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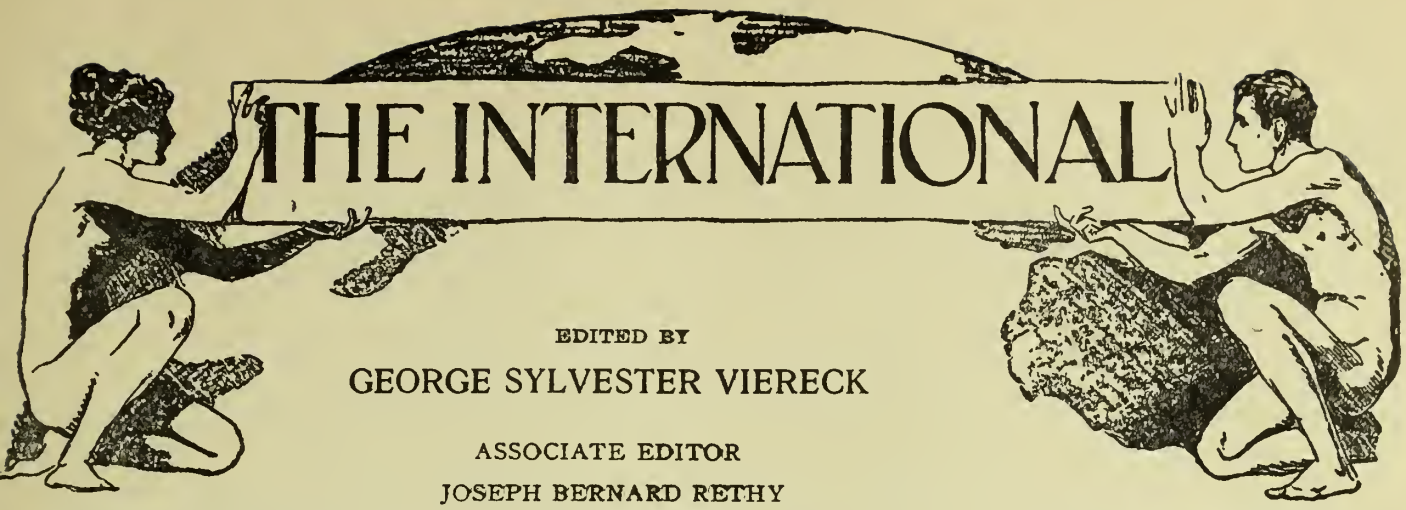

EDITED BY
GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
JOSEPH BERNARD RETHY

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MR. WILSON'S GREAT TALK ABOUT PEACE WITHOUT VICTORY.

WHAT particularly strikes one in President Wilson's plea for peace before the Senate last month is its implication. We might say its implications. The first of them is that Mr. Wilson has knowledge which is denied the rest of us. He is so profound a master of state craft that we shall not suppose he overlooks the means to his great end. He will not have it imagined that he can bring peace by merely talking about it. He has thought out long in advance the various steps he must take to give his peace policy effect. He does not let the world see all that is in his mind. Consequently, any comment upon his words is but a guess or perhaps a clever conjecture. Making this confession of our incapacity to criticise Mr. Wilson in a well-informed way, we venture to think that his words have brought peace within a measurable distance of the belligerents. Even the mighty British Empire will not too haughtily reject the proffer of the olive branch from a President of the United States. If it were not for our faith in the subtlety, the diplomacy, the art of Mr. Wilson—using these terms inoffensively—we should say at once that he is doomed to humiliation. As it is, we credit him with genius, diplomacy, skill, subtlety and a noble purpose. On the basis of that combination of qualities in Wilson, we hope. We do no more than hope until the President makes his next move. It will be striking, sensational, and, let us pray, successful.

IS GERMANY ABOUT TO STARVE?

THERE is a very general expectation in London that the Germans will be so hungry in the spring as to be capable of making a meal of Emperor William and the general staff. Moreover, the Germans are big eaters and they will not relish a curtailment of their diet beyond a certain point. The crops will not permit the masses to live between one harvest and another. These calculations are very finely made. They are convincing on paper. The reply to them is embodied in the anecdote of Napoleon and his hungry and ragged soldiers, "You have nothing," he said to them. "The enemy has everything." The starving soldiers fought for their stomachs and they soon drove off the well-fed and enervated enemy. All military history shows that when troops are fighting for a meal in the possession of the enemy, they are invincible. Nor need we overlook the factor of despair. Let us grant that the Germans are as badly off as the English would have us believe. Their despair would lend them a power of offense against which the allies might contend in vain. In short, a little knowledge of history ought to teach the theorists who think the Germans are starving that it is the hungry, the ragged and the despairing who conquer the world.

WHY THE WAR SITUATION WILL NOT SOON CHANGE.

FOR a period that may extend through the next few years, and which, at the best, will last a year, the world will witness the progress of the sanguinary struggle for the dominion of the world which has brought calamities untold to the white race. The condition of the professional man may become worse and worse. The holders of tangible assets may find them shrinking. The speculators in values that rise and fall with the tide of battle may reap immense fortunes and lose still greater ones. All this misery will not bring the mighty struggle to an end. The explanation is to be found in the fact that the men at the foundation of society, the toiling millions, are, on the whole, benefited by the duration of the war. The masses in England continue still to find money in their

pockets. The demand for manual laborers outruns the supply. The toil of the skilled worker is rewarded upon an unprecedented scale. The wives of the soldiers are cared for, in spite of the misery of which we read. In short, the continuation of the struggle is not ruining the proletariat. The wage earners may be sent into battle to die for their country. They are cared for, and they have no economic problem to solve. The humblest man in the ranks may rise to the highest command. These are the considerations which make the pleas of the pacifists so meaningless to the poor. In peace the poor live a life of horror in the slums. The men of force and of initiative among them go to prison. To-day the strong vagrant is an asset to the recruiting sergeant. How absurd is the talk of the agitators who remind the workers that they are cannon food. Is it not better to be food for cannon than food for worms in a pauper's burying ground? The man who comes back wounded from the battle is a petted hero. In the light of developments, we need look for no such revolt of the millions against conditions which are to them an improvement over what they had to endure when there was peace. The Socialist vote has shrunk in this land. It is not as important as it was. We do not think it is likely to be important after the war unless peace brings back the old form of starvation for the masses.

THE SUMMER AND THE SUBMARINE AND THE OCEAN.

WINTER is about passing away and with it the commerce of the world takes a fresh lease of life. The Germans have been busy with their favorite naval weapon and some dozen or more ships have been sunk in the South Atlantic alone. There will be a loud outcry against this by the allies, whose complaint will be based upon the familiar contention that the Germans do not fight according to the British code. The difficulty of the mistress of the seas is that the seas of which she is mistress are so wide. If efforts are made to police one ocean, the foe will turn up in another. The sea is one but it is also vast. The ships that sail the globe must traverse unpoliced regions as well as policed regions. There is no evidence that the Germans have not adhered to their agreement with this Government in the method of their submarine operations. The allies will present cases to Washington suggestive of every imaginable turpitude. There will be exchanges of ideas between our capital and that of Emperor William. The organs of Anglomania in New York will magnify the crisis in a sensational way and in the end everything will be about as it was. There is not the slightest prospect of this country being involved in the great European war as a result of the submarine campaign to be reopened when the weather is warm. A popular impression to the contrary prevails, because the mind of the American people has been charged with the idea that President Wilson does not trust the German navy. He is afraid that navy will break away from the control of the Wilhelmstrasse. This idea is fresh evidence of the extent to which our people are given nonsense in place of reality. There is no prospect at all that the German navy will run amuck and there is as little likelihood that we shall be drawn into the war. Germany will not sink unarmed merchantmen without warning; but she will not spare warships disguised as merchantmen. It is to the interest of this country to remain at peace. We have remained at peace with honor. What we have done in the face of more serious obstacles we can do easily now that the control of events is (from the diplomatic standpoint) in our hands.

THE COMING EVENTS OF THE WAR ON LAND.

