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XI. A THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

(Continued)

A DEFINITION OF ATTENTION

By D. MARSDEN

I

(1) OUR definition of the *activity of knowing* was as follows: "An image is *known* as distinct from being *sensed* when at the moment of its enactment the experiencing organism is already in possession of the *symbol* by means of which its conceptual image is formed." "To *know* any phenomenon is to be possessed of the *symbol* by means of which its conceptual image is created."

(2) If this definition be sound, the prerequisite and occasioning cause of all knowledge is the putting into operation of the power which inheres in the symbol. Of what this power consists, and how the symbol comes into possession of it we have already given an interpretation, and the definition of the activity of *knowing* merely formulates the implications of that interpretation. Let us now, however, turn from our hypothesis concerning the character of knowledge to survey in more detail the normal experience of knowing as it exists familiarly for every one of us.

(3) Were an ordinary educated intelligence, unwarped by metaphysical propensities, required to name the "faculty" most intimately involved in "getting to know" any fact whatsoever, his choice would of a certainty fall upon *attention*. No fact, he would say, is or can be known until it has been *noted*: which is to say, *attended to*. But the objection which the psychologist would enter against selection being made of *attention* would be that the character of *attention* itself is controversial. No general agreement as yet exists even as to whether *to attend* is a simple or a complex function. For the psychologist, therefore, *attention* could be introduced as an explaining factor having value for a theory of knowledge only in the shape of a definition which propounded *attention's* own character, and the definition itself would require establishment and a defence.

(4) It is therefore in the form of such a definition that we propose to make *attention* serve in our account of the processes of knowledge. As we conceive it, *attention* is a complex process definable in simpler terms, which under examination turn out to be nothing other than the *converse* of those which defined the activity of *knowing* itself. That is, the two definitions *to get to know* and *to attend* constitute two logical ways of approaching and taking hold of an identical activity.

(5) If this be so, the *problem of knowledge* is no more formidable than the *problem of attention*; or if we care to put it so, the *problem of attention* is not less formidable than that of knowledge. Whether they be facile or difficult they occupy the one level: a fact which if established has a profoundly modifying effect upon the divisions of philosophical inquiry. The central theme of metaphysics is the *problem of knowledge*, but the *problem of attention* belongs—and is recognized as belonging—so essentially to psychology that the modestest psychology manual does not hesitate to address itself to its solution. If, then, the problems are identified, consideration of both necessarily falls within the one sphere; and since there is small prospect of psychology ever abandoning its jurisdiction over *attention* the sphere of psychology must enlarge itself to include that of *knowledge* also. Metaphysics in such circumstances would therefore find itself robbed of the subject upon which rests its chief claim to persist as an independent sphere of inquiry.

(6) Let us then at the outset submit a provisional definition of *attention*: "*To attend to any phenomenon is to make progressively intensive application of symbols to that phenomenon.*"

This definition, we hold, expresses the gist of all that is unique in the attentive process. No doubt—particularly when *attention* is directed towards physical phenomena—activities other than verbally controlled

ones interweave themselves in and amongst the strictly symbolizing activities, profoundly modifying the latter's subsequent stages, but such non-verbal activities are incidental to rather than essential features of the attentive process.

(7) We shall proceed to the defence of our definition of *attention* by considering it in relation to that supposed mystery of mind, the "narrowness of the field of attentive consciousness." Writing under the head of *attention* James says: "One of the most extraordinary facts of our life is that, although we are besieged at every moment by impressions from our whole sensory surface, we notice so very small a part of them. The sum total of our impressions never enters into our *experience*, consciously so called, which runs through this sum total like a tiny rill through a broad flowery mead. Yet the physical impressions which do not count are *there* as much as those which do, and affect our sense-organs just as energetically. Why they fail to pierce the mind is a mystery, which is only named and not explained when we invoke . . . the narrowness of consciousness as its ground."

(8) Over against this fact of the *narrowness* of attentive consciousness James contrasts the tendency of consciousness which is *not* attentive to disperse even to the limits of blankness. In his translucent prose James goes on to say: "Most of us probably fall several times a day into a fit somewhat like this: The eyes are fixed on vacancy, the sounds of the world melt into confused unity, the attention is dispersed so that the whole body is felt, as it were, at once, and the foreground of consciousness is filled, if by anything, by a sort of solemn sense of surrender to the empty passing of time. Every moment we expect the spell to break, for we know no reason why it should continue. But it does continue, pulse after pulse, and we float with it, until—also without reason that we can discover—an energy is given, something—we know not what—enables us to gather ourselves together, we wink our eyes, we shake our heads . . . and the wheels of life go round again."

(9) Now a questioning of one's own daily experience seems to prove that such conditions, comparatively speaking, are exceedingly rare. James's suggestion of "several times a day" seems distinctly generous; and recurrences so numerous are far from easy to recall. The observable facts of the situation rather seem to invite the broad generalization that, normally, an intelligent human being who is not asleep is *at attention*. That "tiny rill" of attentive consciousness in our waking hours is practically unfailing. Its contents vary as do its volume, speed, intensity, and interest; but it maintains an unbroken continuity in its flow.

(10) Now the question of first importance for any theory of attention is this: What is the "material": what constitutes the "substance": of this stream with the unceasing flow? The accepted answer, of course, is that it is consciousness: that indefinable something which words fail otherwise to name. Such answer leaves "mystery" in possession of the field: a condition of affairs which, pleasantly exciting as it is to the metaphysician, is intolerable to a psychology which aspires to be a science. Hence, it is only in strict consonance with the requirements of a genuine psychology that the constituent materials of this rill must be held to be quite specifically definable.

(11) Our own view is that not only must it be thus definable but that it already is so. We hold this "tiny rill" to be nothing other than a continuous stream of words—ceaselessly flowing *one at a time*. We hold that when we say we are attending to a thing—be it physical or mental—we mean that the words which compose the conscious stream at the moment are those which name the said thing, its properties and its relations. Maintaining the figure of speech, we can say we are attending to a thing

when the stream of consciousness laps it about with words. We mean precisely the same kind of thing which we mean when we say we are *thinking* about a thing. Thinking and attending are synonymous. Both consist of speech (usually speech suppressed and incipient, but speech none the less), and speech is the laying of words end by end. Attention is the laying of words end by end. Our conscious life is the laying of words end by end.

(12) The constitution of our inner life: our consciousness: is not, then, a mystery. It is a chain of words: or slightly more accurately, a chain of symbols. The symbols spin themselves out singly, forming a single continuous line. The track which the line follows constitutes the course taken by successive "attentions." Throughout our waking hours this string of words lengthens itself out ceaselessly and uninterruptedly, but in *perfect sleep* when all words are stilled, the conscious coil ceases to lengthen, remaining stationary ready to be taken up again with the augmented energy conserved in sleep. In *imperfect sleep*, however, the volatile words escape and take form, weaving out their new ill-controlled lengths of consciousness as *dreams*.

(13) If, therefore, it were sought to reveal all the deep secrets of the human heart, what one would require would be some delicate recording instrument capable of registering all those movements forming ceaselessly in the throat and head *as words*: words—often as not—unspoken and so incipient that they do not achieve specific and recognizable form as words, but attain only to the general setting of the muscles preparatory to the forming of specific words. Of this abortive kind of words must be our *subconscious* thoughts properly so called. The chronicle such an instrument would set forth would indeed render us knowable as we are: in all our vanities, our smothered impulses, our loves, hates, hopes, and fears. Our nearest approach to anything of its kind are the chronicles set forth by the great veracious artists of literature.

(14) There is one conclusion which such a mirrored record would certainly render unavoidable. It would make very clear the fact that its own designation as a "tiny rill" is a happy one from one point of view only, i.e. that the stream spins itself out *a word at a time*. This feature apart, "tiny rill" is hopelessly inadequate. It is true that there are times when life seems stale, flat, unprofitable, and boring, when the flow of symbols is languid and niggardly and grudging, each symbol possessed barely of the energy to beget its successor. But these are rather what have to be regarded as the gaps in life. When life is in good trim, when the line which strings our successive words together is galvanized into proper working action, the tale is quite other. The words surge pell-mell. In minute observation they form short, fascinating, tight-packed rings and loops, but in vast generalizations, with more than lightning's swiftness and force they fling their nervous line wide and net whole hemispheres of meaning. They sweep through every corner of the heavens. With a giant's ease they balance entire worlds against each other, unite them, divide them, make clean division through minutenesses and confusions at which the finest non-verbal tool would retire helpless, and put the whole plastic universe through figures of differentiation and comparison as smooth and harmonious as those of a ballet. The width, splendour, and variety of this stream are, in fine, just what makes life an intoxicating and lordly thing.

II

(15) This account of *attention* which identifies it with the act of symbolizing and postulates the latter as the unfailing condition of all conscious (i.e. waking human) life, hardly seems to take account of the fact that *attention* is usually accepted as something which

plays quite intermittently. This objection is, of course, patently superficial. We are attending to this, that, or the other every moment we are conscious, but obviously our attention has specific direction inasmuch as our words are necessarily specific; and it has degrees of intensity inasmuch as the volume of significance which a word possesses and the rate at which words flow likewise vary. When, therefore, we invite attention to any matter, what we have in mind are these three variables. "Give attention to this matter" means "Abandon the stream of words already flowing about some other matter, and rehearse all the names (or other symbolic designations) associated or associable with the matter in question. Rehearse them, moreover, in all their fullness, both as to quality and quantity." Thus the ordinary acceptance of attention is not so much that of attention in general, but attention in high degree with its direction duly specified. It is under the influence of attention of this kind that subjects *grow*. It is precisely by these means that the analytic processes are so fruitful.

(16) Let us consider a simple instance. I say I will attend to this pen in my hand. Immediately I stop writing. The first effect is thus to make a break with the subject to which I was just now wholly attending, i.e. that of writing words on paper about *attention*. I next endeavour to concentrate my entire energies—sensory as well as verbal—on the pen. I hold it in front of me, and with the feeling that something is expected of me I virtuously repeat "Pen." The affair, however, seems to hang fire. Something seems to be pulling at my new attention and paralysing it. The words certainly refuse to flow freely about the *pen*. To find out what is amiss I suddenly turn a searchlight into the depths of my mind. I ask, "What is there? What *am* I attending to?" And surely enough I unearth the cause. Down there is flowing a quiet trickle of words, "Get it down as you go along: you don't want to go over this again." I find, that is, that I have tried to compromise with the new attention, so as to leave the former one in part possession of the ground. I have only half broken off with the old. But it is no use. As long as my attention is confused with the writing of this article on *attention*, attention to this pen in my hand is not possible. Compromise merely entails falling between two stools. Both processes are held up. At one point previous to the sudden rounding on my mind, I found myself staring fixedly at the pen literally thinking of (i.e. attending to) nothing: in a frame of mind, indeed, very like that dispersed condition which James described.

