emptiness.

MAX MICHELSOHN

**TARR**

BY WYNDHAM LEWIS

**PART V**

**A MEGRIM OF HUMOUR**

**CHAPTER I**

SOME days later, in the evening, Tarr was to be found in a strange place. Decidedly his hosts could not have explained how he got there. He displayed no consciousness of the anomaly. He had introduced himself—now for the second time—into Fraulein Lipmann's aesthetic saloon, after dining with her and her following at Flobert's Restaurant. As inexplicable as Kreisler's former visits, these ones that Tarr began to make were not so perfectly unwelcome. There was a glimmering of meaning in them for Bertha's women friends. He had just walked in two nights before, as though he were an old and established visitor there, shaken meaning in them for Bertha's women friends. He then listened to their music, drank their coffee and went away apparently satisfied. Did he consider that his so close connexion with Bertha entitled him to this? It was at all events a prerogative he had never before availed himself of, except on one or two occasions at first, in her company.

The women's explanation of this eccentric sudden frequentation was that Tarr was in despair. His separation from Bertha (or her conduct with Kreisler) had hit him hard. He wished for consolation or mediation.

Neither of these guesses was right. It was really something absurder than that that had brought him there.

Only a week or ten days away from his love affair with Bertha, Tarr was now coming back to the old haunts and precincts of his infatuation. He was living it all over again in memory, the central and all the accessory figures still in exactly the same place. Suddenly, everything to do with "those days," as he thought of a week or two before (or what had ended officially then) had become very pleasing.

Bertha's women friends were delightful landmarks. Tarr could not understand how it was he had not taken an interest in them before. They had so much of the German savour of that life lived with Bertha about them!

But not only with them, but with Bertha herself he
was likewise carrying on this mysterious retrospective life. He was so delighted, as a fact, to be free of Bertha that he poetized herself and all her belongings.

On this particular second visit to Fraulein Lipmann’s he met Anastasya Vashek. She, at least, was nothing to do with his souvenirs. Yet, not realizing her as an absolute new-comer at once, he accepted her as another proof of how delightful these people in truth were.

He had been a very silent guest so far. They were curious to hear what this enigma should eventually say, when it decided to speak.

"How is Bertha?" they had asked him.

"She has got a cold," he had answered. It was a fact that she had caught a summer cold several days before. "How strange!" they thought. "So he sees her still!"

"She hasn’t been to Flobert’s lately," Renée Lipmann said. "I’ve been so busy, or I’d have gone round to see her. She’s not in bed, is she?"

"Oh, no, she’s just got a slight cold. She’s very well otherwise," Tarr answered.

Bertha disappears. Tarr turns up tranquilly in his place. Was he a substitute? What could all this mean? Their first flutter over, their traditional hostility for him reawakened. He had always been an ungratifying, uninteresting, unpleasant person: "Homme égoïste! Homme sensuel!" in Van Benck’s famous words.

On seeing him talking with new liveliness, not displayed with them, to Anastasya, suspicions began to germinate. Even such shrewd intuition, a development from the reality, as this: "Perhaps getting to like me, and losing his first, he has come here to find another." Comfortable in his liberty, he was still enjoying, by proxy or otherwise, the satisfaction of slavery.

The arrogance implied by his infatuation for the commonplace was taboo. He must be more humble, he must respect the attachment in his equals.

He had been "Homme égoïste" so far, but "Homme sensuel" was an exaggeration. His consciousness had been undeveloped. His Bertha, if she had not been a joke, would not have satisfied him. She did not succeed in waking his senses, although she had attracted them. There was no more reality in his passion than in his intellect.

He now had a closer explanation of his attachment to stupidity than he had been able to give Lowndes. It was that his artist’s asceticism could not support anything more serious than such an elementary rival, and, when sex was in the ascendant, it turned his eyes away from the highest beauty and dulled the extremities of his senses, so that he had nothing but rudimentary inclinations left.