NO sooner will the ground in Northern France and in Belgium be dry enough for infantry tactics on a colossal scale than the campaign must reopen on both sides with redoubled fury. Any accident might happen. For example, the Germans could, given a fortuitous combination of events, break through the lines of the foe and march on to Paris. The American mind has become so obsessed by the spectacular character of any capture of Paris that the appearance of a German army there would seem to many of us tantamount to an end of the war. That is sheer delusion. The capture of Paris by the Germans would not end the war if the French army remained intact. Similarly, any breaking through the German lines by the allies in the western theater would not mean that the end was in sight. The allies might conceivably get far on the road to Berlin and still suffer defeat and destruction. This point ought to be kept in mind, because we are about to witness a stage of the war in which the wavering of lines will be a feature of all offensives. We have seen the end of the trench stage of the great war. Men will still entrench, but there will be no more holding of entrenched positions indefinitely. Both sides have acquired so much experience in searching trenches with artillery that it is well nigh impossible for any line to retain its original character under heavy bombardment. Therefore, we shall have exciting clashes masked behind the claims of one side or the other, reinforced with maps of the ground held. The "map" period of the war is over in the west. The era of movement of large bodies of troops will take its place. We shall hear of armies moving hither and thither, of defeats, pursuits, surprises, but the results

will be veiled behind the curtain of a censorship. If the net result should not be a decisive triumph for the allies in the west, we may look for the collapse of the Lloyd George ministry in London.

THE COURSE OF THE "LEAK" INQUIRY.

THAT committee of the House of Representatives which has undertaken to investigate the leak of a Presidential note should tolerate no trifling with its authority. The powers of a house committee making an investigation of this kind are ample. If there be a flaw in the resolution empowering the investigation, that flaw can be remedied. It is too much the habit to take a House committee as if it were a joke. In some respects, Congress is the highest court in the land. Certainly, the committee of Congress investigating an affair under a proper resolution has all the power of a regularly constituted court. It can not be flouted with impunity. Nevertheless, we saw a House committee almost openly insulted by a Federal bureaucrat in this very city not so many months ago. He was to have been summoned before the bar of the House, but he did not go. Perhaps he will be forced to appear in a week or two. This is but one episode. The country well remembers a very rich man who ran hither and thither about the country to escape an investigating committee of Congress. If the gentlemen who are looking into the leak will vindicate their authority, if they refuse to tolerate trifling by men of millions who resent questioning, the inquiry will do an immense amount of good. As regards the leak itself, we venture to think that an immense ado has been made about very little. It is reasonable to suppose that men whose business it is to keep in touch with speculative values on the Stock Exchange do not forget to watch the developments at Washington. There is nothing at this moment to prove the insinuations against men high in the administration. The charges against them are not credible on their face. The country will want chapter and verse and these can be afforded only if the Congressional Committee displays energy and efficiency.

THE ANGLOMANIACS WORRY THE PRESIDENT AGAIN.

IT was inevitable that President Wilson should come in for denunciation on the part of the Anglomaniacs because he spoke a word for peace. Those Anglomaniacs are prone to talk of the President's "mistake." The capacity of the men who use that word to keep out of mistakes themselves is by no means obvious. The glaring incapacity of the critics of President Wilson to pass judgment on the policy that inspired his peace note does not discon-cert those Anglomaniacs at all. We have emerged into a period of history that would try the subtlety of a Machiavelli, a period that must press a Charlemagne hard and baffle the instinct for rule of a Pope Gregory the Great. In the throes of each recurrent crisis, President Wilson has achieved a series of diplomatic victories of which Talleyrand might be proud. The correspondence with Germany has been masterly. The hints to England have been strong and, if not effective, they have detached the American mind from its superstition regarding Great Britain. The President has held aloof in the spirit, if not always with the ease, of Washington. In the face of such a series of successes, he was justified in saying a word for that peace which is still far away. Only the conceited, the impertinent, the ignorant or the mercenary would venture to speak disdainfully of what President Wilson has done in addressing an identical note to the belligerents. He is, of course, making moves in what might be called a preliminary series of games. He is establishing the record. He is writing a preface to the text that is yet to be read to us. In flat and flagrant defiance of the evidence of this fact, the President's critics—men who are British subjects at heart—talk of his mistake. How does an ignoramus define a mistake? What correction does he offer? Such Anglomaniacs remind us of the sophomores who are so ready to tell the professor about Shakespeare's mistakes. Well, we won't mind Shakespeare's mistakes, because his biggest mistake is more precious than all Doctor Dryasdust's accuracies.

ANOTHER TRIUMPH FOR THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY.

OF all the victories of the great Federal bureaucracy over the liberties of the American people we can remember none to compare in importance with the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the Mann "white slave" case. There is a suspicion in some artless minds that this Mann law was enacted in ignorance of what it really stands for. There are other simple souls who think the effect of the act in promoting blackmail was but evidence of a lack of insight into human nature. Those who know what forces are hidden in our national life need not be told that the bureaucrats who had the Mann law enacted understood its character and purport. It was another device on the part of the Federal bureaucrats to make their hold upon power firmer. They are now in a position to invade the private lives of the American people under cover of a power that no Congressman dare attack. It has been said that no one in Washington will ever dare to introduce a bill correcting the abuses of the Mann law. It is difficult for anyone to expose those

abuses without incurring suspicion of some unworthy motive. The evil of the act is not in its attitude to the "escapades" of people, although that is open to question, but in the vast power it confers upon a bureaucracy exercising the powers of the Federal Government to set itself up as a censor of the morals of the people. The power bestowed upon the bureaucrats by the Mann act would be dangerous if exercised by the elected representatives of the people. It is exercised by men who owe their office to appointment at the dictation of hierarchical superiors, men who are not residents of the districts they invade with their inquisitorial powers. The postoffice has in the past been a scandal because of the travesty of justice which it called a "fraud order proceeding," but this evil fades into nothingness beside the new bureaucratic tyranny of the Mann mistake. We do not for a moment insinuate a word of reproach against Congressman Mann. We do not doubt that he was hoodwinked by some unctuous bureaucrat into lending the weight of his name to a legislative trick.

OUR MIDDLE WEST ON THE MAP OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCE.

THE Middle West has put itself on the map of international finance.

Taking up what Wall Street dropped, the wealth of our Middle West is being enlisted in the salvage of the Chinese Republic. This American loan to China has a threefold meaning. Behind the bald fact of five millions gold bolstering China in her moment of need, we have the American Government coming out of its shell—the Nipponese covering a wry face over the setback given her dream of empire over China.

The playing of fairy godmother to the harassed Chinese Republic augurs much. The $5,000,000 loan undertaken by the Continental and Commercial Bank of Chicago is—as the men putting through the deal said—a revelation of a new Middle West. Yesterday it was content to be hailed the granary of the world. That is past. The one money market in America no longer is Wall Street. The new Middle West is dipping into the stakes lying half around the world.

Capping with success a long failure of China to get golden aid from this country, the Middle West flyer in finance has a larger import.

"The Department of State," says Secretary of State Lansing, "is always gratified to see the Republic of China receive financial assistance from the citizens of the United States." If the words of the Secretary of State carry any meaning, it is an expression of concern over the fate of China. Coupled to this, the declaration of the State Department that "the legitimate enterprises abroad" of our country will get "all proper diplomatic support and protection" has a challenge which will not be lost on the world; for the Secretary of State—knowing the circumstances of the Middle West's loosening of purse—has voiced no words of warning.

How will Japan, looking on China as her pie, take this stiffening of China's backbone—the declaration of our Secretary of State.

China's fight for life may be put in two words: money and meddling—from without. The nibbling policy put in action by Japan, the bludgeoning of China into giving an inch that an ell may be grasped, has no place for America's espousal of China and her woes. Japan knows that every dollar from across the Pacific to China sets Japanese ambitions back in the Celestial Republic just two hundred centuries.

The Middle West—the Administration's Middle West—is putting a momentous stake into China. Is the American Government ready to see it through? Are we willing to face Japan's hostility over this fingering into what our past backing down has taught the land of the Mikado to be their own place in the sun? Have we said what we mean? Do we mean what we say?

Americans may close their eyes to this—as they have done in the past. But the Japanese will not. Some day America may awake to the fact that the conclusion of the China loan of 1916 was but the beginning of larger events—events pushing this nation into a road from which there is no turning.

More than one international furrow, blindly ploughed, has been sown by Mars.

WHY THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH IS RESTRICTED BY AMERICANS.