(17) So, I hustle myself: shake myself physically out of the strongly established old attention, and give myself wholly to the Pen. Whereupon what follows represents the very unexciting substance of my *attention* as connected with it. "Pen, pen, pen. A very nice pen. What is there to attend to about this pen?" Here, a spark of interest. I notice a distinct quality about my present visual sensations. They are *new*. Literally for the *first time* I see this pen. Though I must have been using it for many months, and although being light and flexible it suits me very well and I should no doubt waste hours looking for it if it were misplaced, I have never attended to it before. I have never seen it before. Its weight, girth, and ease of movement, together with a general notion about its shape and size which has enabled me to recognize it without hesitation though it would have failed me in any attempt to describe it, are all of it that I have ever apprehended. So I get on with the tabulation of its newly sensed "points." "Not a swell. Disreputable in fact. Where did it come from. One of the children's probably. The 'two a penny' kind. Before the war. Pleasant colour: striated hazel. Original colour doubtful. Two accidents with different coloured inks. Traces nicely toned. One certainly

marking-ink. Mellowed purple. The other a lightish blue. Some polish (constant usage). Well gnawed at tip of holder (knotty points apparently). Slackish steel band (that's why the nib gives so nicely). Light brown Waverley nib. Total length $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Weight: couldn't say—will try it on the scales though. Diameter: . . ." and so on. The words run dry. I have become bored. The words run to matters which concern me more than this pen, to whose symbolic enumeration I perceive there could be no end save my own reluctance to proceed; for beyond these superficial features it is clear that words can be made to guide the senses to find out its less obvious properties: its chemical and physical ones, for instance, and to push on to where now temporarily they confuse rather than exhaust themselves in a tangle somewhere beyond the atom.

(18) This fact that words play the rôle of *pioneer* not merely in relation to activity proper, but also in the sphere of sensory activity is one of the most curious features which the study of *attention* has to disclose. That it is to be regarded as a fact there can be no doubt; not only is it unvaryingly established by introspective observation: it is supported by the findings of the most painstaking experimental work. There are two facts in respect of *attention* which may be accepted as proved by practical experiment. One is that it is possible to attend only to one thing at a time; the other is that to know *what* we are attending to; *what* it is we are looking for: is a more important consideration for successful *attention* than even the appropriate concentration of the sense-organs upon the locality concerned. That the name: the symbol: shall be in evidence is the *sine qua non* of the attentive process.

(19) These being the facts, the conundrum we are faced with is *why* this should be. How is it, in attending, let us say, to physical phenomena, that the application of *words* should necessarily be the first activity of the whole process? How is it that words not only take the lead, but keep it throughout? In our opinion the only admissible conjecture is that the *words* consists of the *same kind of stuff* as sensory experience, or activity, as well as the activity which we commonly regard as action proper. The word is germane to both. They are all three of the same nature at the root. Let us look into the nature of the word.

(20) A word (or any symbol) has two aspects. It has that which it possesses in virtue of its specific form: an aspect which is created out of specific organic movements. But far more important than its mere form is the aspect which we call its *significance*. Owing to the manner of origin of symbols and their subsequent artificial development which accentuates the element of genius operating at their origin, symbols find themselves able to link up with feelings of every known kind in such a manner that they constitute the first and opening stages of feelings of every conceivable type. They thus make themselves a sort of keyboard, play upon which invokes all varieties of feeling *in their initial stages*, and form easy to be manipulated starting-points from which any type of feeling can unerringly be made to take shape. A symbol, then, is a key which being struck calls forth in their full-grown form the very movements which in their full-grown form would constitute the actual related physical phenomena. It is to this feature that they owe all their power and pertinence.

(21) Let us illustrate by means of one or two word-phrases chosen because they possess in a relatively high degree the power to invoke strongly marked responsive organic movements. Let us think of such a phrase as: "To eat a lemon"; or "To plunge a hand unawares into boiling liquid"; or "To become dizzy walking on a rope spanning a rocky ravine." Now either these phrases fall short of the standard of effectiveness as symbols, or they

incipiently infect our own bodies with the movements they name. In the first instance it is not possible to "take in" the sense of the phrase without the lips drawing in and the teeth setting on edge. The apprehending of the second entails a rush of blood to the head and ears, and makes the eyes start incipiently from their sockets; while the third entails that sickening lunge of the heart and horrid contraction of the bodily muscles which invariably accompanies loss of control over one's balance. Now in the instances given we have compounded the words into phrases in order to get a stronger effect from the combination, but the principle holds good for an individual word. If we were, for instance, to consider the word "eat" alone, apprehension of its meaning would consist in an incipient movement of the jaws and an incipient stimulation of the salivary glands. And similarly with every word.

(22) A word then—or any symbol—is the initial stage of the movements involved in the enactment of the things—physical or other—for which the word stands proxy. It is from this fact that words derive their overwhelming force. Its obvious consequence is that the hearer and reader of words as well as the user are inevitably implicated in the actions to which the words give name. If we apprehend the *meaning* of words we are compelled to *participate* in what they mean: a fact of which the trade of dramatist, novelist, and artist in words generally is an elaborate—though possibly an unconscious—exploitation. It furnishes indeed a conceivable basis upon which a scientific justification of the office of censor might be projected. Words being necessarily invasive, they can be viewed as competent to commit assaults of every nameable kind.

(23) Such being their character it is clear that in the constant use of symbols there must be a tendency towards power-shrinkage and waste. There must, for instance, be a tendency for the organic response-movement which they excite to diminish *in depth*: particularly so in view of the fact that it is of the essence of symbols that their response shall—granted that some specific feeling-effect is to be obtained—play about the minimum required.

(24) The most patent illustration of the wastage of power of the ordinary word-symbol is that which obtains when strongly emphasized words are much reiterated. The vividest and most telling phrase from overuse will rapidly cease to be able to exert its weight. The commoner, normally unemphasized words, on the other hand: the plain verbs, adjectives, prepositions, adverbs: have a better staying power just because they are less prone to overuse, though from a philosophic point of view they are beset nevertheless by remoter and much more subtle dangers of their own. Their very matter-of-factness, that air they possess of having been there throughout all time, enshrouds the source of their significance with a baffling inscrutability. The unaggressive conjunctive form *and*, for instance, with its bearing upon the elementary arithmetical process of *addition* is an example. The verbal form *be* is another. It is for reasons of this kind that there is distracted inquiry as to the philosophic basis of mathematics and physics: their axioms, postulates, and all their unacknowledged assumptions, and it is the reason, too, why there exists a problem of knowledge in general. It is not that the *current* significance of such words is ever lost sight of, but what *is* lost sight of is the fact that all symbols, no matter how strictly conventionalized (as in the symbols of chemistry and physics), no matter how drastically abridged (as in mathematical symbolism), represent nothing other than movements, actual or potential, of the organism which applies them.

(25) Even the subtlest symbolization (and the "knowledge" which accrues from its employment) has to find its bearings in a chain of this kind: The

subtlest symbolization represents no more than an abridged form of our thinking; and our thinking is incipient speaking; and speaking (over and above the movements involved in the shaping of mere word-forms) constitutes the initial stage of those same organic movements which, prolonged, bring into being the actual thing to which the symbol relates. There is no radical difference in constitution between a thing and a conception of that thing. At the root, both movements are one; the difference between them is that the conception (normally) contents itself with the enactment of the root (i.e. of the incipient stage) only.

(26) Summarizing these facts in their relation to *attention* we get this: Attentive conciseness is entirely a matter of applying symbols, and symbols are the initial stages of the total movements which constitute the things they symbolize. *Therefore*: To attend is to launch oneself incipiently into the enacting movements which constitute the things attended to.

III

(27) It is to these facts that we have now to turn for an explanation of those characteristics which in sum bring about the phenomenon described as the "*narrowness of attentive consciousness*." The characteristics are the total absorption of available organic energy in the single attentive process and that *waiting* characteristic of attention which consists in the inhibition of the main part of this energy in order to enable it to serve as a subconscious reserve for the active pioneering symbol. Let us liken the total amount of organic energy available for expenditure in action (whether in those passive inevitable forms of activity which constitute *sensing things* or in the positive voluntary forms which are more normally recognized as activity) as forming a *cone*. Then in the conception of a thing which ensues upon the naming of it, the fraction of the total available organic energy actively involved can be regarded as that which covers the area about the apex of the cone merely. This may not indeed be regarded as a mere point. It is an expanse, but an expanse which may be as small as possible consonantly with the limits set to the true symbol. It must be sufficiently extended, that is, to throw into evidence the direction of the lines which subtend the cone's base. It must assert the angle, so to speak, unmistakably. The symbolic standard is satisfied when—and only when—the lie and direction of the whole is asserted as a potentiality. The symbol may of course do more than that, and often does. In the case of vivid and carefully assorted words the limits of actuality can indeed be reached. But the essential point is that it *may not fall below* the limit indicative of such potentiality and remain a symbol.

(28) But though it is the merest fraction of the whole bodily energy which is involved in active expenditure in the attentive process (the applying of the symbol that is), the whole quantum nevertheless: the remaining part of the entire cone: waits in attendance upon the findings of the implicated fraction. None of this attendant energy is free to spend itself in movements independent of those upon which momentarily the apex is engaged. It is bespoke for requirements as asserted by the apex. If that minute pioneering agency reports favourably for action it is tantamount to a command of "All in," and the organism will then engage itself as a whole on the lines imposed by the apex's fleeting type. If it does not so report, then symbol yields to symbol to form a verbal line: the "tiny rill" of attentive consciousness. And as each such point of consciousness succeeds to point, the vast inhibited hinterland of energy which waits upon it *reforms in concert*.