But in the interests of his animalism he was turning to betray the artist in him. For he had been saying to himself lately that a more suitable lady-companion must be found; one, that is, he need not be ashamed of. He felt that the time had arrived for Life to come in for some of the benefits of Consciousness. Anastasya’s beauty, bangles, and good sense were the very thing.

Despite himself, Sorbert was dragged out of his luxury of reminiscence without knowing it, and began discriminating between the Bertha enjoyment felt through the pungent German medium of her friends, and this novel sensation. Yet this sensation was intense. It was as though a man having wandered sentimentally along an abandoned route, a tactless and gushing acquaintance had been discovered in unlikely possession.

Tarr asked her what part of Germany she came.

"My parents are Russian. I was born in Berlin and brought up in America. We live in Dresden," she answered.

This accounted for her jarring on his mandolin German reveries. "Lots of Russian families have settled latterly in Germany, haven’t they?" he asked.

"Russians are still rather savage. The more bourgeois a place or thing is the more it attracts them. German watering places, musical centres and so on, they like about as well as anything. They often settle there."

"Do you regard yourself as a Russian—or a German?"

"Oh, a Russian. I am! I’m glad of that," said Tarr, quite forgetting where he was, and forgetting the nature of his occupation.

"Don’t you like Germans then?"

"Well, now you remind me of it, I do:—very much, in fact," he shook himself with self-reproach and gazed round benevolently and comfortably at his hosts. "Else I shouldn’t be here! They’re such a nice, modest, assimilative race, with an admirable sense of duty. They are born servants; excellent mercenary troops, I understand. They should always be used as such."

"I see you know them à fond." She laughed in the direction of the Lipmann.

He made a deprecating gesture.

"Not much, but... But they are an accessible and friendly people."

"You are English?"

"Yes."

He treated his hosts with a warm benignity which sought, perhaps, to make up for past affronts. It appeared only to gratify partially. He was treating them like part and parcel of Bertha. They were not ready to accept this valuation, that of chattels of her world.

The two Kinderbaehs came over and made an affectionate demonstration round and upon Anastasya. She got up, scattering them abruptly, and went over to the piano.

"What a big brute!" Tarr thought. "She would be just as good as Bertha to kiss. And you get a respectable human being into the bargain!" He was not intimately convinced that she would be as satisfactory. Let us see how it would be; he considered. This larger machine of repressed, moping senses did attract. To take it to pieces, bit by bit, and penetrate to its intimacy, might give a similar pleasure to undressing Bertha!

Possessed of such an intense life as Anastasya, women always appeared on the verge of a dark spasm of unconsciousness. With their organism of fierce mechanical reactions, their self-possession was rather bluff. So much more accomplished socially than men, yet they were not the social creatures, but men. Surrender to a woman was a sort of suicide for an artist. Nature, who never forgives an artist, would never allow her to forgive. With any "superior" woman he had ever met, this feeling of being with a parvenu never left him. Anastasya was not an exception.

On leaving, Tarr no longer felt that he would come back to enjoy a diffused form of Bertha there. The prolongations of his Bertha period had passed a climax.

On leaving Renée Lipmann’s, nevertheless, Tarr went to the Café de l’Aigle, some distance away, but with an object. To make his present frequentation more complete, it only needed Kreisler. Otto was there, very much on his present visiting list. He visited him regularly at the Café de l’Aigle, where he was constantly to be found.

This is how Tarr had got to know him.
CHAPTER II

TARR had arrived at Bertha's place about seven in the evening on his first return from Montmartre. He hung about for a little. In ten minutes' time he had his reward. She came out, followed by Kreisler. Bertha did not see him at first. He followed on the other side of the street, some fifteen yards behind. He did this with sleepy gratification. All was well. Indifference was absolute. There was an element of seriousness of things, Bertha's drama, the significance of the awful words, "Herr Kreisler!" and so on, was present to him. Bertha must know the meaning of his rapid resurrection—she knew him too well not to know that. So they walked on, without conversation. Then Tarr inquired if she were "quite well."