NO doubt there were flaws in the character of George Washington. He was a great and good man, much abler than we are permitted to suppose, owing to the Lincoln craze. George Washington was the father of his country in a splendid sense. His memory has been discredited within recent weeks by the authorities of a native American State or, to be literally accurate, by the native Americans who rule one of our States. These native Americans had a citizen tried and convicted of saying that George Washington was guilty of moral lapses. The law of that State forbids disrespectful allusions to the memory of the first President of the United States. One may not cite his sins even as historical facts.

In another State in which the native American element is strong, a citizen has been tried and is

about to be punished for denying that God exists. If we are correctly informed, the citizen went so far as to say that Jesus Christ was never divine in origin. The episode has been in the courts for some weeks and will remain there, for a vigorous defense is imminent.

In still another of our States, a clergyman of blameless life was arrested for reading the Bible in public. In yet another, a man was found guilty of the crime of criticizing the police.

Let us not multiply examples. It will be an easy matter to recall one and it will perhaps be as easy to recall two. We read of such things in the newspapers, from time to time, but we heed them very little unless some personal interest be at stake.

The question next suggests itself: why is it possible in a land like ours for the authorities to make an organized campaign against the right of free speech, to obliterate it practically? In reply, we have only to point out one important fact. The native American is brought up from his cradle to believe that he and his ancestors are in some special and peculiar sense the guardians of liberty. One might almost say that the American is taught that his country discovered freedom or invented it. At any rate, no one in the wide world knows so much about freedom or has so much freedom as the Americans.

As a result of this teaching, there is in the American mind a most conceited attitude to the whole topic of freedom. Nobody can teach an American anything about freedom. Nobody can teach him anything about democracy. Freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press—these things are guaranteed in the Constitution and that establishes the fact of their existence.

The theologians are fond of quoting the warning of the New Testament epistle to the effect that he that thinketh he standeth should take heed lest he fall. There is a spiritual pride that is the death of the soul. In the same way, there is a political conceit that is the death of liberty. It is well nigh impossible to agitate for the right of free speech in this country because the masses of the American people are convinced that we all enjoy it already. There is not a glimmer of a suspicion that the right of free speech is not exercised by anyone who pleases to-day. If we point to the instances in which the right of free speech is denied, we will be told that the persons punished for presuming to criticize George Washington or for denying the trinity or for quoting the Bible in public were guilty of abuses of their constitutional right. All Americans consider that they know what the right of free speech is.

It is this unfortunate state of the national mind which is responsible for the bitter hatreds and racial divisions brought about among us by the war in Europe. The animosities were engendered in the first place by exercise of the right of free speech. The first impulse of a native American, when the right of free speech is exercised in terms he dislikes, is to have somebody indicted. Then he discovers to his chagrin that it is possible to make remarks on the subject of international relations without going to prison. No doubt, this omission in the law will be remedied at the instance of the Federal bureaucracy. In due time we shall have to serve a term in jail, not only for saying that George Washington was not perfect, that Jesus Christ was not divine, that policemen ought to be kept within due limits, but for saying that we ought to avoid entangling alliances with the powers of Europe. When such statutes are enforced all around us, the American people will still remain firm in the belief that we enjoy the right of free speech in this great land of liberty.

THE MOBILIZATION

By OLIVER AMES.

THEY mobilized in earlier years
Their secret jealousies and fears,
Their cunning, caution, etiquette—
Till all at Sarejevo met.
Then, on the map which they'd undone,
They forced the fight they feigned to shun.
And whilst the field, the air, the wave,
Thronged with their millions vainly brave,
(Their millions called from round and round
Against one land-locked plot of ground),
They mobilized through all the lands
Fresh millions of munition hands,—
Through all the lands, the meat and bread,
Coal, cotton, copper, gold and lead,
The carrier-beasts, the carrier-cars,
And carrier-ships for mailed Mars;
They mobilized the press of earth,
The rhyme of slander, the smudge of mirth;
Yet mobilized with most success
Man's pity and man's righteousness—
Man's righteousness, for their good fight;
Man's pity—for their sorry plight.

WELCOME MICHAEL MONAHAN

BEGINNING with this number the subscribers of Michael Monahan's brave little Phoenix will receive the International. We, on the other hand, take pleasure in introducing the inimitable Michael Monahan to our readers. For decades, in the Papyrus and in the Phoenix, the successor of that venturesome periodical, Michael Monahan has fearlessly fought the battle of culture against commercialism in literature. He has gathered around himself a loyal fellowship of lovers of letters and lovers of truth. We welcome this little band at our banquet table. We hope that they will not be disappointed with what fare we may offer them. We promise to keep up the traditions for which Monahan has battled with his Irish heart and his cosmopolitan brain. We shall succeed, if Mr. Monahan will not desert us. The stars that have shone for him are the stars that also guide us.

The International stands for Americanism as opposed to any foreign influence. We believe in a Declaration of Independence in the realm of letters as well as in the body politic. We also believe in International Culture as opposed to Provincialism. While the war lasts, men's minds are keyed to a dangerous pitch. It may be that we shall strike a note now and then that may displease some of our new readers. We may agree on some questions. We may disagree on others. But we hope that neither we nor they will forget that art is common ground where all men may meet. No passport is needed to cross that border, save the love of letters and a dauntless heart. We scorn to check the free discussion of vital topics by our contributors. With equal scorn we refuse to join a conspiracy of silence against ourselves. We shall continue to keep an open Forum in the International for unpopular points of view. We shall not muzzle the intelligent minority. We shall not sell out to Mammon or Mrs. Grundy. One man's meat is another man's poison. If we offer poison to some of our readers, Monahan may supply an antidote. Welcome, Michael Monahan!

MICHAEL MONAHAN TO HIS FRIENDS

DEAR FRIENDS:

I have a sad word for you: owing to unfavorable conditions in the paper trade I am forced to end the publication of *The Phoenix*. Our last issue was that of December, 1916, and there will be no future one. Let us spare our tears! *The Phoenix* has put up a good fight for its ideals and I trust justified its too brief existence. Grief should be only for the ineffectual.

Besides, this is not really a final parting with our good friends, many of whom have followed us from the far years of the *Papyrus*—Allah will not have it so! And in truth *The Phoenix* is not dead except commercially—the spiritual part of it—the *thing you liked* about it, has passed into another medium and survives.

In a word, *The Phoenix* is now merged with *The International Magazine*, of New York, edited by my gifted friend, George Sylvester Viereck. *The International* is the most original and progressive of American literary magazines. Its ideals are mainly those to which I have sealed my humble allegiance since I first took up the pen. Above all, it upholds and cleaves to the free literary spirit which to my mind is the most precious appanage of liberty in our country today.

I shall expect to contribute regularly to *The International*, to talk to my friends in its pages as freely as of yore in *The Papyrus* or *Phoenix*, and I bespeak for it a full measure of the loyal and generous support which has been mine in the past.

It is not farewell then, dear fellow pilgrim, and I trust we shall march on still for many years together. Never have we really tired of this wonderful adventure of life—and the ideal is always before us!

Your sincere friend,
MICHAEL MONAHAN.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

(The author of "Sanine" and "At the Breaking Point" is one of the greatest of living novelists. In his novels, Artzibashev reveals unhappy Russia with immense power and sympathy. Not since Tolstoy has Russia produced a writer whose appeal is so universal. The following terrifying tale is the greatest indictment of capital punishment that has ever been written. You will be shocked, but you will want every human being to read it.)

By M. ARTZIBASHEV.

THE evening was cold, altogether autumnal. Upon the thinned out trees in the garden and the black roofs of barns shone sharply the fine, blue new moon, and in the cold sky its brilliance seemed disquieting and enigmatic. Silently it floated over the black, motionless earth, where no sentient life appeared, as though it perceived something, understood something that will never be known or understood by mankind. Thus over an immense black grave arises at night a mysterious blue flame and quietly it stands above the bowed grasses, silently mourning over someone's inscrutable destiny.

Upon the balcony of the old seignorial home burned a solitary candle under a glass dome, and the former prosecuting attorney's flabby hand, with short fingers, crawled unpleasantly along the table-cloth stained with red wine; amid dirty plates and glasses, casting a black, spider-like shadow.

The old attorney has been living for a long time upon this deserted estate of the extinct seignors. He let himself droop entirely, drank heavily, became shrunken, and his enormous shaggy head resembled the gruff snout of an aged bear dying somewhere in a forest thicket, wanted by no one, vicious and forsaken.