(Continued on page 127)

A MUSIC-HALL IN BARCELONA

By ARTHUR SYMONS

I AM *aficionado*, as a Spaniard would say, of music-halls. They amuse me, and I am always grateful to any one or anything that amuses me. The drama, if it is to be looked on as an art at all, is a serious art, to be taken seriously; the art of the music-hall is admittedly frivolous—the consecration of the frivolous. The more it approaches the legitimate drama the less characteristic, the less interesting it is. I come to the music-hall for dancing, for singing, for the human harmonies of the acrobat. And I come for that exquisite sense of the frivolous, that air of Bohemian freedom, that relief from respectability, which one gets here, and nowhere more surely than here. In a music-hall the audience is a part of the performance. The audience in a theatre, besides being in itself less amusing, is on its best behaviour; you do not so easily surprise its “humours.” Here we have a tragic comedy in the box yonder, a farce in the third row of the stalls, a scene from a ballet in the promenade. The fascination of these private performances is irresistible; and they are so constantly changing, so full of surprises, so mysterious and so clear.

So when I found myself in Barcelona, I went one night to the Alcazar Español, the most characteristic place I could find, extremely curious to see what a Spanish music-hall would be like. It was very near my hotel, in a side street turning out of the Rambla, and I had heard through the open window the sound of music and of voices. I got there early, a little before nine. The entrance was not imposing, but it was covered with placards which had their interest. I pushed open the swing-doors and found myself in a long vestibule, at the other end of which was a sort of counter, which did duty for a box-office. I paid, went down a step or two, and through another door. There was a bar at one end of the room, and a few small tables placed near two embrasures, through which one saw an inner room. This was the hall. At one end was a little stage; the curtain was down, and the musicians' chairs and desks were vacant. Except for the stage, and for a gallery which ran along one side and the other end, the room was just like an ordinary café. There were the usual seats, the usual marble-topped tables, the usual glasses, and, lounging sleepily in the corners, the usual waiters. Two or three people stood at the bar, a few more were drinking coffee or *aguardiente* at the tables. Presently two women came in, and began to arrange one another's dresses in the corner. Two of the performers, I thought, and rightly. Then a few more people came in, and a few more, and the place gradually filled. The audience was not a distinguished one. None of the women wore hats, and few of them assumed an air of too extreme superiority to the waiters. Two fantastic creatures at a table next to me seemed to find it pleasant as well as profitable to be served by a waiter who would sit down at the same table and pay open court to them. Women would appear and disappear at the door leading into the next room, the room with the bar. The red door by the side of the stage—the stage door—began to open and shut. And now the musicians were assembling. The grey-haired leader of the orchestra, smoking a cigar, brought in the score. He sat down at his piano, and handed round the sheets of music. The members of the orchestra brought newspapers with them. The man who played the clarinet was smoking a cigarette fixed in an interminable holder. He did his duty by his instrument in the overture that followed, but he never allowed the cigarette to go out. I thought the performance remarkable.

The first entry on the programme was *Baile*

Sevillanas, por las parejas madre e hija, Isabel Santos, y las hermanas Mazantini. Isabel Santos, the mother, was a vigorous, strongly built, hard-featured, determined-looking woman of fifty. Her daughter was slight, graceful, delicately pink and white, very pretty and charming; her face was perfectly sweet and simple, with something of a remote and dreamy look in the eyes. One of the sisters Mazantini was fat, ugly, and unattractive; the other, a rather large woman, had an admirable figure and a gay and pleasant face. The curtain rose to a strange dance-measure. The four women took their places on the stage, facing one another by two and two. They raised their arms, the eight pairs of castanets clanged at once, and the dance began. Spanish dances have a certain resemblance with the dances of the East. One's idea of a dance, in England, is something in which all the movement is due to the legs. In Japan, in Egypt, the legs have very little to do with the dance. The exquisite rhythms of Japanese dancers are produced by the subtle gesture of hands, the manipulation of scarves, the delicate undulations of the body. In Arab dances, in the *dance du ventre*, the legs are more motionless still. They are only used to assist in producing the extraordinary movements of the stomach and the hips, in which so much of the dance consists. It is a dance in which the body sets itself to its own rhythm. Spanish dancing, which no doubt derives its Eastern colour from the Moors, is almost equally a dance of the whole body, and its particular characteristic—the action of the hips—is due to a physical peculiarity of the Spaniards, whose spines have a special and unique curve of their own. The walk of Spanish women has a world-wide fame: one meets a Venus Callipygus at every corner. The *Baile Sevillanas*, with all its differences, had a very definite resemblance to the Arab dances I had seen. It began with a gentle swaying movement in time to the regular clack-clack of castanets. Now the women faced one another, now they glided to and fro, changing places, as in a movement of the lancers. The swaying movement of the hips became more pronounced; the body moved in a sort of circle upon itself. And then they would cross and recross, accentuating the rhythm with a stamp of the heels. Their arms waved and dipped, curving with the curves of the body. The dance grew more exciting, with a sort of lascivious suggestiveness, a morbid, perverse charm, as the women writhed to and fro, now languishingly, now furiously, together and apart. It ended with a frantic *tremoussement* of the hips, a stamp of the heels, and a last clang of the castanets as the arms grew rigid in the sudden immobility of the body. There were two encores, and two more dances, much the same as the first, and then at last the curtain was allowed to descend, and the women went tranquilly back to the corner where they had been drinking coffee with their friends.

Then came Señorita Villaclara, a fair-complexioned woman, with dark, sleepy, wicked eyes, and black hair trailing over her forehead with little curls near the ears. The leader of the orchestra began to play on the piano a brief monotonous air, and the woman—looking out between her half-shut eyes—began the *Malaguena*. It was a strange, piercing, Moorish chant, sung in a high falsetto voice, in long, acute, trembling phrases—a wail rather than a song—with pauses, as if to gain breath, between. A few words seemed to be repeated over and over again, with tremulous, inarticulate cries that wavered in time to a regularly beating rhythm. The sound was like nothing I have ever heard. It pierced the brain, it tortured one with a sort of delicious spasm. The next song had more of a regular melody, though still in this extraordinary strained voice, and still with something of a lament in its monotony. I could not understand the words, but the woman's gestures left no doubt as to the character of the song. It was

assertively indecent, but with that curious kind of indecency—an almost religious solemnity in performer and audience—which the Spaniards share with the Eastern races. Another song followed, given with the same serious and collected indecency, and received with the same serious and collected attention. It had a refrain of “Alleluia!” and the woman, I know not why, borrowed a man’s soft felt hat, turned down the brim and put it on before beginning the song. When the applause was over, she returned the hat, came back to the table at which she had been sitting, dismally enough, and yawned more desperately than ever.

HANDS

I AM grieved for our hands, our hands that have caressed roses and women’s flesh, old lovely books, and marbles of Carrara. I am grieved for our hands that were so reverent in beauty’s service, so glad of beauty of tresses, hair and silken robe and gentle fingers, so glad of beauty of bronze and wood and stone and rustling parchment. So glad, so reverent, so white.

I am grieved for our hands. . . .

RICHARD ALDINGTON

REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY POETRY

I

ONE of the ways by which contemporary verse has tried to escape the rhetorical, the abstract, the moralizing, to recover (for that is its purpose) the accents of direct speech, is to concentrate its attention upon trivial or accidental or commonplace objects. This tendency is common to a very great variety of poets; what is less noticed is the divergence of form which it takes. To be concrete, if perhaps facile in generalization, I may divide the tendency into its English and its American currents. With the American the effect is more usually an arrest at the object in view; the American poet is fearful of betraying any reaction beyond that revealed in the choice and arrangement; the effect is of an ingenious if sometimes perverse visual imagination in complete detachment from any other faculty. The Russian influence may here count for something; the Russian novel, with its curious trick of fastening upon accidental properties of a critical situation, and letting these in turn fasten upon the attention to such an extent as to replace the emotion which gave them their importance.

This is the preoccupation of the accidental; the English tendency is rather to be preoccupied with the trivial. In this difference the American shows his too quick susceptibility to foreign influence; the Englishman his imperviousness. For contemporary English verse has borrowed little from foreign sources; it is almost politically English; the Georgian poets insist upon the English countryside, and are even positively patriotic. When, therefore, they turn to the common object, to the animal or flower or hearth-rug, it is in the mood, not of Dostoevski but of Wordsworth. Because of this Wordsworthian strain I have called their attention trivial (not invidiously) rather than accidental. Both methods or manners, the Wordsworth and the Dostoevski, may be distinguished from another which is more universal: it is universally human to attach the strongest emotions to definite tokens. Only, while with the Russian the emotion dissolves in a mass of sensational detail, and while with Wordsworth the emotion is of the object

and not of human life, with certain poets the emotion is definitely human, merely seizing the object in order to express itself. When Donne says:

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm,
Nor question much,
That subtle wreath of hair, which crowns my arm—

or when he uses the same idea again, perhaps more effectively:

When my grave is broke up again . . .
And he that digs it, spies
A bracelet of bright hair about the bone

the feeling and the material symbol preserve exactly their proper proportions. A poet of morbidly keen sensibilities but weak will might become absorbed in the hair to the exclusion of the original association which made it significant; a poet of imaginative or reflective power more than emotional power would endow the hair with ghostly or moralistic meaning. Donne sees the thing as it is.

When Wordsworth, however, fixes his attention upon:

the meanest flower that blows

his attitude is utterly different. His daffodil emphasizes the importance of the flower for its own sake, not because of association with passions specifically human.

In the Georgian poets we observe the same attitude. The emotion is derived from the object, and such emotions must either be vague (as in Wordsworth) or, if more definite, pleasing. Thus, it is not unworthy of notice how often the word “little” occurs; and how this word is used, not merely as a necessary piece of information, but with a caress, a conscious delight:

Just now the lilac is in bloom
All before my little room. . . .

And under that Almighty Fin
The littlest fish may enter in. . . .

Making everything afraid,
Wrinkling up his little face . . . (i.e. the hare).

The little black cat with bright green eyes. . . .

And his little frame grew stout
And his little legs grew strong. . . .

A typical example of this type of poetry, and one of the most charming, is a short lyric of Mr. Davies:

Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad,
Beyond the town, where wild flowers grow—
A rainbow and a cuckoo, Lord,
How rich and great the times are now! . . .

A rainbow and a cuckoo’s song
May never come together again;
May never come
This side the tomb.

There is just the suggestion of a moral or philosophical conclusion (hinting at the law of probability) which divides the mood from the Elizabethan, and allies it to Wordsworth. In another poem, Mr. Davies approaches this master still more closely (“The Kingfisher”):

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain;
Thou hast no proud, ambitious mind. . . .