"Yes, Sorbert, quite well," she replied, with soft tragic banter. As though by design, he always found just the words or tone that would give an opening for this sentimental irony of hers. But the least hint that he had come to reinstate himself must not remain. It must be clearly understood that Kreisler was the principal figure now. He, Tarr, was only a privileged friend.

With unflattering rapidity somebody else had been found. Her pretension to heroic attachment was compromised. Should not he put in for the vacated berth?

He had an air of welcoming Kreisler. "Make yourself at home; don't mind me," his manner said. As to showing him over the premises he was taking possession of—he had made the inspection, himself, no doubt!

"We have a mutual friend, Lowndes," Tarr said to Kreisler, pleasantly. "A week or two ago he was going to introduce me to you, but it was fated——"

"Ah, yes, Lowndes," said Kreisler, "I know him."

"Has he left Paris, do you know?"

"I think not. I thought I saw him yesterday, there, in the Boulevard du Paradis." Kreisler nodded over his shoulder, indicating precisely the spot on which they had hated. His gesture implied that Lowndes might still be found thereabout.

Bertha shrank in "subtle" pantomime from their affability. From the glances she pawed her German friend with, he must deserve nothing but horrified avoidance. Sorbert's astute and mischievous way of saddling her with Kreisler, accepting their being together as the most natural thing in life, roused her combativeness. Tarr honoured him, clearly out of politeness to her. Very well: all she could do for the moment was to be noticeably distant with Kreisler. She must display towards him the disgust and reprobation that Tarr should feel, and which he refused, in order to vex her.

Kreisler during the last few days had persisted and persisted. He had displayed some cleverness in his choice of means. As a result of overtures and manoeuvres, Bertha had now consented to see him. Her demoralization was complete. She could not stand up any longer against the result, personified by Kreisler, of her idiotic actions. At present she transferred her self-hatred from herself to Kreisler. Tarr's former relations with Bertha were known to him. He resented the Englishman's air of proprietorship, the sort of pleasant "handing-over" that was going on. It had for object, he thought, to cheapen his little success.

"I don't think, Herr Kreisler, I'll come to dinner after all." She stood still and rolled her eyes wildly in several directions, and stuck one of her hands stiffly out from her side.

"Very well, Fräulein," he replied evenly.---The dismissal annoyed him. His eyes took in Tarr contemptuously presented: Was this a resuscitation of old love at his expense? Tarr had perhaps come to claim his property. This was not the way that it was usually done.

"Adieu, Herr Kreisler," sounded like his dismissal. A "never let me see you again; understand that here things end!" was written boldly in her very bold eyes. With reason why we good day to Tarr.

"I hope we shall meet again": Tarr shook him warmly by the hand.

"It is likely," Kreisler replied at once.

As yet Kreisler was undisturbed. He intended not to relinquish his acquaintance with Bertha Lunken. If the Englishman's amiability were a polite way of claiming property left ownerless and therefore susceptible of new rights being deployed as regards it, then in time those later rights would be vindicated. Kreisler's first impression of Tarr was not flattering. But no doubt they would meet again, as he had said.

CHAPTER III

BERTHA held out her hand brutally, in a sort of spasm of will: said, in the voice of "finality,"

"Good-bye, Sorbet: good-bye!" He did not take it. She left it there a moment, saying again, "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, if you like," he said at length. "But I see no reason why we should part in this manner. If Kreisler wouldn't mind——" he looked after him—"we might go for a little walk. Or will you come and have an aperitif?"
"No, Sorbert, I'd rather not.—Let us say good-bye at once; will you?"

"My dear girl, don't be so silly!" He took her arm and dragged her towards a café, the first on the boulevard they were approaching.

She hung back, prolonging the personal contact, yet pretending to be resisting it with wonder.

"I can't, Sorbert. Je ne peux pas!" purring her lips out and rolling her eyes. She went to the café in the end. For some time conversation hung back.

"How is Fräulein Lipmann getting on?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen her."

"Ah!"