"So-so, my dear friend!" he was saying to the young and dashing coroner, Verigin, who involuntarily was stopping with him on his way from a distant inquest. "It is only customary to think so . . . because it is convenient . . . as though all evil is caused by the imperfection of the courts and our judicial attitude. But in reality the cause lies much deeper. . . . There does not exist a single form of retaliation that does not secrete within itself a direct or an indirect, but absolutely the most barbarous, stupid and cruel injustice. You know, I came to the conclusion that if, in general, there is one form of retaliation to which it is possible to give preference, even though only on the strength of its internal meaning, it is the form of personal retaliation. Yes, my dear! This is so, and the Voltairians may vainly grumble. It is sad, but a fact nevertheless! Mournful, but natural! Yes. Pass me the bottle, my friend, I'll take a drink. It is quite cold already. Rather an early fall this year. I don't remember one like it."

"Listen, Kirill Kirillovitch!" cried Verigin. "Why, what you have just said is an absurdity! Did you stop to reflect upon it? Why, it would mean savagery, anarchy, the era of Judge Lynch!"

The old attorney glanced at his guest with the heavy eyes of a drunken person and monstrously screwed up his lips.

"My green birdling!" he said suddenly, with unexpected anger. "And how do you know but that perhaps Lynch law is really the ideal law, the only reasonable form of justice; however, mankind would create even greater evils from this form of justice than from the one we now have.

The old attorney was silent and began to pull at the wine, protruding his thick, lower lip. Large, red blood like drops fell heavily upon his clean tilt-cloth vest and diffused in turbid stains, while the wizened thick neck swelled and fell, as though in it something moved, round and alive.

"Since you like Lynch law so much, then why do you think that from it a still greater evil would result? It would seem—just the opposite!" uttered the coroner, with an exacerbated irony.

"Did I say that I approve of Lynch law?" said the attorney surprised, although not at all sincerely. "I absolutely do not approve of anything! I have my preferences, my friend. I have my preferences, but do not approve. In this there is a vast difference! I beg you to note this. And the evil would result for the following reason: the great mass of people live only because the right of personal retaliation does not exist in the modern state. And in its pure form it scarcely ever did exist! Imagine what would happen if to every person were given this right! Why, God grant that upon the whole terrestrial globe there might be found two hundred persons whom no one would want to molest, persons actually harmless, not base, who have never committed a single crime in all their lives—or at least not interfered with the lives of others!"

"What are you saying?" Verigin shook his hand. "That is a paradox!"

NO, this is not a paradox, but the truth! Now, endeavor to select from among the circle of people known to you, as an experiment, at least five of whom you could say with certainty and perfect sincerity, 'yes,' these may live; they are worthy of it, for they do not sit on any one's neck; on their account no human lives are being sacrificed for this or that reason, they do not withhold anything; they interfere with no one and their lives are absolutely devoid of all doubtful stains! Why, such people, rightfully, would be worthy of God's paradise! For, according to an old belief, these sinless people would be godlike and saints."

Verigin gazed vexedly at the old attorney and could not decide whether he jested or spoke seriously, but instinctively he felt something offensive in his words. And a positive hatred grew within him toward his short fingers, dirty tilt-cloth vest and flagging chin, black like an old actor's.

"Let us elaborate this picture," he continued with manifest malevolence. "We will imagine to ourselves paradise, a real paradise, as it is pictured to us in our childhood—a sort of blue summit, not like a garden, but somewhat like it—radiance, light, fragrance, angels en déshabillé, and so forth. And mentally let everybody that you know enter therein—officers, druggists, priests, government clerks, gymnasium students, young girls and ladies. Will this not seem an evident absurdity and will it not rather become a trifle embarrassing to us as though we did really commit something foolish, clumsy and even altogether indecent?"

"What nonsense," angrily replied Verigin.

"Paradise is only an image—a symbol of sinlessness—the only place where you can imagine a human being absolutely stainless."

And the old attorney with an evident and vulgar cynicism added:

"Come now, confess if among all your acquaintances, there are any whom you can at all imagine as fit for that place, where there is no sickness, no sighing, no filth of any kind."

"No! It is the truth, isn't it? Take, for instance, Jennie Telepneva?"

It was clear that the attorney knew of Verigin's feelings for Jennie, and that he was mocking him.

"Listen!" more loudly exclaimed the coroner, fuming and rising from his chair.

But the old attorney suddenly became terribly frightened. He arose, caught the coroner with both hands, almost forcibly made him sit down again and mumbled imploringly:

"Come, come, come! My dear, forgive me, do not be angry. I did not know! On my word of honor, I did not wish to insult you, and as for Jennie, I have the greatest respect for her. Come now, don't be angry, cheer up!"

Verigin was red one moment, pale the next, and senselessly twisted his hands.

"Come, forgive me, my dear. What are you making of it, really! Not every word is to be taken so to heart! On my word of honor, I meant no evil, but I am tactless when I argue. Oh, come, let's have a drink, my dear, and forget about it. Enough sulking with an old man. For I am indeed old, old enough to be your grandfather!"

Verigin felt uncomfortable at the old man's wheedling, and scowled, deciding in any event to be above such drunken chatter. Besides, the horses had not yet arrived from the village station, and he wasn't going to walk there on foot.

The attorney glanced silently upon him and suddenly began to speak in an even tone of voice as though absolutely nothing had happened.

"Concerning innocent girls, I meant nothing personal and mentioned them merely to intimate to a certain extent that we ourselves are not entirely without a blemish. Even in the matter of passion. But this is all bosh, the most essential thing is that were we to untie our hands and thus make it possible to render a measure of absolute justice, we would be forced to strike out from the list practically the entire human race without exception. A vast *auto da fe* would then have taken place. Yes!"

THE old attorney gazed over the candle into the darkness of the room and his eyes sparkled with what the coroner thought was cruelty.

"Yes, and you are capable of doing this with a light heart!"

And very clearly realizing how much higher he stood above this evil, good for nothing, decrepit old man, he felt entirely composed.

"Yes, yes," reflectively muttered the old bear, "I recall every one whom I knew, and I knew, my dear, an extremely great number of personalities, and I realize that there is not a single individual among them, who if brought before the face of absolute justice could prove himself perfectly innocent and who would not be deserving at least of forfeiting all his rights to his station. In a broad sense, of course."

"Really, not a single one!" indecisively replied the coroner and shuddered, either from cold or from the picture which presented itself to him.

"Yes, yes!" laughingly answered the old attorney; "two godly men were found even in Sodom, but were I the Heavenly Father, I would not for the sake of two godly men, even though they were the most saintly, suffer at least two-hundred milliards, according to the lowest estimate, of scoundrels to live in the world! This is, you know, already too obvious an inconsistency for such, permit me to say, mathematics.

The old attorney became silent and his head shook for a long time, while the lower lip, thick and shaved, reached almost to his breast.

Silent also was Verigin, gazing upon the old man attentively and thoughtfully.

It became altogether quiet and cold. The crescent of the moon hid itself and only one brilliant spark of its upper horn shone in the gloom, linked in a black silhouette of some terrible chimney.

The old attorney laughed softly in answer to some of his own inner thoughts and inclined toward the bottle. A thick hand with short fingers crept along the wet, disgusting tablecloth and along side of it crawled a black spider—its shadow.

"When I was yet young," began the old attorney again, "and just prior to my appointment as assistant-prosecuting attorney, a case of this sort fell to my lot. A peasant woman and a little girl, thirteen or fourteen years old, were both murdered. Murder and violence with the motive of robbery. A horrible and inhuman deed. Well, we arrived, as is customary, toward night. For some reason the authorities always arrive at night. Well, we arrived, gathered the witnesses and went to the scene of the crime."

He remained silent for a while, as if endeavoring to refresh his memory.