The Georgian Love of Nature is on the whole less vague than Wordsworth’s, and has less philosophy

behind it: for Wordsworth had a philosophy, though ill apprehended from foreign teachers; the Georgian plays more delicately with his subject, and in his style has often more in common with Stevenson. On the other hand, not having abstractions to fall back upon, the modern poet, when he diverts his attention from birds, fields, and villages, is subject to lapses of rhetoric from which Wordsworth, with his complete innocence of other emotions than those in which he specialized, is comparatively free. Thus Rupert Brooke, after a number of lines which show a really amazing felicity and command of language, in "The Fish," descends to:

O world of lips, O world of laughter,
Where hope is fleet and thought flies after . . .

retrieved happily by another fine passage at the end. And another poem is completely spoilt by such adjectives as "crying-sweet," "scattering-bright."

Mr. Harold Monro* has a vocabulary less rich, less astonishing, than Brooke's, but at the same time less rhetorical. He is one of those (for he is to be associated to the Georgian poets) who has the most consistently pursued one direction. He is less literary, often more natural; he is also less a Little-Englander, and deserves a public not purely insular. Often he employs the same tone of infantile simplicity:

The stars must make an awful noise
In whirling round the sky . . .

but the total effect of his last volume is not one of prettiness. That he knows how to handle the pretty mood is attested by an earlier poem, "Milk for the Cat," which escapes insipidity by its extraordinary cleverness; he can reflect in an almost Emersonian mood ("Often we must entertain"), but his consistent effort has been to express the strangeness of the familiar objects and "meetings":

How did you enter that body? Why are you here?
At once, when I had seen your eyes appear
Over the brim of earth, they were looking for me.

It is a limited genre; but it is a legitimate bypath of poetry. It has been done best, perhaps, by Henri Bataille. Only in something harder can great passion be expressed; the vague is a more dangerous path for poetry than the arid. Perhaps it is one sign of this weakness that I cannot select any poems from this book as of particular excellence; but the book as a whole makes a more complete impression than any but a very few of recent years.

T. S. E.

* *Strange Meetings*. By Harold Monro. The Poetry Bookshop. 1s. net.

THE FRENCH WORD IN MODERN PROSE

VIII. JULES ROMAINS: *Mort de Quelqu'un*.

IF a man were to call himself a philosopher, or a cynic, or an egoist, or an altruist, we should be suspicious of him. Whether M. Jules Romains called himself or was called by some one else a "unanimist" I do not know, but if he did so qualify his literary intentions he meant something thereby. It is not an accidental definition like "impressionist," which had its origin in the name Claude Monet gave to one of his Salon pictures, and "cubist," which, despite their looseness, now convey, by association, precise ideas to the mind. M. Jules Romains'

definition of his purpose, or the definition applied to it, is as close a corresponding term as a term can be, but, what is more, he realizes to the full the significance of the term which may be understood as partaking also of "solidarity" and "interdependence." All things, according to M. Romains, man and matter, thought and deed, are echoes of one another and react upon one another. And he proves the theory through the medium of art: a narrative beginning with a death—the death of an obscure little man, a retired engine-driver—and woven round this death, wherein the deceased is always the pivot of the recounted events.

M. Romains may not have thought of the actual word "unanimity," but its meaning was most undoubtedly the motive of the work. He kept it in mind all the way through the narrative, as Whistler kept his colour-scheme in mind all the way through a picture. He proves it by evidence. Indeed one may say that every word in the book has been written with the full intention of demonstrating the theory. And the result has been attained with the precision which always escorts the testimonies of those sure of their case.

A knack for bringing the picturesque aspect of life into prominence has been of the greatest assistance in furthering the main idea. The following quotations will show in some measure the complete success with which M. Romains proves his doctrine. I would have liked to quote at greater length had space permitted.

While they chatted about the old engine-driver, the wind in the street, through the half-open issues, rushed forth to meet the wind in the yard. Then the doors opened wide, and banged more loudly afterwards.

For a second the women noticed the corner of a passage, the red tiles of a kitchen floor, a bedroom with its bright wall-paper.

Then the group of women lived with the confused, throbbing soul peculiar to the congregation in churches. Like these it conceived fugitively of things surpassing terrestrial and human power; like these it travailed a moment to incarnate certain dreams of man: the being entirely realizing itself, and life without end.

While they chatted the women thought all the time about their shopping duties, and that it would be necessary to go sooner or later; each was already beginning to find the other's conversation tedious; but they hesitated to part; they were bound to each other as by an old family tie; they needed neither animated talk nor any other particular reason for enjoying each other's society.

Meanwhile a telegram sent by the concierge, after some wavering on his part as to whether he might not relish the knowledge of this death all by himself, arrived to announce it in a distant village. It is given a little boy to carry to the deceased's old father.

Nobody here, on these banks, had ever thought of Jacques Godard as dead.

Those who knew him, the baker in the lane, the barber near the bridge, when by chance they mentioned him, would say to each other: "Jacques Godard, the Godards' son, who lives in Paris, who was on a railway." For they would remember old friends in that way, on certain afternoons when they sat on their doorsteps, for want of customers. And while they looked at the sun, the water, the valley, the walls opposite, and the highest branches of the hidden gardens, they had never evoked a Jacques Godard lying stiff in his coffin, or dissolving under the stone of the tomb. Never behind eyes which saw these banks had there appeared the picture of a dead Godard.

It was he, the little breathless boy, who was to bring it there for the first time. And he did so with all his heart: he thought constantly of the damp, crumpled telegram he gripped in his left hand; and he repeated to himself: "The Godards' son died to-day," adding quickly: "Père Godard, there is bad news."

It was all he knew. For him Jacques Godard was not an old man living on his pension; had not driven an express train for thousands of days, had not suffered, had not married, had not

lost his wife. Jacques Godard became again quite simple, quite new, without experience: a child running along a stream.

In such manner M. Jules Romains proves how all in this world diverges to converge. And he is always alive to its incessant metamorphosis from concrete to abstract, abstract to concrete.

The funeral scene in the church might be reminiscent of Mr. Joyce:

Each one felt the presence of his neighbour like something dear and sad. Those who were related would nearly have clasped hands as in moments of great sorrow. And yet no one wanted to be elsewhere. One would have gladly stayed for ever in the blue-and-red-windowed chapel. It formed an infractuosity, where life sought refuge and collected itself, without wishing or having the possibility of going farther. The bodies sank into their seats; they had that little happy tremor of the man who has come home. . . .

The thunder of the organ seemed to belong to the deceased. It flowed around the souls, changed their places, lifted them up, drew them along a kind of warm, vital current. You had the impression you were carried on the blood of some immense being.

The deceased was so big he needed no one any longer. By thinking of him you did not commit a deed of charity, you yielded to a force. He collected himself, he remade himself anew. He was the master.

Even the priest was induced to think of the deceased. He was glad to be at the altar and to make the sacred signs.

"I was right to take orders," he mused. "What other profession could have procured for me the great joy I experience at this moment."

He loved the dead stranger, loved him without attributing features to him, but not impersonally. At first he tried to imagine him and failed; was he a youth, an adult, or an old man? He had not been told and he never asked these things.

A master-scene, after that of the death of Godard himself and the discovery of the corpse by the concierge—simpler and trimmer than the excursions into the semi-supernatural—is that of the death of his aged mother and father. He describes the events as Jules Renard might have done, adding his own insistence on the "unanimity" of thought, sensation, and circumstance.

One winter's evening Mère Godard came home coughing. She had been gathering pine-cones and twigs in a little wood, on the slope of a hill facing north. It had snowed three days before, and the snow had not finished melting.

"You are coughing a good deal!"

"Yes, a little."

The old woman said she would go to bed without supper and hadn't the strength to make herself something hot to drink.

The old man made some remarks, then stopped asking questions. And she did not complain. But both were certain she would die.

At first they were certain of it each in their own way, separately. The old man seemed to be interested in the hearth, in the wood-fire, in the pans. . . . Then they were certain of it together. In spite of the effort each made to keep it in his and her soul, they had to yield. At first they said nothing; the old woman simply stopped contemplating the flame to lay her neck flat against the pillow. The old man dropped a little twig he held, tremblingly placed the pan on the edge of the fire and sat down on a stool. Together they thought that one of them would die. They thought about it not in a flash, but slowly like people in conversation. Mère Godard did not say to herself: "I am dying." She said: "The old woman is dying." And the approaching event seemed no more personal to one than to the other. . . . Then a drop of water fell on the ground with a slight noise; another drop fell; then others at regular intervals. The old man did not move to find where they came from. But the new noise produced by the drops made him hear the ticking from the clock which he had not yet heeded that evening. The drops and the seconds fell alternately.

The old woman also heard them and felt the better that she

was dying. The regularity of the noise seemed to undo her by little blows. It was her way of dying, the pace assumed by her last hour.

The old man went for some one to fetch the priest.

His wife remained alone, her body stretched in the middle of the bed, the nape of her neck flat on the pillow; her soul became quite tiny; it seemed huddled up in a corner but it remained limpid and suffered anxiety rather than fear. . . .

"My Jacques died this spring."

She repeated this to herself; she was full of that remembrance, but felt no grief from it. . . .

"Yes, I shall see Jacques in Heaven." But this idea brought nothing precise or even near to her eyes. The old woman drew her extraordinary serenity from elsewhere as also the kind of joyfulness which made her hasten towards death as she might have done to a family dinner-party.

The entire book is built on a solid, flawlessly logical basis. Romance and philosophy form an alliance attaining to no more nor less than artistic perfection. M. Jules Romains is at the very summit of France's innovators, for his is a discovery justifying itself not only by reason of its own character, but by reason of the example he gives of its literary as well as of its scientific potentialities.

MURIEL CIOLKOWSKA

ELIZABETHAN CLASSICISTS

By EZRA POUND

I

THE reactions and "movements" of literature are scarcely, if ever, movements against good work or good custom. Dryden and the precursors of Dryden did not react against *Hamlet*. If the eighteenth-century movement toward regularity is among those least sympathetic to the public of our moment, it is "historically justifiable," even though the katachrestical vigours of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* may not be enough to "explain" the existence of Pope. A single faulty work showing great powers would hardly be enough to start a "reaction"; only the mediocrity of a given time can drive the more intelligent men of that time to "break with tradition."

I take it that the phrase "break with tradition" is currently used to mean "desert the more obvious imbecilities of one's immediate elders"; at least, it has had that meaning in the periodical mouth for some years. Only the careful and critical mind will seek to know how much tradition inhered in the immediate elders.