Tarr felt he had five pieces to play. He had played one. The other four he toyed with in a lazy way:

"Van Bencke?"

"I have not seen her."

That left three.

"How is Isolde?"

"I don't know."

"Seen the Kinderbachs?"

"One of them."

"How is Clare?"

"Clare? She is quite well, I think."

The soldier for the pieces of this dialogue was a dreary grey matter that Bertha supplied. Their talk was an unnecessary column on the top of which she perched herself with glassy quietude.

She turned to him abruptly as though he had been hiding behind her, and tickling her neck with a piece of feather-grass.

"Why did you leave me, Sorbert?—Why did you leave me?"

He filled his pipe, and then said, feeling like a bad actor.

"I went away at that particular moment, as you know, because I had heard that Herr Kreisler—"

"Don't speak to me about Kreisler—don't mention his name. I beg you.—I hate that man.—Ugh!"

Genuine vehemence made Tarr have a look at her.

Of course she would say that. She was using too much genuineness, though, not to be rather flush of it for the moment.

"But I don't see—"

"Don't; don't!" She sat up suddenly in her chair and shook her finger in his face. "If you mention Kreisler again, Sorbert, I shall hate you too! I especially pray you not to mention him."

She expand, mouth drawn down at corners.

"As you like."

She insisted he should appear to be demanding an explanation. Any hint of exceptional claims on her confidence must be avoided.

"Why did you leave me?—You don't know.—I have been mad ever since. One is as helpless as can be—When you are here once more, I feel how weak I am without you. It has not been fair. I have felt just as though I had got out of a sick-bed. I am not blaming you."

They went to Flobert's from the café. It was after nine o'clock, and the place was empty. She bought a wing of chicken; at a dairy some salad and eggs; at a café some pâté de foie gras. She was out, he thought, for a week or two and to admire everything formerly he had found most irritating in Bertha herself. Before retiring definitely, like a man who hears that the wind of the fruit he has just been eating is good, and comes back to his plate to devour the part he had discarded, Tarr returned to have a last tankard of German beer.

Or still nearer the figure, his claim in the unexceptionable part of her now lapsed, he had returned demanding to be allowed to live just a little while longer on the absurd and disagreeable section.

Bertha suffered, on her side, more than all the rest of the time she had spent with him put together. To tell the whole Kreisler story might lead to a fight. It was too late for that. She could not, she felt, in honour, seek to re-entangle Tarr, nor could she disown Kreisler. She had been found with Kreisler: she had no means of keeping him away for good. An attempt at suppressing him might produce any result. Should she have been able, or desired to resume her relations with Tarr, Kreisler would not have left him unformed of things that had happened, shown in the most uncongenial light. If left alone, and not driven away like a dog, he might gradually quiet down and disappear. Sorbert would be gone, too, by that time!

Their grand, never-to-be-forgotten friendship was ending in shabby shallows. Tarr had the best rôle, and did not deserve it. Kreisler was the implacable remote creder of the situation.

CHAPTER IV

TARR left Bertha punctually at seven. She looked very ill. He resolved not to go there any more. He felt upset. Lejeune's, when he got there, was full of Americans. It was like having dinner among a lot of canny children. Kreisler was not there. He went on a hunt for him afterwards, and ran him to earth at the Café de l'Aigle.

Kreisler was not cordial. He emitted sounds of surprise, shuffled his feet and blinked. But Tarr sat down in front of him on his own initiative. Then Kreisler, calling the garçon, offered him a drink. Afterwards he settled down to contemplate Bertha's Englishman, and await developments. He was always rather softer with people with whom he could converse in his own harsh tongue than the Germans.

The causes at the root of Tarr's present thrusting of himself upon Kreisler were the same as his later visits at the Lipmann's. A sort of bath of Germans was his prescription for himself, a voluptuous immersion. To heighten the effect, he was being German himself: being Bertha as well.

But he was more German than the Germans.