"The hovel in which the tragedy took place stood on a common and, as it proved later, the murdered peasant woman carried on an illicit trade in wine. We arrive. It is already dark. The guard stands at a little distance from the hovel—he's afraid. We enter. The hovel is like all hovels—the ceiling is low, oppressive, in the corner are images, upon the table bread covered with a towel, upon a window-sill burns a candle, and as the door stands open and the window panes are broken, the flame tosses in all directions. And, really, you know, it is quite dreadful; lying in the centre of the hovel, flat on the green floor, is the body of the stout peasant woman, in a tattered skirt, with yellow feet. The back naked, greasy, as if made of lard, and the head severed completely and standing; just imagine, near the leg of the table, as though the dead woman were staring from under the floor. The murderer, evidently, struggled desperately with her for a long time; the woman was healthy, strong, and he, as it proved later, was a puny individual. However, he succeeded in throwing her flat and pressing her down with his knee against her back, evidently threatening her with a knife. He demanded money, but she would not give up. Then taking hold of her hair he drew the woman's head back and drew the knife across her neck. The neck was thick, fat. With one slit he could not kill her, and as she struggled and almost wrenched herself from him, he struck her with the knife between the shoulders so that the blood spattered even the wall across the room. Then, when the woman weakened, he drew the head back again and began to cut. He cut a long time, and accurately, and severed a living woman's head. She shrieked, they say, at first, so that she could be heard all over the village, then she began to hiccough only, and then to rattle. The peasants, of course, were afraid to come to her aid, as at that time a band of roving gypsies camped in the neighborhood, and there is nothing more cowardly in the world than a Russian peasant. Yes! Then, having murdered the woman, the wretch crawled up in the garret. There sat a girl about thirteen years of age and her little brother, a seven-year-old shaver. And here, evidently, a beastly fury possessed him.

"This is horrible!" said the coroner.

"BUT worst of all was," continued the old attorney, "that upon this whole butchery, which lasted for quite a long time the girl's little brother, Stepka, gazed from the top of the oven. The murderer wanted to kill him also, but evidently, having satiated his murderous lust, he became weak and kind after his own fashion. He took Stepka by the hand, but Stepka set up a howl.

"'Oh, please uncle, don't touch me!' he implored. 'Oh,

darling, oh, golden uncle!' Clutching at the murderer's hand that had only just butchered his mother and sister, he began to kiss it—violently! His whole face was smeared with his sister's and mother's blood. He screamed, shrieked and kissed the hand, as though it were his own father's. And thus he really succeeded in saving his own life! It was upon his information that the murderer was caught."

The old attorney stopped for some reason.

"And when we questioned this Stepka, it was evident that the tragedy did not pass without leaving its effect upon him. He did not get away cheaply! They brought in the urchin, thin, like a match stick, with a large head, the hair in shreds and upright; his eyes enormous, wild and blinking constantly. They blink and at the same time creep out of their orbits, and the tongue hideously rolling out of the mouth—just like a frog's! It was terrible, you know, and pitiful, and disgusting to look upon him. It were much better had he been really killed! For what was he now, not a human, but just a spasm of some kind.

"Somehow we managed to cross-examine him. We turned his whole soul inside out and for a second time made him live through everything, and finally succeeded in our object."

"But what for?" the coroner frowned sickingly.

The old attorney snapped back maliciously.

"What do you mean, what for? Mustn't the murderer be caught? That justice may be vindicated! What would you have? Stepka was the only material witness, and there were suspicions that the murderer was a native of the same village and must have been known to Stepka.

Verigin remained silent, but the attorney waited long and spitefully for an answer.

"Mama's head," says he, "as he cut it off, the head rolled on the floor, and mama without a head, on all fours, like a toad, around the room, hop, hop. While the blood poured out in a stream from the opening. I became frightened and jumped on top of the oven and Tanka huddled herself on a bench and became silent. And then he fell upon Tanka. I can't even see her at all. And then Tanka gave a terrible shriek, and he shouted: 'Quiet, or I'll kill you,' and he struck Tanka with the knife! I began to jump on the wall, beat my head against it and screamed. Mama lies with a head, and the head stares from under the table—at me!

"And at this moment the boy emitted a shriek, and staggered back against the wall. After much effort we finally calmed him. He was constantly struggling, screaming and kissed our hands and bit at the same time.

"The murderer, of course, was caught. About three months later I received my appointment to the post of assistant prosecuting attorney, and I had to be present at the execution of this same murderer. We were then under martial law.

"I will not begin to describe all my sensations when I learned that I was to be present as a witness at the execution. Depressed, heavy, ashamed, terrified and for some reason cold, this is all that can be said. But with all that, I can tell you, that if this same murderer would have fallen into my hands there, in the hovel, or even on the following day, I would have killed him on the spot, like a dog! And perhaps as inhumanely as he himself did! I heard the news later that he was caught, that he was condemned to death, and when occasion made it necessary to speak about this incident with my acquaintances, which was quite often, indeed, because this was to be the first execution in our city, I, notwithstanding the protests of the young generation, stated with a certain ferocity:

" 'That is just what the infamous wretch deserves! I would quarter him, not alone hang him!'

AND really! Now, tell me, why the devil should he have been forgiven? To whom was it necessary that he should not die, but remain living, this downright beast, ready for a cent, for the gratification of the slightest instinct, to commit every crime, every atrocity, anything! You will say—prison? But has prison ever reformed anybody? No! Then what is the sense to let this vermin sit in some locked cell while hundreds of persons feed, clothe and watch him? His existence is absolutely unnecessary to any one The logical thing to do was, of course, to strangle him forthwith. And I think that were I to catch him, so to say, in the act of committing the crime, and kill him, I would feel neither repentance, nor even the slightest moral shock! On the contrary, I would have experienced a feeling of great satisfaction, for I would have thereby given a wide outlet to that wrath and revulsion which he aroused in me with his impetuous, loathsome beastliness.

"And yet, when I learned that I, personally, would have to be present at his execution, I became petrified and for three days walked like one in a trance! Immediately I forgot the crime and saw only one thing: that this is horrible, that it is murder, and that I will participate in this murder!

"And so, that night, several hours before the execution, I and some others, upon whom, according to law, fell the duty of witnessing at the ceremony of a hanging, arrived at the prison.

"For some reason we were all convinced that he was asleep. Out of our imagination we all formed this notion, that all persons condemned to death always sleep heavily upon their last night. But what devil can sleep here, when I myself hardly slept before this at all and awoke constantly in a cold sweat.

"No one, of course, knew just how and what it was necessary to do, and owing to this there was a great deal of confusion. Everybody walked about as if lost and languished like persons in the throes of death. The warden of the prison himself was the most distraught of all. He even ordered, for some reason, that no one should enter that corridor, and only one solitary soldier was on watch there, from a Penza regiment. I remember even this. Of all the oppressive impressions I remember only that the warden continually kept going out and returning, and with sighs, like an old woman gazed at his watch. The watch was of silver. Also I remember how they led the executioner out into the yard. You know, I pictured an executioner to myself in many ways but never as this one really proved to be. Imagine a perfect operatic figure, in a black domino and black gloves, in some absurd mask, through openings in which appear incomprehensible red eyes, while from underneath it projects a little, stubby gray beard. It was said afterward that this was a certain teacher from a gymnasium, but that is, of course, ridiculous. Yet he passed freely and calmly, even bowed to us, and every one felt terrified, lest he might also offer his hand. And yet he could have easily done so! Why not? He will soap the rope and will tighten the noose, while we did all we could that no one should interfere with him in his work and that the victim should not escape from the noose and the soap.

AND so, at dawn, pale, distraught, with sinking hearts, upon legs bending under us from some disgusting weakness, we came out of the office and began stealthily to cross the entire prison. In front walked on tiptoe the warden of the prison, behind him an officer of gendarmes, after him I, and behind me stealthily crept a little black priest, for some reason squatting at every step. The silence of the prison was terrible. The day of the execution was successfully kept in secret and all slept soundly. Nevertheless, when we, in a file, crept past the little windows in the cell doors, a perspira-

tion stood out over the whole body. We knew that if we were observed the entire prison will rise on its legs, will rush to the windows and will begin to beat, smash the windows, whistle, shriek, revile us with abuse and insults—spit upon us even, if possible! And we will be compelled to run the gauntlet of such anger and contempt that it were far better we should be chased naked through the city with brooms. And in the depths of our souls we realized perfectly well that this we honestly deserved, because anything more despicable than what we were doing can not even be imagined. But thank God," with an evil smile remarked the attorney, "and although covered with sweat, gazing around on all sides of us and almost sinking from weakness in the knees, we did arrive safely. And in the corridor, where his cell was situated, something altogether unforeseen awaited us.