Vaguely in some course of literature we heard of "the old fourteeners," "vulgariter" the metre of the *Battle of Ivry*. *Hamlet* could not have been written in this pleasing and popular measure. The "classics," however, appeared in it. For Court ladies and cosmopolitan heroes it is perhaps a little bewildering, but in the mouth of Oenone:

The Heroical Epistles of the learned Poet Publius Ovidius Naso. In English verse; set out and translated by George Tuberville. 1567. London; Henry Denham.

OENONE TO PARIS

To Paris that was once her owne
though now it be not so,
From Ida, Oenon greeting sendes
as these hir letters show,
May not thy nouel wife endure
that thou my Pissle reade.
That they with Grecian fist were wrought
thou needste not stand in dreade.

Pegasian nymph renoude in Troie,
 Oenone hight by name,
 Of thee, (of thee that were mine owne) complaine
 if thou permit the same,
 What froward god doth seeke to barre
 Oenone to be thine ?
 Or by what guilt have I deserude
 that Paris should decline ?
 Take paciently deserude woe
 and never grutch at all :
 But undeserued wrongs will grieve
 a woman at the gall.

Scarce were thou of so noble fame,
 as platly doth appeare :
 When I (the offspring of a froud)
 did choose the for my feere.
 And thou, who now art Priams sonne
 (all reuerence layde apart)
 Were tho a Hyard to beholde
 when first thou wanste my heart.
 How oft have we in shaddow laine
 whylst hungrie flocks have fedde ?
 How oft have we of grasse and greanes
 preparde a homely bedde ?
 How oft on simple stacks of strawe
 and bennet did we rest ?
 How oft the dew and foggie mist
 our lodging hath opprest ?
 Who first discouerde thee the holtes
 and Lawndes of lurking game ?
 Who first displaid thee where the whelps
 lay sucking of their Dame ?
 I sundrie tymes have holpe to pitch
 thy toyles for want of ayde :
 And forst thy Hounds to climbe the hilles
 that gladly would have stayde.

One boysterous Beech Oenone's name
 in outward barke doth beare :
 And with thy caruing knife is cut
 OENON, every wheare.
 And as the trees in tyme doe ware
 so doth encrease my name :
 Go to, grow on, erect your selves
 helpe to aduance my fame.
 There growes (I minde it uerie well)
 upon a banck, a tree
 Whereon ther doth a fresh recorde
 and will remaine of mee,
 Liue long thou happie tree, I say,
 that on the brinck doth stande ;
 And hast ingraued in thy barke
 these wordes, with Paris hande.

When Pastor Paris shall reuolte,
 and Oenon's love forgoe :
 Then Xanthus waters shall recoyle,
 and to their Fountaines floe.
 Now Ryuer backward bend thy course,
 let Xanthus streame retier :
 For Paris hath renoune the Nymph
 and prooude himself a lier.
 That cursed day bred all my doole,
 the winter of my joy,
 With cloudes of froward fortune fraught
 procurde me this annoy ;

When cankred crafte Iuno came
 with Venus (Nurce of Love)
 And Pallas eke, that warlike wench,
 their beauties pride to proue.

The pastoral note is at least not unpleasing, and the story more real than in the mouths of the later poets, who enliven us with the couplet to the tune :

Or Paris, who, to steal that daintie piece,
 Traveled as far as 'twas 'twixt Troy and Greece.

The old versions of Ovid are, I think, well worth a week or so random reading. Turning from the *Heroides* I find this in a little booklet said to be "printed abroad" and undated. It bears "C. Marlow" on the title page.

AMORUM *

Now on the sea from her olde loue comes shee
 That drawes the day from heaven's cold axle-tree,
 Aurora whither slidest thou down againe,
 And byrdes from Memnon yeerly shall be slaine.

Now in her tender arms I sweetlie bide,
 If euer, now well lies she by my side,
 The ayre is colde, and sleep is sweetest now,
 And byrdes send foorth shril notes from every bow.
 Whither runst thou, that men and women loue not,
 Holde in thy rosie horses that they moue not,
 Ere thou rise stars teach seamen where to saile,
 But when thou comest, they of their course faile.
 Poore trauailers though tired, rise at thy sight,
 The painful Hinde by thee to fild is sent,
 Slow oxen early in the yoke are pent.
 Thou cousnest boyes of sleep, and dost betray them
 To Pedants that with cruel lashes pay them.

Any fault is more pleasing than the current fault of the many. One should read a few bad poets of every era, as one should read a little trash of every contemporary nation, if one would know the worth of the good in either.

Turning from translations, for a moment, to *The Shepherd's Starre* (1591), for the abandonment of syntax and sense, for an interesting experiment in metric, for beautiful lines, stray in a maze of unsense, I find the incoherent conclusion of much incoherence, where *Amaryllis* says: "In the meane while let my Roundilay end my follie"; and tilts at the age-old bogie of "Sapphics," *Aeolium carmen*, which perhaps *Catullus* alone of imitators has imitated with success.

THE SHEPHERDE'S STARRE, 1591

Amaryllis. In the meane while let this my Roundilay end my follie :

Sith the nymphs are thought to be happie creatures,
 For that at faier *Helicon* a Fountaine,
 Where all use like white Ritch iuorie foreheads
 Daily to sprinkle,

Sith the quire of Muses atend *Diana*,
 Ever use to bathe heauie thoughts refyning,
 With the Silver skinne, Civet and Mir using
 For their adornment,

Sith my sacred Nymphs priuiledge abateth,
 Cause *Dianas* grace did elect the *Myrtle*,
 To be pride of every branch in order
 last of her handmaides ;

Should then I thus liue to behold euerted
 Skies, with impure eyes in a fountaine harboured
 Where *Titans* honor seated is as under
 All the beholders ?

Helpe wofull *Ecco*, reabound relenting,
 That *Dianas* grace on her helpe recalling,
 May well heare thy voice to bewaile, reanswere
 Faire *Amaryllis*.

Fairer in deede then *Galatea*, fairest
 Of *Dianas* troope to bewitch the wisest,
 With amasing eye to abandon humors
 of any gallants,

Shee *Thetis* faier, *Galatea* modest,
 —Albeit some say in a Chrystal often,
 Tis a rule, there lurketh a deadly poyson,
 Tis but a false rule.

* *Amorum*, lib. i, elegia 13.

For what Yse is hid in a Diamond Ring,
Where the wise beholder hath eyes refusing,
Allabasters vaines to no workman hidden,
Gold to no Touchstone.

There bedeckes fairest *Rosamond* the fountaine,
Where resorts those greene *Driades* the waterie
Nymphs, of olive plants recreat by *Phaebus*
Till they be maried.

So beginning ends the report of her fame,
Whose report passing any pennes relation,
Doth entreat her loue, by reinspiration
To dull heads yeelding faer eies reflection,
Still to be present.

Surely among poems containing a considerable amount of beauty, this is one of the worst ever written. Patient endeavour will reveal to the reader a little more coherence and syntax than is at first glance apparent, but from this I draw no moral conclusion.

For all half-forgotten writing there is, to my mind, little criticism save selection. "Those greene *Driades*"; Oenone, "offspring of a flood"; the music of the Elegy must make their own argument.

Next month I shall set forth a few passages from the *Metamorphoses*.

PASSING PARIS

M. PAUL VALÉRY breaks a silence covering several years with a long ode, *La Jeune Parque*, published, in a limited edition to subscribers, at the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Its appearance was revealed to me by M. Francis de Miomandre, whom I met one hot day effervescent with enthusiasm, reading it in the open street. His wonderful memory, holding all things that it wishes to hold, having already registered its every line, he has kindly consented to entrust me with his copy of the poem, to permit me to communicate some of its beauty to EGOIST readers.

The work is a homogeneous inspiration assuming a deceptively Racinean outline. Deceptive because it is really a hermetic disguise for a vision the significance of which can only become very slowly apparent to a reader not naturally in touch with the clue. A few lines will show the fluency of the form and the mystery of the thought evolving in planes which may be familiar to "H. D." with whom M. Paul Valéry would appear to have certain similarities of perception if not in the interpretation thereof:

Délicieux linceuls, mon désordre tiède,
Couche où je me répands, m'interroge et me cède,
Où j'allai de mon cœur noyer les battements,
Presque tombeau vivant dans mes appartements,
Qui respire, et sur qui l'éternité s'écoute,
Place pleine de moi qui m'avez prise toute,
O forme de ma forme et la creuse chaleur
Que mes retours sur moi reconnaissaient la leur,
Voici que tant d'orgueil qui dans vos plis se plonge
A la fin se mélange aux bassesses du songe !
Dans vos nappes, où lisse elle imitait sa mort
L'idole, malgré soi se dispose et s'endort,
Lasse femme absolue, et les yeux dans ses larmes,
Quand de ses secrets nus les autres et les charmes,
Et ce reste d'amour que se gardait le corps
Corrompirent sa perte et ses mortels accords.

The poem voices, apparently, a double personality :
Body and spirit perhaps ?

J'ai de mes bras épais environné mes tempes
Et longtemps de mon âme attendu les éclairs !

The oracular note is omnipresent :

Tout peut naître ici-bas d'une attente infinie.
L'ombre même le cède à certaine agonie,

L'âme avare s'entr'ouvre, et du monstre s'émeut
Qui se tord sur le pas d'une porte de feu.

* * *

The war with its Anglo-French accord has brought Shakespeare into fashion in France. Believe it if you like, but fashion is the word to write. An officially approved "Shakespeare Society" has been formed; special pains have been taken to give the *Merchant of Venice* a worthy stage rendering, albeit suited to *le goût français*, whatever that may mean, other than that it was not to the taste of the sincere lovers of Shakespeare, French or not; and a great many people have been "discovering" him. A few have discovered something new to say about the god of gods. Among these first credit must be given to André Suarès who, in the *Double Bouquet*—now defunct, always about to revive with a new name and (let us hope) new colour—in a remarkable though rather long-drawn-out essay, was at times in touch with the spirit of his idol. Henry Bataille in *Écrits sur le Théâtre* (Crès et Cie, 3 fr. 50) comes a good second in a chapter on *Hamlet*; and M. Edmond Jaloux handled the *Merchant of Venice* to the satisfaction of those who tremble with foreboding each time they meet with a new commentary on this eternal one. M. C.