Many aspects of his conduct were so un-German that Kreisler did not recognize the portrait or haul him as a fellow. Successive lovers of a certain woman fraternizing; husbands hobbnobbing with their wives' lovers or husbands of their unmarried days is a commonplace of German or Scandinavian society.
Kreisler had not returned to Bertha's. He was too lazy to plan conscientiously. But he concluded that she had better be given scope for anything the return of Tarr might suggest. He, Otto Kreisler, might as well be made to no longer to exist. His mind was working up again for some truculent action. Tarr was no obstacle. He would just walk through Tarr like a ghost when he saw fit to "advance" again.

"You met Lowndes in Rome, didn't you?" Tarr asked him.

Kreisler nodded.

"Have you seen Fräulein Lunken to-day?"

"No." As Tarr was coming to the point Kreisler condescended to speak: "I shall see her to-morrow morning."

A space for protest or comment seemed to be left after this sentence, in Kreisler's still very "speaking" expression.

Tarr smiled at the tone of this piece of information. Kreisler at once grinned, mockingly, in return. "You can get out of your head any idea that I have turned up to interfere with your proceedings," Tarr then said. "Affairs lie entirely between Fräulein Lunken and yourself."

Kreisler met this assurance truculently. "You could not interfere with my proceedings. I do what I want to do in this life!"

"How silly! I admire you!"

"Your admiration is not asked for!"

"It leaps up involuntarily! Prost! But I did not mean, Herr Kreisler, that my desire to interfere, had such desire existed, would have been tolerated. Oh, no! I meant that no such desire existing, we had no cause for quarrel. Prost!"

Tarr drank his glass expectantly and coaxingly, peering steadily at the German. He said, "Prost!" as he would have said, "Peep-oh!"

"Prost!" Kreisler answered with alarming suddenness, and an alarming diabolical smile. "Prost!" with finality. He put his glass down. "That is all right. I have no desire, he wiped and struck up his moustaches, to quarrel with anybody. I wish to be left alone. That is all."

"To be left alone to enjoy your friendship with Bertha—that is your meaning? Am I not right? I see.

"That is my business. I wish to be left alone."

"Of course it is your business, my dear chap. Have another drink!" He called the garçon. Kreisler agreed to another drink.

Why was this Englishman sitting there and talking to him? It was in the German style and yet it wasn't. Was Kreisler to be shifted, was he meant to go? Had the task of doing this been put on him, or in the hope that he would volunteer a promise, to quarrel in his distorted face. In a bargaining spirit he began to run England down. He must not appear too anxious to go there. "Perhaps this Englishman had been sent him by the Schickelgrüber. He had always got on well with Englishmen!"

The peculiar notion then crossed his mind that Tarr perhaps wanted to get him out of Paris, and had come to make him some offer of hospitality in England. In a bargaining spirit he began to run England down. "They things have changed. England's not what it was," he said.

"No. But it has changed for the better."

"I don't believe it!"

"Quite true. The last time I was there it had improved so much that I thought of stopping. Merry England is fouta! There won't be a regular pub, in the whole country in fifty years. Art will flourish! There's not a real gipsy left in the country. The sham art-ones are dwindling!"

"Are the Zigeuner disappearing?"

"Je vous crois! Rather!"

"The only Englishmen I know are very sym-pathisch."

Tarr's Englishmen were very pathisch. "There will be a regular pub, in the whole country in fifty years. Art will flourish! There's not a real gipsy left in the country. The sham art-ones are dwindling!"

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Tarr waited for Kreisler to respond to the drink, but Kreisler ruminated. "What do you find particularly attractive about England?" Tarr asked in a discursive way. "I ask you as a German. I have often wondered what a German would think of her."

Kreisler looked at him with resentful uncertainty for a moment. "You want to know what I think of the Lunken? She's a sly prostitute, that's what she is!" he announced loudly and unhesitatingly.

"Ah!"

When he had given Tarr time for any possible demonstration, he thawed into his sociable self. He then added:

"She's not a bad girl! But she tricked you, my friend! She never cared that—I snapped his fingers ineptly—for you! She told me so!"
"Really! That’s interesting.—But I expect you’re only telling lies. All Germans do!"