"The first thing that met our gaze was a deserted, brilliantly illuminated corridor, and then the surprisingly strange figure of the lone soldier sentry. He was, I even now remember, a weak, stunted soldier with wholly white eye-brows and eye-lashes. He stood in the corridor, all right, but how! Huddled together, with his back to the wall, as though he endeavored to penetrate through it with his entire body, with the gun over-weighted in the direction of his cell, and an unnaturally distorted head in the same direction. Such elemental terror I never saw! At once it was seen that the nerves of the man were strained to the extreme limit, that a mere scream would have sufficed, a whistle or a movement of any kind, to rend the insecure partition between reason and madness, and the soldier would have roared in an inhuman voice, would have attacked the wall, would have begun to shoot at any one in sight. He stood there, you understand, without moving a muscle, as though he were not there at all, only his whitish eyes glanced obliquely along the length of the wall.

"Some one was about to snort at the sight of such a figure, but he immediately caught himself, for at that very instant we sighted *him*.

"That is, not him exactly, but only his head.

"Through a narrow window in the cell door, evidently forced through with great effort, stuck out a completely motionless, dead, waxen head. It was of an extreme dark yellow color and the expression upon this face bore absolutely nothing resembling the human. This was a dead head and upon its dead face two enormous dead eyes, protruded to such an extent that all the veins and nerves were exposed from the terrible tension, and suffused with blood. They just barely moved in an uninterrupted circular motion, intently and tenaciously trying to absorb everything at once. They protruded in our direction and it seemed to me that they crept out still further from their orbits. But as before, there was no expression of any kind in them—only possibly, if a corpse after lying for two days in a coffin could get frightened, he might have looked like this!

"We all stood stock still at once. Some one screamed, some one stepped on my foot, and we almost started to run down the stairs, panic stricken, like a flock of sheep. But instead of that, suddenly a terrible anger, shaking the whole body with a torturing shudder, possessed us all. We vainly hoped that that head should hide itself or else would scream or grimace, do anything, only that it should not gaze so! And instead of running away, we rushed forward toward the door and the warden of the prison was the first to scream with all his might:

" 'Well, well, well—you!'

"But the real horror was in this, that even after our impetuous movement, after this cry of anguish, the head did not stir. It only slowly turned its terrible eyes toward us and again sank. And somehow it happened that I found myself suddenly in front of everybody, and right in front of my face, so close that I could even distinguish the eye-lashes and the blood-shot veins in the eye-balls, was the dead head. It appeared to me enormous. And suddenly I saw clearly how the two immense eyes, filled with blood, were protruding from their sockets and moving closer upon me, penetrating into my eyes and glancing piercingly into my very brain.

"Here I became hysterical, after which I lay for two months in a hospital, and when I improved—immediately tendered my resignation.

"The soldier sentry afterward narrated to me that the head appeared at dusk. It crept out stealthily, gazed around, disappeared, with a frightful effort it forced itself through the small opening and became still. And thus it stuck there all night. At first he screamed at it, threatened it, tried to frighten it away with his bayonet, and then became exhausted.

THE murderer was of small stature and in order to reach the window he had to stand on tip-toe, and the window was so small that when they removed him they peeled off all the skin from his ears and jaws. And thus he stood and gazed all night long, evidently trying to absorb into himself every minute detail—light, the lamp, the soldier with his gun—everything—so as not to forget, to satiate his sight in these last hours of life, which was being taken away from him for ever.

"It is interesting to know whether he thought of his victims, of the peasant woman and the tortured Tanka? I do not think so! One's own life is more precious than anything else! And when it is being taken away, everything else must seem endlessly insignificant. How could he think that a just punishment awaited him? And even if he did recall them, then undoubtedly in a terrible wrath, on account of such miserable trash then, to perish! And if he could, probably, he would have again murdered them, and even in a more inhuman manner and with such refinement of cruelty, with such bestiality that the whole world would have stood aghast—and now all on account of such insignificant trash he is obliged to suffer such torture.

"But what's the use of talking about it! I was told afterward that before the moment of death he suddenly became thoroughly composed, firmly walked to the scaffold, alone stepped up on the stool and stood quietly while they drew the shroud over him and fastened the rope around his neck. He only muttered to himself:

" 'Hurry, hurry, hurry!'

"He muttered evidently for himself alone, frightfully hastily, barely succeeding in uttering the words and constantly increasing the tempo to such an extent, that toward the end it was already impossible to comprehend him. And when they took down the body and the executioner removed the shroud it was revealed that he had turned completely grey. He turned white in those two or three minutes while he stood underneath the shroud, not seeing anything and only feeling around his neck the tenacious fingers of the executioner."

The old attorney poured out for himself a glass of wine with a shaking hand, drank it down, spilling some over his chin. The coroner gazed intently upon him, and poignantly before Verigin appeared those unseen fingers, as though wholly independently, akin to some sort of evil wasps, crawlingly encircling the neck of the living, who in the throes of death could only repeat one and the same word: "Hurry, hurry!"

"Yes, my dear," again began the old attorney, and in his

voice resounded an unusual tenderness, "it is very difficult to narrate this just exactly as one feels about it, and maybe that is really why the people cannot comprehend in all its horror just what capital punishment really is. The entire villainy of this refined torture, killing the body before murdering piecemeal the human soul, this cold-blooded murder no one can picture to himself! Even the real actors in this drama cannot feel the beast within themselves! And what does it mean? One set of men catches a murderer, another watches over him that he should not escape, a third sits in judgment and passes sentence upon him, a certain general confirms the sentence, while the real act of murdering, hanging him is left to an executioner! And upon this executioner, invariably a cretin, a semi-savage being, is thrown the entire burden of responsibility for this villainy! And I think that if there were not this subdivison of this infamy into parts, passing it from hand to hand, if the confirming general would himself also have to tighten the noose, the judges themselves draw the shroud over their victim, and the lawmakers with their own hands hold the human being struggling against death, then there would be no such thing possible as capital punishment! Otherwise it would simply signify that the whole world is overfilled with beasts. The whole secret lies in just exactly this, that under the existing order of things there are no real beasts, those who catch, those who sentence—these do not see the execution, they do not choke living human beings and they think that this naturally does not depend upon them, and that they merely fulfill their duty. Some there are who may even experience an exaltation of patriotic pride at this. And when a general after signing a death warrant for some person enters into the circle of his own home, greets his children, his wife, they will not shrink back from him in terror and squeamish scorn, but just the reverse, will sympathise with him: 'Poor, poor fellow; how hard it must have been on you!'

"NO, this ought not to be so!" shrilly screamed the attorney. "You make it so, you catch a murderer, you do not let him escape death, that means that you consider this a necessity; well then, do also the executing yourself! You sit in judgment and pass sentence of death! That means that you believe in the sacredness of your laws; well then, carry them out yourself also! You endorse a warrant, then don't merely sign it, but go directly, just as you are, in all your regalia, go and soap the rope and do the choking. And then you will be perfectly right, for when you have yourself killed, then either you are insensible to the horror of capital punishment and you are yourself by nature a beast, or you have a holy faith in the sacredness of such a method of choking!"

"But what are we to do?" quietly inquired the coroner, helplessly spreading his hands. "Somebody must undertake to render justice and protection to society."

"Must?" reiterated the old attorney. "No one must. But if you wish, I will do this."

He was silent a while, as though either trying to collect his thoughts or else undecided about something.

"What?" involuntarily moving his chair closer, asked the coroner.

"I do not know. But I can narrate to you a certain story. For me, personally, it contains a profound meaning. In a certain city, in a very ancient time, of course, so ancient in fact that they never even existed, lived a very happy and kind people. And their city was so gothic, and the sky so blue, and their wooden shoes they wore with such a becoming dignity that no manner of robberies, murders, et cetera, ever occurred among them. Their whole lawful authority was vested in an old, white-haired burgomaster, in whose righteousness they believed no less than in their blue sky and their wooden shoes. They lived very peacefully, and suddenly—a murder was perpetrated! A beautiful young girl, who always wore a blue ribbon in her braid, was found at dawn violated and choked to death with that same blue ribbon. They discovered also who it was who dared to commit such a bestiality; it was a fat young fellow, the son of a local inn-keeper, a cad with a stupid red face and gold buttons on a red vest. They grabbed him and brought him before the burgomaster. The entire city seemed to have gone out of their minds; the women wailed; the men kept losing their wooden shoes; the most respected citizens came running, dressed only in their pajamas and paper nightcaps—and no one knew what was to be done? Never during their lives did it ever enter their heads that it is possible to take a living human being and choke him—and besides such a pretty, charming girl; one who never spoke an evil word to anyone! And what was worst of all, the murderer himself was more bewildered than everybody else, and stood smiling stupidly and crying in three streams. He himself did not know how it happened. The girl long ago attracted him; he made her presents of pieces of ribbon, beads, smiled to her whenever they met and jostled her with his elbow when chance permitted, while she laughed at him and did not accept his gifts. Upon this fateful night he met her back of the orchard, he wanted to embrace her, but she repulsed him. Then he began to kiss her forcibly and suddenly experienced such a fiendishly irrisistible desire that he overpowered and violated her, and when she began to scream he became so frightened that at first he only tried to stuff her mouth, but then became so infuriated with terror that he choked her completely! Now he did not have the least idea what was best for him to do and did not comprehend what the people would do with him.