THE REBIRTH OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FRANCE

By HUNTLY CARTER

TO many persons the importance of France is to be found in the following fable: There was once a great war on earth. And the British Lion, growing weary of the strife, said he would have no more of it. So he explained to the Gallic Cock that he was anxious for the future to fraternize with him and be gentle and the Gallic Cock observed that he had no objection. But as night fell he saw that his master, the French Farmer, had provided himself with a heavy gun. This fable does not, however, go far enough. France has a more important business on hand than merely helping to patch Peace. It has a practical scheme for saving its own soul and those of all other nations. England, as we know, has not got so far. It has arrived only at a scheme for saving its neck. It hopes to do so by getting rid of the war debt—some day. Actually, France is experiencing a rebirth of importance. From what we may conceive to be the earliest times, it has aspired to be the spiritual inspirer of the world, and has, accordingly, transmitted more than one brilliant beam to the dark and lonesome land sometimes miscalled Merry England. As I once said in these columns, Heaven has glanced very kindly indeed at this aspiration, by endowing France with appropriate geographical and climatic features and placing it just where it can be kept at its essential work. By such means France was permitted for a very long time to fulfil its inspirational duties, especially to England which, otherwise, would be in a much sorrier plight than it is. Then Napoleon came, took France in hand, and heavily burdened it with a cast-iron centralized form of government with political jobbers to match. Now incorruptible Frenchmen will tell you it is hard to understand that France was once God's own country. Yet some of them do understand it, and having as it were a full grasp of the true inwardness of this godliness are resolutely set on bringing it back to the light of day. Which means that they conceive it to be their high and supreme duty to transform France into a working model of a Republic formed of a perfect federation of free regions. If this duty is well performed and pursued to the uttermost at the

present crisis, it is easy to prophesy that world-transformation will follow. For the war, it seems, is leading all nations to pledge themselves to stand or fall together for the future. Of course a federal association of the sort is only to be preserved by a worldful of human beings living lives in common in regions organized on lines exactly similar to each other. That is to say, according to one common model. Hence, the world at the point of death has called on France to prepare a beautiful resurrection. Or so it seems.

So that it has come to pass that the only talk that matters in France turns upon the elements of reconstruction and more especially upon spiritual fundamentals. In such ways many things are being revisited. Vital terms, in particular, are a-tiptoe clamouring to be rescued from misuse and mystery. One can see with half an eye that "The State," "Freedom," and "Revolution" are ranged side by side petitioning plain sense to exalt them to the seventh heaven of clear meaning. But who with any sense would start laying foundations without a re-examination of the sort. A foolish modeller of clay nations might attempt to remake "The State" unaware whether it is an abstraction or a solid. A clown might propose to confer "Freedom" on mankind not knowing whether it existed. And a first-rate muddle-head might seek to pass off "Reform" as "Revolution," unconscious that "Revolution" is Reform with a strong touch of liver.

The true reformer does not think and act thus loosely. I am inclined to think that he starts out pledged in the interests of clear vision and exact knowledge. Perhaps by his desire to unpack old forms with definition we shall know him. In any case, here in Paris are Regionalist leaders, such as Charles Brun, with fat volumes of definitions of the term regionalism to their credit. Besides these are honourable men who nurse reform without caring the least about the spirit that words enclose. For instance, there are two groups of them dancing round the State idea, which has long been bitten out of recognition by wrong association with "Government," "nation," "race," "people," "society," and other organizations and unions. The first are sworn to social and industrial reform by the aid of "The State" (whatever this may mean). They are represented by French Syndicalists who have revised their doctrine of "The State" co-operation which is similar to that of the English National Guildsmen. The second regard "The State" as something too poisonous for words and predict a big anti-Statist reaction after the war. Any one who likes may study their attitude by reading that notable book, *Les Bases d'une Paix durable*, written by Auguste Schvan and published by Félix Alcan, Paris.

If there were space I could prove that Art, Drama, and Poetry are actively assisting at this rebirth of importance. And, strange though it may sound, they are at the proper starting-point of definition. Indeed, it would seem as though their exponents have concluded that the only way to give them full expression is to find out first of all what this æsthetic trinity really means. In no other way can one account for the long-continued experiment with form. Does it not seem to say that advanced minds are convinced that form should be as fluid as the thing it informs? In days gone by I strongly held the opinion that the new men in the theatre and the studio were searching for livingness. And I now conclude from something I saw in Paris that this dynamic element has entered the theatre for the first time in its history. The Russian Ballet, "Parade," revealed to me how the actor's very obtrusive identity may be concealed beneath a fluid mask of character and environment. This futurist ballet was written by Jean Cocteau, decorated by Picasso, set to music by Erik Satie (whose work was fully described by Leigh

Henry in THE EGOIST for July 1914), and duly hissed by idiot spectators, writers, and editors. I think a direct outcome of this ballet was Guillaume Apollinaire's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, a "sur-réaliste" play with "simultané" decorations by MM. Férat, Steinberg, and Irène Lagut, and clever music by Germaine Albert-Birot. It had the effect of producing a split in the camp of the progressives, some of whom complained that they could not see Apollinaire for the maze of decorative ideas. Others saw Apollo quite clearly in his simultaneous get-up pleading for the simultaneous repopulation of France. It was all very gay and significant. And it told us that livingness was once more afoot seeking to crown the drama. In this and many ways it seeks to crown France.

TARR*

By WYNDHAM LEWIS

PART VII: SWAGGER SEX

CHAPTER I

BERTHA was still being taken in carefully prepared doses of an hour a day: from half-past four to a quarter to six. Any one else would have found this much of Bertha insupportable under any conditions. But Tarr's eccentric soul had been used to such far greater doses that this was the minimum he considered necessary for a cure.

Tarr came to her every day with the regularity of an old gentleman at a German "Bad" taking his spring water at the regulation hour. But the cure was finishing. There were signs of a new robustness, (hateful to her) equivalent to a springy walk and a contented and sunny eye, that heralded departure. His daily visits, with their brutal regularity, did her as much harm as they did him good.

The news of Solyk's death, then Kreisler's, affected the readily melodramatic side of her nature peculiarly. Death had made himself *de la partie*. Kreisler had left her alone for a few days. This is what had occupied him. The sensational news, without actually pushing her to imitation, made her own case, and her own tragic sensations, more real. They had received, in an indirect and cousin-thrice-removed sort of way, the authority of Death. Death—real living Death—was somewhere on the scene. His presence was announced, was felt. He had struck down somebody among them.

In the meantime this disposed of Kreisler for ever. Tarr as well appeared to feel that they were left in *tête-à-tête*. A sort of chaperon had been lost in Kreisler. His official post as protector or passive "obstacle" had been a definite status. If he stayed on, it would have to be as something else. On the day on which the news of Kreisler's end arrived, he talked of leaving for England. Her more drawn face, longer silences, sharp glances, once more embarrassed him.

He did not go to England at once. In the week or two succeeding his meeting with Anastasya in the restaurant he saw her frequently. So a chaperon was found. Bertha was officially presented to her successor. When she learnt that Anastasya had been chosen, her energy reformed. She braced herself for a substantial struggle.

The apparition at the window of the restaurant was her first revived activity.

CHAPTER II

ON August the tenth Tarr had an appointment with Anastasya at his studio in Montmartre. They had arranged to dine in Montmartre. It was their seventh meeting. He had just done his daily

* Tarr started in the issue of April 1916.

cure. He hurried back and found her lounging against the door, reading the newspaper.

"Ah, there you are! You're late, Mr. Tarr."

"Am I? I'm sorry. Have you been waiting long?"

"Not very. Fräulein Lunken——"

"She— I couldn't get away."

"No, it is difficult to get away, apparently."

He let her in. He was annoyed at the backwardness of his senses. His mind stepped in, determined to do their business for them. He put his arm round her waist, and planting his lips fully on hers, began kissing her. He slipped his hands sideways beneath her coat, and pressed an athletic, sinuous hulk against him. The various bulging and retreating contact of her body brought monotonous German reminders.

It was the first time he had kissed her. She showed no bashfulness or disinclination, but no return. Was she in the unfortunate position of an unawakened mass; and had she so rationalized her intimate possessions that there was no precocious fancy left until mature animal ardour was set up? He felt as though he were embracing a tiger, who was not unsympathetic, but rather surprised. Perhaps he had been too sudden. He ran his hand upwards along her body. All was statuesquely genuine. She took his hand away.

"We haven't come to that yet," she said.

"Haven't we!"

"I didn't think we had."

Smiling at each other, they separated.

"Let me take your coat off. You'll be hot in here."

Her coat was all in florid redundancies of heavy cloth, like a Tintoretto dress. Underneath she was wearing a very plain dark blouse and skirt, like a working girl, which exaggerated the breadth and straightness of her shoulders. Not to sentimentalize it, she had open-work stockings on underneath, such as the genuine girl would have worn on her night out, at one and eleven-three the pair.

"You look very well," Tarr said.

"I put these on for you."

Tarr had, while he was kissing her, found his senses again. They had flared up in such a way that the reason had been offended, and resisted. Hence some little conflict. They were not going to have the credit——!

He became shy. He was ashamed of his sudden interest, which had been so long in coming, and instinctively hid it. He was committed to the rôle of a reasonable man.

"I am very flattered at your thinking of me in that way. I am afraid I do not deserve——"

"I want you to *deserve*, though. You are absurd about women. You are like a schoolboy!"

"Oh, you've noticed that?"

"It doesn't require much——"

She lay staring at him in a serious way. Squashed up as she was lying, a very respectable bulk of hip filled the space between the two arms of the chair, not enough to completely satisfy a Dago, but too much to please a dandy of the west. He compared this opulence with Bertha's and admitted that it outdid his fiancée's. He did this childish measuring in the belief that he was not observed.

"You are extremely recalcitrant to intelligence, aren't you?" she said.

"In women, you mean?"

"Yes."

"I suppose I am. My tastes are simple."

"I don't know anything about your tastes, of course. I'm guessing."

"You can take it that you are right."

He began to feel extremely attracted to this intelligent head. He had been living for the last week or so in the steady conviction that he should never get the right sensual angle with this girl. It

was a queer feeling, after all, to see his sensuality speaking sense. He would marry her.

"Well," she said, with pleasant American accent in speaking English, "I feel you see some disability in sensible women that does not exist. It doesn't irritate you too much to hear a woman talking about it?"

"Of course not—you. You are so handsome. I shouldn't like it if you were less so. Such good looks" (he rolled his eyes appreciatively) "get us out of arty coldness. You are all right. The worst of looks like yours is that sense has about the same effect as nonsense. Sense is a delightful anomaly just as rot would be! You don't require words or philosophy. But they give one a pleasant tickling all the same."