"All Germans lie!"

"Deutscher-volk—the folk that deceives!" is your philosopher Nietzsche’s account of the origin of the word Deutsch.

Kreisler sulked a moment till he had recovered.

"No. We don’t lie! Why should we? We’re not afraid of the truth, so why should we?"

Perhaps, as a tribe, you lied to begin with, but have now given it up?"

"What?"

That may be the explanation of Nietzsche’s etymology. Although he seemed to be stimulated at the idea of your national certificate of untruthfulness. He felt that, as a true patriot, he should react against your blue eyes, beer, and childish frankness.

"Quatch! Nietzsche was always paradoxical. He would say anything to amuse himself. You English are the greatest liars and hypocrites on this earth!"

"See the Continental Press! You should not swallow that rubbish. I only dispute your statement because I know it is not first-hand. What I mean about the Germans was that, like the Jews, they are extremely proud of success in deceit. No enthusiasm of that sort exists in England. Hypocrisy is usually a selfish stupidity, rather than the result of cunning."

"The English are stupid hypocrites then! We agree. Prost!"

"The Germans are uncouth but zealous liars! Prost!"

He offered Kreisler a cigarette. A pause occurred to allow the acuter national susceptibilities to cool.

"You haven’t yet given me your opinion of Bertha. You permitted yourself a truculent flourish that evaded the question."

"I wish to evade the question. I told you that she has tricked you. She is very main! She is tricking me now; or she is trying to. She will not succeed with me! When you go to take a woman you should be careful not to forget your whip! That Nietzsche said too!"

"Are you going to give her a beating?" Tarr asked.

Kreisler laughed in a ferocious and ironical manner.

"You consider that you are being fooled, in some way, by Fraulein Lunken?"

"She would if she could. She is nothing but deceit. She is a snake. Pfiu!"

"You consider her a very cunning and double-faced woman?"

Kreisler nodded sulkily.

"With the soul of a prostitute?"

"She has an innocent face, like a Madonna. But she is a prostitute. I have the proofs of it!"

"In what way has she tricked me?"

"In the way that women always trick men!"

With resentment partly and with hard picturesque levity Kreisler met Tarr’s discourse.

This solitary drinker, particularly shabby, who could be “dismissed” so easily, whom Bertha with accents of sincerity, “hated, hated!” was so different to the sort of man that Tarr expected might attract her, that he began to wonder. A certain satisfaction accompanied these observations.

For that week he saw Kreisler nearly every day. A partie à deux then began. Bertha (whom Tarr saw constantly too) did not actually refuse admittance to Kreisler (although he usually had first to knock a good many times), yet she played him repeatedly not to come any more. Standing always in a drooping and desperate condition before him, she did her best to avert a new outburst on his part. She sought to mollify him as much as was consistent with the most absolute refusal. Tarr, unaware of how things actually stood, seconded his successor.

Kreisler, on his side, was rendered obstinate by her often tearful refusal to have anything more whatsoever to do with him. He had come to regard Tarr as part of Bertha, a sort of masculine extension of her. At the café he would look out for him, and drink deeply in his presence.

"I will have her. I will have her!" he once shouted towards the end of the evening, springing up and calling loudly for the garçon. It was all Tarr could do to prevent him from going, with assurances of intercession.

His suspicions of Tarr at last awoke once more. What was the meaning of this Englishman always there! What was he there for! If it had not been for him, several times he would have rushed off and left his way. But he was always there between them. And in secret, too, probably, and away from him—Kreisler—he was working on Bertha’s feelings, and preventing her from seeing him. Tarr was any-how the obstacle. And yet there he was, talking and palavering, and offering to act as an intermediary, and preventing him from acting. He alone was the obstacle, and yet he talked as though he were nothing to do with it, or at the most a casually interested third party. That is how Kreisler felt on his way home after having drunk a good deal. But so long as Tarr paid for drinks he staved him off his prey.

(To be continued)

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