"THAT night the respected citizens sat in the City Hall and deliberated how they should act. Finally one dug out a famous quotation from the Bible, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!' But when the burgomaster interpreted to them what this meant, that accordingly they themselves would also have to choke the red-haired youth, some even began to laugh. Of course, of course! But who is going to do the choking!

"Finally the day of the trial arrived.

"All the inhabitants of the city arrayed in their holiday raiment gathered in front of the burgomaster's house and stood silently, with terror and amazement gazing upon the carrotty lad, who wore his finest vest with gold buttons, and stood near the steps, gaping upon the crowd, with his fingers stuck in his embroidered suspenders. He wore a haughty expression upon his face! Perhaps he was even proud of having attracted so many people, but above all the din he could not help hearing the illustrious citizens sitting in conference under the window of the burgomaster's home, and he also knew what conclusions they reached.

"'Fiend! you yourself ought to be choked!' shouted an aged druggist from the crowd at him, the same one who discovered the text in the Bible.

"'Well, go ahead and do it!' insultingly replied the red-haired lad, and laughed, seeing the entire absurdity of such a proposal.

"The aged druggist angrily pulled his skull-cap over his forehead and stepped aside.

"And then the old grey-haired burgomaster issued from his house.

"'Citizens,' said he with deep sorrow, 'something has transpired, the like of which we never witnessed before. A hid-

eous and irreparable crime! What is to be done?'

"The populace remained silent. While the lad smiled in manifest derision.

"'Listen!' said the old burgomaster, and his voice resounded menacingly, 'you—are a murderer and a beast! You are no brother to us, leave us! Go wherever you please and never dare come back to us, that we may never see your face again, upon which lies the imprint of Cain!'

"The stout youth turned pale. No one had ever left from this city before, and the very thought of such a thing seemed to everyone strange and terrible. At first he was frightened, but one crime already awakens and hardens the evil will. During the night that he awaited the verdict, the red-headed youth already became a confirmed criminal, insolent and crafty.

"'Guess again!' mockingly answered he. 'I will go nowhere.'

"The people groaned, and the aged druggist tore off his skull-cap in disgust and threw it on the ground.

"Only the burgomaster alone remained composed. He stepped further forward and said:

"'Very well. Remain with us. But you have committed a murder and now you are no longer the same as others. You have proved that another's life, no matter whose it is, is nothing to you, that you will not hesitate to take it. Then allow us also the same right, not to consider your life the precious gift that we considered it heretofore.'

"'As you please!' insolently answered the youth, placing his arms akimbo.

"'And when you are drowning, or sick, or will be starving from hunger and no one will offer to assist you, we shall not blame him.'

"'I'll manage to get along alone!' the youth snapped back defiantly, though not without turning pale.

"'Very well. Live! But—if there is among us such a one whose heart cannot withstand the horror of your crime, for whom it is difficult to live under the same sky with a fiend, let him kill you, as you have killed!'

"Silence ensued. The sun shone, the Gothic city nestled peacefully under the blue sky, the populace, pale and confused, were silent, while the pale, grey face of the old burgomaster was triumphant and stern.

"The youth gazed forlornly about him on all sides.

"'I would like to see such a person!' with difficulty he finally muttered.

"'That person am—I!' loudly uttered the old burgomaster and drawing a knife plunged it into the neck of the fat, red-headed youth.

"And when he expired in his own blood before the eyes of the distracted people, the old man threw away the knife and said:

CITIZENS! All night long I thought how this person, this fiend and murderer, will continue to live among us while his victim will long since have rotted in the earth. She was so happy, she could have lived long, enriching her own and our lives, and he took and killed her, killed her fiendishly, cruelly and mercilessly! And when I pictured to myself how she entreated him, how she fought and struggled in the agony and terror of death, how he choked her, and seeing how the living, human eyes were gradually becoming clouded with the shroud of agony—I felt that I cannot live together with him, that the ghost of the murdered victim will forever stand before my eyes and I will always remember that in my life there was once a day when all the blood of my heart was frozen within me, and I—did nothing. And so I killed him.

"'I feel neither remorse, nor regret, nor fear. But now I too am a murderer, and if there is among you at least one person to whom it is painful to look upon me, let him kill me, as I have killed.'

"The silence lasted long; very long. The populace gazed sorrowfully upon their old burgomaster, but not in a single heart did the thought of slaying him occur. Because he suffered so much, because his heart could not bear the fiendish crime and he decided to kill and die himself, their love and veneration for him became only still greater. Upon the body of the red-headed youth they looked with terror, but without pity, and quietly the people began to disperse.

"The last to remain was the father of the red-headed youth. He continuously glanced on all sides of him, and his right hand was convulsively clutched at his bosom. The old burgomaster calmly and sadly gazed upon him from above and waited. Already the inn-keeper made a step forward, but glanced around, saw a group of citizens furtively watching him from a distance, paled with fear and anger, bent himself and ran quickly away.

"Then the old burgomaster smiled brightly and said:

"'Justice is vindicated!'

"And he entered his house.

"But all this is pure fiction," the old attorney interrupted himself with anger, "there is no justice, there is no righteousness, but simply—but simply I'm drunk!"

He laughed softly and drew the bottle toward him.

"I will only say this, that human wisdom travels in a circle and again and again returns to the same place where it was already long ago!"

The coroner gazed for a long time thoughtfully upon the old attorney, and in his head stirred vague, big thoughts, while in his heart grew a touching respect for this old, droll drunkard and cynic, who could not bear human suffering and withdrew from life to die here, upon a forsaken estate, wanted by no one and by all forgotten.

And when he was riding home, at night, along a deserted, pathless steppe, on the edge of which the red fire from the sinking disc of the moon was disappearing silently and terribly into the earth, the coroner felt bad and oppressed. All life appeared to him as an endless absurdity, and he felt a strong aversion toward his profession, toward courts, toward attorneys, laws and transient human rights.

Toward morning he dozed off, and he dreamed that on both sides of the road, in the black gloom stood two enormous severed heads with yellow, motionless features and terrible, soul-piercing eyes. One head was that of the murdered peasant woman, the other—that of her hanged murderer. And Verigin had to pass between them, and this was so awful and so difficult that he awoke completely unnerved, perspiring, shivering with a slight, enervating chill.

While the dawn of a new day of life was already beginning, and the steppe grew greyish with the pale, blue light of a rainy, autumn morning.

(Translated by George E. Haendelman.)

PERCY MACKAYE

An Appreciation, So Far as Is Possible

By ALEISTER CROWLEY.

A PUBLISHER, hearing recently from Mr. Percy Mackaye, to whom he had sent a book for review, was advised by this great poet to have the volume rebound; for the cover was so brutal and repulsive that, for his part, he had thrown the book into the waste-paper basket without further investigation.

Here is the calibre of Mr. Mackaye's mind.

What insight! What knowledge of the world! How much must one know who judges of literature by what is not even its outward show, but an accident for which the writer is not, as a rule, in any way responsible.

This revelation of genius, the power to divine Hercules not from his own foot, but from the boot of somebody whom Hercules had never even met, sent me headlong to the library; for alas, my own shelves were bare of any such masterpieces as Percy Mackaye's.

The covers of his books were neither brutal nor repulsive; my path to the *chefs d'oeuvre* themselves was easy.

The "frightfulness" only appears on beginning to read.

I began with "A Thousand Years Ago." In a preface the great poet explains why he wrote this play; for which much thanks.