"I am glad you are learning. However, don't praise me like that. It makes me a little shy. I know how you feel about women. You feel that good sense gets in the way."

"It interferes with the senses, you mean? I don't think I feel that altogether——"

"You feel I'm not a woman, don't you? Not properly a woman, like your Bertha. There's no mistake about her!"

"One requires something unconscious, perhaps. I've never met any woman who interested me but was ten times more stupid than I. I want to *be alone* in those things. I like it to be subterranean as well."

"Well, I have a cave! I've got all that, too. I *promise* you."

Her *promise* was slow and lispng. Tarr once more had to deal with himself.

"I—am—a woman; not a man. That is the fact." ("Fact" was long and American.) "You don't realize that—I assure you I am!" She looked at him with a soft, steady smile, that drew his gaze and will into her, rather than imposed itself on him.

"I know." He felt that there was not much to say.

"No, you know far less than you think. See here; I set out thinking of you in this way—'Nothing but a female booby will please that man!' I wanted to please you, but I couldn't do it on those lines. I'm going to make an effort along my own lines. You are like a youngster who hasn't got used to the taste of liquor; you don't like it. You haven't grown up yet. I want to make you drunk and see what happens!"

She had her legs crossed. Extremely white flesh showed above the black Lisle silk, amidst linen as expensive as the outer cloth was plain. This clever alternating of the humble and gorgeous! Would the body be plain? The provocation was merely a further argument. It said, "Young man, what is there you find in your Bertha that cannot be provided along with superior sense?" His Mohammedan eye did not refuse the conventional bait. His butcher's sensibility pressed his fancy into professional details. What with her words and her acts he was in a state of strong confusion.

She jumped up and put on her coat, like a ponderous curtain showering down to her heels. Peep-shows were ended!

"Come, let's have some dinner. I'm hungry. We can discuss this problem better after a beefsteak!" A Porterhouse would have fitted, Tarr thought.

He followed obediently and silently. He was glad that Anastasya had taken things into her hands. The positions that these fundamental matters got him into! Should he allow himself to be overhauled and reformed by this abnormal beauty? He was not altogether enjoying himself. He felt a ridiculous amateur. He was a butcher in his spare moments. This immensely intellectual ox, covered with prizes and pedigrees, overwhelmed him. You required not a butcher, but an artist, for that! He was not an artist in anything but oil-paint. Oil-paint and meat

were singularly alike. They had reciprocal potentialities. But he was afraid of being definitely distracted.

The earlier coldness all appeared cunning; his own former coldness was the cunning of destiny.

He felt immensely pleased with himself as he walked down the Boulevard Clichy with this perfect article rolling and sweeping beside him. No bourgeoisie this time! He could be proud of this anywhere! Absolute perfection! Highest quality obtainable. "The face that launched a thousand ships." A thousand ships crowded in her gait. There was nothing highfalutin about her, Burne-Jonesque, Grail-lady, or Irish-romantic. Perfect meat, perfect sense, accent of Minnesota, music of the Steppes! And all that was included under the one inadequate but pleasantly familiar heading, *German*. He became more and more impressed with what was *German* about her.

He took her to a large, expensive, and quiet restaurant. They began with oysters. He had never eaten oysters before. Prudence had prevented him. She laughed very much at this.

"You are a savage, Tarr!" The use of his surname was a tremendous caress. "You are afraid of typhoid, and your palate is as conservative as an ox's. Give me a kiss!"

She put her lips out; he kissed them with solemnity and concentration, adjusting his glasses afterwards.

They discussed eating for some time. He discovered he knew nothing about it.

"Why, man, you never think!"

Tarr considered. "No, I'm not very observant in many things. But I have a defence. All that part of me is rudimentary. But that is as it should be."

"How—as it should be?"

"I don't disperse myself. I specialize on necessities."

"Don't you call food——?"

"Not in the way you've been considering it. Listen. Life is art's rival and vice versa."

"I don't see the opposition."

"No, because you mix them up. You are the archenemy of any picture."

"I? Nonsense! But art comes out of life, in any case. What is art?"

"My dear girl—life with all the nonsense taken out of it. Will that do?"

"Yes. But what is art—especially?" She insisted with her hands on a plastic answer. "Are we in life, now? *What is art?*"

"*Life* is anything that could live and die. *Art* is peculiar; it is anything that lives and that yet you cannot imagine as dying."

"Why cannot art die? If you smash up a statue, it is as dead as a dead man."

"No, it is not. That is the difference. It is the God, or soul, we say, of the man. It always has existed, if it is a true statue."

"But cannot you say of some life that it could not die?"

"No, because in that case it is the *real* coming through. *Death* is the one attribute that is peculiar to *life*. It is the something that it is impossible to imagine in connexion with art. Reality is entirely founded on this fact, that of *Death*. All *action* revolves round that, and has it for motif. The purest thought is totally ignorant of death. *Death* means the perpetual extinction of impertinent sparks. But it is the key of life."

"But what is *art*? You are talking about it as though I knew what it was!"

"What is life, do you know? Well, I know what art is in the same way."

"Yes, but I ask you as a favour to define it for me. A picture is art, a living person is life. We sitting here are *life*; if we were talking on a stage we should be *art*. How would you define art?"

"Well, let's take your example. But a picture, and also the actors on a stage, are pure life. Art is merely what the picture and the stage-scene represent, and what we now, and any living person as such, only, do *not*. That is why you can say that the true statue can be smashed, and yet not die."

"Still, what *is* it? What *is* art?"

"It is ourselves disentangled from death and accident."

"How do you know?"

"I feel that is so, because I notice that that is the essential point to grasp. *Death* is the thing that differentiates art and life. Art is identical with the idea of permanence. It is a continuity and not an individual spasm. Life is the idea of the person."

Both their faces lost some of their colour, hers her white, his his yellow. They flung themselves upon each other like waves. The fuller stream came from him.

"You say that the actors on the stage are pure life, yet they represent something that *we* do not. But 'all the world's a stage,' isn't it? So how do we not also stand for that something?"

"Yes, life does generally stand for that something too; but it only emerges and is visible in art."

"Still I don't know what art is!"

"You ought to by this time. However, we can go further. Consider the content of what we call art. A statue is art, as you said; you are life. There is bad art and bad life. We will only consider the good. A statue, then, is a dead thing; a lump of wood or stone. Its lines and masses are its soul. Anything living, quick and changing, is bad art, always; naked men and women are the worst art of all, because there are fewer semi-dead things about them. The shell of the tortoise, the plumage of a bird, makes these animals approach nearer to art. Soft, quivering and quick flesh is as far from art as an object can be."

"Art is merely *the dead*, then?"

"No, but *deadness* is the first condition of art. A hippopotamus's armoured hide, a turtle's shell, feathers or machinery on the one hand; *that* opposed to naked pulsing and moving of the soft inside of life, along with infinite elasticity and consciousness of movement, on the other.

"Deadness, then," Tarr went on, "in the limited sense in which we use that word is the first condition of art. The second is absence of *soul*, in the sentimental human sense. The lines and masses of the statue are its soul. No restless, quick, flame-like ego is imagined for the *inside* of it. It has no inside. This is another condition of art; *to have no inside*, nothing you cannot *see*. Instead, then, of being something impelled like a machine by a little egoistic fire inside, it lives soullessly and deadly by its frontal lines and masses."

Tarr was developing, from her point of view, too much shop. She encouraged him, however, immediately.

"Why should human beings be chiefly represented in art?"

"Because what we call art depends on human beings for its advertisement. As men's ideas about themselves change, art should change too."

They had waded through a good deal of food while this conversation had been proceeding. She now stretched herself, clasping her hands in her lap. She smiled at Tarr as though to invite him to smile too, at her beautiful, heavy, hysterical anatomy. She had been driving hard inscrutable Art deeper and deeper into herself. She now drew it out and showed it to Tarr.

"Art is paleozoic matter, dolomite, oil-paint, and mathematics; also something else. Having established that, we will stick a little flag up and come back another day. I want to hear now about *life*. But do you believe in anything?"

Tarr was staring, suspended, with a smile cut in

half, therefore defunct, at the wall. He turned his head slowly, with his mutilated smile, his glasses slanting in an agreeably vulpine way.

"Believe in anything? I only believe in one thing, pleasure of taste. In that way you get back though, with me, to mathematics and paleozoic times, and the coloured powders of the earth."

Anastasya ordered a *gâteau reine de Samothrace*.

"Reine de Samothrace! Reine de Samothrace!" Tarr muttered. "Donnez-moi une omelette au rhum."

Tarr looked at her for some time in a steady, depressed way. What a treat for his eyes not to be jibing! She held all the imagery of a perfect world. There was no pathos anywhere in her form. Kindness—*bestial kindness*—would be an out-of-work in this neighbourhood. The upper part of her head was massive and intelligent. The middle of her body was massive and exciting. There was no animalism out of place in the shape of a weight of jaw. The weight was in the head and hips. But was not this a complete thing by itself? How did he stand as regards it? He had always been sceptical about perfection. Did she and he need each other? His steadfast ideas of the flower surrounded by dung were challenged. She might be a monotonous abstraction, and, if accepted, impoverish his life. She was the summit, and the summit was narrow. Or in any case was not ugliness and foolishness the richest soil? Irritants were useful though not beautiful. He reached back doubtfully towards his bourgeoisie. But he was revolted as he touched that mess, with this clean and solid object beneath his eyes. He was not convinced, though, that he was on the right road. He preferred a cabin to a palace, and thought that a villa was better for him than either, but did not want to order his life so rigidly as that.

"What did you make of Kreisler's proceedings?" she asked him.

"In what way do you mean?"

"Well, first—do you think he and Bertha—got on very well?"

"Do you mean was Bertha his mistress? I should think not. But I'm not sure. That isn't very interesting, is it?"

"Kreisler is interesting, not Bertha, of course."

"You're very hard on Bertha."

She put her tongue out at him and wrinkled up her nose.

A queen, standing on her throne, was obtruding her "unruly member."

"What were Kreisler's relations with you, by the way?" he asked blankly.

Her extreme freedom with himself suggested possible explanations of her manner in discussing Soltyk's death at the time.

"My relations with Kreisler consisted in a half-hour's conversation with him in a restaurant, and that was all. I spoke to him several times after that, but only for a few minutes. He was very excited the last time we met. I have a theory that his duel and general behaviour was due to unrequited passion for me. Your Bertha, on the other hand, has a theory that it was due to unrequited passion for *her*. I wondered if you had any information that might support her case or mine."

"No. I know nothing about it. I hold, myself, a quite different theory."

"What is that? That he was in love with *you*?"

"My theory has not the charming simplicity of your theory or Bertha's. I don't believe that he was in love with anybody. I believe, though, that it was a sex-tumult of sorts——"

"What is that?"

"You want to hear my theory? This is it. I believe that all the fuss he made was an attempt to get out of Art back into life again, like a fish flopping

about who had got into the wrong tank. It would be more exact to say, *back into sex*. He was trying to get back into sex again out of a little puddle of Art where he felt he was gradually expiring. What I mean is this. He was an art student without any talent, and was leading a dull, slovenly existence like thousands of others in the same case. He was very hard up. Things were grim that way too. The sex-instinct of the average man, then, had become perverted into a silly false channel. Or it might be better to say that his elementary art-instinct had been rooted out of sex and one or two other things, where it was both useful and ornamental, and naturally flourished, and had been exalted into a department by itself, where it bungled and wrecked everything. It is a measure the need of which hits the eye in these days to keep the art-instinct of the run of men in its place. These art-spirits should be kept firmly embedded in *sex*, in *fighting*, and in *affairs*. The nearest the general run of men can get to Art is *Action*. Real, bustling, bloody action is what they want! Sex is *their* form of art: the battle of existence in enterprise, Commerce, is *their* picture. The moment they *think* or *dream* you get an immense weight of cheap stagnating passion that becomes a menace to the health of the world. A "cultured" nation is as great a menace as a "free" one. The answer to the men who object to this as high-handed is plain enough. You must answer: No man's claim is *individual*; the claim of an exceptional being is that of an important type or original—is an inclusive claim. The eccentric Many do not matter. They are the individuals. And anyway Goddam economy in any shape or form! Long live Waste! Curse the principle of Humanity! Mute inglorious Miltons are not mute for God-in-Heaven. They have the Silence. Bless Waste, Heaven bless Waste! Hoch Waste!"

"I'll drink to that!" said Anastasya, raising her glass. "Here's to Waste! Hoch!" Tarr drank this toast with gusto.

"Here's to Waste!" he said loudly. "Waste yourselves, pour yourselves out, let there be no High-Men except such as happen! Economy is sedition. Drink your blood if you have no wine! But *waste*; fling out into the streets; never count your yarn. Accept fools, compromise yourselves with the poor in spirit, fling the rich ones behind you; live like the lions in the forests with fleas on your back. Down with the *Efficient Chimpanzee*!"

Anastasya's eyes were bloodshot with the gulp she had taken to honour Waste. Tarr patted her on the back.

"There are no lions in the forests!" she hiccuped, patting her chest. "You're pulling my leg."

They got to their coffee more or less decorously. But Tarr had grown extremely loquacious and expansive in every way. He began slapping her thighs to emphasise his points, as Diderot was in the habit of doing with the Princess de Clèves. After that he began kissing her, when he had made a particularly successful remark, to celebrate it. Their second bottle of wine had put many things to flight. He lay back in his chair in prolonged bursts of laughter. She, in German fashion, clapped her hand over his mouth, and he seized it with his teeth and made pale shell-shapes in its brown fat.

In a café opposite the restaurant, where they next went, they had further drinks.

They caressed each other's hands now as a matter of course! Indifferent to the supercilious and bitter natives, they became lost in lengthy kisses, their arms round each other's necks. In a little cave of intoxicated affection, a conversation took place.

"Have you had dealings with many——?"

"What's that you say, dear?" she asked with eager, sleepy seriousness. The "dear" reminded him of accostings in the streets.

"Have you been the mistress of many men?"

"No, of course not. Only one. He was a Russian."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"What did you say?"

"How much did he bag?"

"Bag?"

"What did the Russian represent?"

"Nothing at all, Tarr. That's why I took him. I wanted the experience. But now I want you! You are my first *person*!" Distant reminiscences of Bertha, grateful to him at present.

Kisses succeeded.

"I don't want you!" Tarr said.

"Oh! • Tell me what you want?"

"I want a woman!"

"But I am a woman, stupid!"

"I want a *slave*."

She whispered in his ear, hanging on his neck.

"No! You may be a woman, but you're not a slave."

"Don't be so quarrelsome. Forget those silly words of yours—slave, woman. It's all right when you're talking about art, but you're hugging a woman at present. This is something that can die! Ha ha! We're in life, my Tarr. *We represent absolutely nothing—thank God!*"

"I realize I'm in life, darling. But I don't like being reminded of it in that way. It makes me feel as though I were in a *mauvais lieu*."

"Give me a kiss, you *efficient chimpanzee*!"

Tarr scowled at her, but did not alter the half-embrace in which they sat.

"You won't give me a kiss? Silly old *inefficient chimpanzee*!"

She sat back in her chair, and head down looked through her eyelashes at him with demure menace.

"Garçon! garçon!" she called.

"Mademoiselle?" the *garçon* said, approaching slowly, with dignified scepticism.

"This gentleman, *garçon*, wants to be a lion with fleas on his back—at least so he says! At the same time he wants a slave. I don't know if he expects the slave to catch his fleas or not. I haven't asked him. But he's a funny-looking bird, isn't he?"

The *garçon* withdrew with hauteur.

"What's the meaning of your latest tack, you little German art-tart?"

"What am I?"

"I called you German æsthetic pastry. I think that describes you."

"Oh, *tart*, is it?"

"Anything you like. Very well made, puffed out. With one solitary Russian, *bien entendu!*"

"And what, good God, shall we call the cow-faced specimen you spend the greater part of your days with—"

"She, too, is German pastry, more homely than you though—"

"Homely's the word!"

"But not quite so fly-blown. Less variegated creams and German pretentiousness—"

"I see! And takes you more seriously than other people would be likely to! That's what all your 'quatch' about 'woman' and 'slave' means. You know that!"

She had recovered from the effects of the drinks completely and was sitting up and talking briskly, looking at him with the same serious, rather flattened face she had had during their argument on Art and Death.

"I know you are a famous whore, who becomes rather acid in your cups!—when you showed me your legs this evening, I suppose I was meant—"

"Assez! Assez!!" She struck the table with her fist.

"Let's get to business." He put his hat on and leant towards her. "It's getting late. Twenty-five francs, I'm afraid, is all I can manage."

"Twenty-five francs for what? With you—it

would be robbery! Twenty-five francs to be your audience while you drivel about art? Keep your money and buy Bertha an—*efficient chimpanzee*! She will need it if she marries you!"

Her mouth drawn tight and her hands in her coat pockets, she walked out of the door of the café.

Tarr ordered another drink.

"It's like a moral tale told on behalf of Bertha," he thought. That was the temper of Paradise! The morality, in pointing to Bertha, did her no good, but caused her to receive the *trop-plein* of his discontent.

He sat in a grim sulk at the thought of the good time he had lost. This scene had succeeded in touching the necessary spring. His vanity helping, for half an hour he plotted his revenge and satisfaction together. Anastasya had violently flung off the illusion of indifference in which she had hitherto appeared to him. The drinks of the evening were a culture in which his disappointment grew luxuriantly, but with a certain buffoonish lightness. He went back to his studio in half an hour's time with smug, thick, secretive pleasure settling down on his body's ungainly complaints.

(To be continued)

A THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

(Continued from page 116)

(29) It is this inhibitory characteristic of *attention* which gives to thought its air of high tension and restraint. The thinker whose work implicates but little his entire structure is nevertheless incessantly controlling a vast number of high potentialities of action, and the very fact that he but rarely allows this potential energy to discharge itself along its initiated lines, inasmuch as it enables him to cover a vastly wider area of ground, commits him to heavy tasks both of renewed initiation and strain. It lays him under the necessity first of rendering his entire energy potential in conformity with the rapidly changing symbol, and second, of exercising the control necessary to restrain this energy from becoming actual.

(30) We can now see what a transforming effect the *power to attend* must have upon the life-history of the organism possessing it. It effects at one stroke a *concentration* and a *withdrawal*. It enables the entire energies of the organism to concentrate themselves into a unified whole, of which a minute portion only—the symbol—is made competent first to assemble and then to negotiate with every conceivable situation. By this means the organism is enabled to withdraw itself gradually from the hurly-burly of action. Gradually it ceases to implicate itself as a whole save on the comparatively rare occasions, and even when it does it is at the instance of the symbol. The practical effect is as though in the symbol a third and neutral agent had arisen to mediate between the organism and its world. Like some strong disruptive force, the symbol has cleft even while it united the Self and the World. It has divided the Ego, throwing the Self into high relief as a unit over and against a multiple world.

(31) It is the symbol again which, just as it accentuates the Self's unity, accentuates also the world's multiplicity. The symbol veins the world with its literally innumerable lines of differentiation. A new distinction obtains whenever a new symbol (backed up, as it necessarily is, by the organism's entire resources) obtains. The particular *form* of the distinction is that taken by the *significance* of the symbol itself; and inasmuch as this is reinforced by the whole energy of the organism, it is possible to base a developing series of distinctions: all potential lines of organic activity: upon it.

(32) It appears, therefore, that the unique value with which the power to symbolize invests its possessor

is that of effecting an enormous economy by a new method of allocating *emphasis*: that of *directing at will* the total available organic forces upon *one form of movement at a time*. It is this feature which explains why we are dead to the rest of the world whenever we are attending closely to any one thing. "Why physical impressions fail to pierce the mind" need not therefore be a "mystery." The whole mechanism of mind: of symbolic action that is: is indeed nothing other than a contrivance to bring about this very end. The available energy momentarily *exhausts itself* in forming the actually enacted movements of the symbol together with the sub-conscious reserve hinterland which attends the symbol. Hence when attention is once given over to any one thing no organic force remains available out of which other sense-impressions may be formed. Strictly, *they are not there*. If *esse = percipi*; if *to be = to be perceived*, and if *to perceive* is an active condition of the organism, in what sense are we entitled to say that "*things are*" when they fail to enter our perception: our conscious experience? Does not Professor James, for instance, in the quotation we gave at the outset—to wit: "Yet the physical impressions which do not count are *there* as much as those which do, and affect our sense-organs just as energetically"—assume the whole position he sets out to prove? And is not the ensuing verdict of a "mystery" just and righteous retribution?

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