The scene is laid in Pekin. Mr. Mackaye has read the encyclopedia for China under the letter C, and for Drama under the letter D, and confined his information. But it must have been a somewhat poor encyclopedia.

All his characters rant like Ancient Pistol; wordy bombast, all at the top of their voices. "By the carcass of Charlemagne, I am dog-aweary of twanging these gutstrings for breakfast." (Dog-aweary is a new one on me, but it is probably poetic license. This stuff is printed as if it were blank verse, but the scansion is as poor as the sense.)

To get the Chinese flavor, Mr. Mackaye deems it sufficient to preface every other speech by an oath introducing the name of what he probably supposes to be a Chinese God. The emperor keeps on ejaculating "by holy Confucius!" "Great Buddha!" "My star!" His name, by the way, is Altorma, which does not sound very Chinese, somehow. But it doesn't matter much, for his courtiers talk Arabic, saying, "Salaam!" when asked to salute a superior, who then assumes a "toploftical" attitude, though probably still "dog-aweary."

The book is full of such delightful finds—almost every page has a gem. "Is he at the door?" "Not him."

The play itself is the veriest rag-bag of stale device. The Princess whose hand depends on the guessing of three riddles; the potion which if dropped on a sleeping lover's lips will make him tell his secret thought; the prince who disguises himself as a beggar, and so on. As the princess herself says, "O, you poor, bloody heads on Pekin's wall. Have you, then, died for this?"

I thought perhaps that Mr. Mackaye might be happier at home; so I turned to "Yankee Fantasies." Here also he graciously explains himself, and why he did it, and his importance to the theatre, and again I am very glad. He tells us how impossible it is to represent dialect graphically, but in the text he proceeds to do it, and by great Buddha I am dog-aweary.

But I do adore his stage directions; the climax of "Chuck" woke me up. Here you are:

"A locust rasps in an elm.

"Faint crickets chirp in the grass.

"An oriole flutes from an apple tree.

"From his hole, the wood-chuck crawls cautiously out, nosing, as he does so, a crumpled and earth-soiled veil, which clings to his dusky hair, half clothing him.

"Pulling from his burrow an ear of corn, he sits on his haunches, silently nibbling it—his small eyes half shut in the sunshine."

I do honestly hope the greatest success for Mr. Mackaye, the modern Shakespeare, because I want to see Sir Herbert Tree as The Woodchuck.

And now I am awake enough to get on to "Gettysburg." This play is printed in blank verse, minus capitals at the beginnings of the lines. But Mr. Mackaye is out to prove that blank verse need not be poetry. He ambles along with perfectly commonplace thought and language, which happens to scan. It simply makes the play read like shocking bad prose.

"O' course;

but I must take my little laugh. I told him I guessed I wasn't presentable any how, my mu'stache and my boots wa'n't blacked this morning. I don't jest like t' talk about my legs. Be you a-goin' to take your young school folks, Polly?"

Mr. Mackaye, like other amateur minor poets—if you can call him that—never suspects that there is a reason for using blank verse, that the only excuse for using it is to produce an effect which cannot be produced elsehow. Without exaltation of theme and treatment, blank verse is a blunder, and one can usually spot the poetical booby by his abuse of it.

In the books at my disposal I can find few lyrics. It may be that Percy Mackaye—how full of suggestion is that name!—has written some odes which leave the "Nightingale" and the "Grecian Urn" and "Melancholy" in the wastepaper basket along with that book with the brutal and repulsive cover; he may have "Prometheus Unbound" beaten a mile; he may have "Lycidas" and "Adonais" taking the count; he may be able to give cards and spades to "Atalanta" and "Dolores" and "Epipsychidion" and "Anactoria." Hope so. I want some first-rate fresh poetry to read. Hope so. But I have not seen it. Instead, I see this!

"Long ago, in the young moonlight,
I lost my heart to a hero;
Strong and tender and stern and right
And terribler than Nero.
Heigho, but he was a dear, O!"

At the conclusion of this, one of the listeners asks: "Was it a fragrance or a song?" In my considered opinion, it must have been a fragrance.

I am aware that this is a very short article, but there are really limits to the amount one can write about Nothing.

A GAME AT LOVE

By GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

("The Mood of a Moment," published in the January issue of The International, aroused so much discussion that we herewith reprint its companion piece, "A Game at Love." Both appear in Mr. Viereck's volume, "A Game at Love and Other Plays." The same characters reappear in several of the pieces. These plays, as the author affirms in the preface, are unplayable. At least, they were not written for any stage.)

CHARACTERS.

CLARENCE *(forty).*
IRENE *(between thirty and forty)*
EVA *(somewhat younger).*

I

(An elegant Boudoir. A desk inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Bric-a-brac. Pictures.)

*(*EVA, *blonde, somewhat languishing, rocks herself in a dainty rocking-chair. As she swings to and fro one gets a glimpse of her little feet. She holds an unlit cigarette in her hand.)*

*(*IRENE, *dark, of fuller form, reclines upon a couch. Her face is that of a woman who has lived much. She puffs vigorously at a cigarette and blows fantastic rings into the air.)*

IRENE: Yes, tell me all about it. I am interested. They say—

EVA: What do they say?

IRENE *(with emphasis):* That he is not like other men; that there is some secret in his life, perhaps—

EVA: It is no longer any secret to me.

IRENE: It is possible that you know?

EVA: I know that he is a bedizened doll, a tailor's dummy.

IRENE *(looks at her intently, but is silent).*

EVA: When I think how I adored him, what depths I sought in those mystic eyes, what secrets in that smile—every fibre of my body revolts.

IRENE: And what did he do to make the spell snap?

EVA: Nothing. That is the very reason: He said nothing, did nothing. I expected something new and strange—nothing happened. I listened, listened to the silver tones of his voice, and heard a shallow babbling.

IRENE: And yet you were entirely under his influence. You were fascinated like a little bird by the eyes of a snake. It was gruesome to behold.

EVA *(with heaving breast):* It is true. He was not only a part of my life, he was my whole life. But he would not let me share in his, would not let me look more deeply—perhaps to hide his own want of depth. He always behaved as though he were the giver. I gave him all—and he did not even say, Thank you.

IRENE *(blowing the smoke thoughtfully through her nose):* Naturally. Of course it is absurd to generalize. Still, you made a mistake in tactics. We women receive in love at least as much as we give. I am inclined to believe that the old Hebrew legend is not far amiss in asserting that the Lord created woman from a rib of man. But nevertheless men expect us to keep up the old wives' tale that we alone are those who give. Our only weapon is man's sensual grossness. Upon this we must play in such a manner that he imagines himself to receive along with its satisfaction—everything.

EVA: I know that. Still I was not so calculating at that time. And then, well, you see, Clarence presents a different problem. He himself knows all our little arts and uses them—only too well. And this makes him master of the situation. The unexpected takes one unawares.

IRENE: But that is interesting, extraordinarily so. A woman can bring all these little arts into play without violating her nature, because to a genuine woman love and motherhood are life itself. Her struggle for love is her struggle for existence. We fight for love as men for daily bread. To us it is at once a passion and a vocation. It's different with men. If a man be a real man, he lacks both time and inclination for these subtleties. When elemental passion grips him, he yields himself unreservedly and genuinely; else he is either a *roue,* or—no man. *(Eyeing* Eva *sharply.)* Nature in making him played one of her cruel tricks. He is a will-o'-the-wisp which lures us into abysses and to shimmering swamps.

EVA: If only the swamps into which he leads us were deep enough to perish in, all would be well. But to soil one's feet in shallow mire! . . . How to classify him I do not quite know. It seems to me that he lacks all genuineness of emotion. To him love is an artifice, and even life. And yet *(she lowers her voice)* he has a sensuous attraction that is powerful, irresistible.

IRENE *(with rising interest):* And where did he first exert that influence? How did you get to know him?

EVA *(laying her cigarette aside, and resting her head upon her hand):* It was this way. He was introduced to me; I think—by my husband. If you have seen him once, you know how attractive he is. I wanted to keep him near me. Perhaps because Mildred was there, who thinks that no man can resist her charms.

IRENE *(interrupting her with a short musical laugh):* I think I heard it said that Mildred and he were intimate at one time.

EVA: They gave no evidence of it. Beyond the conventional phrases they exchanged neither word nor look.

IRENE: That makes it all the more suspicious. Thus will you and Clarence meet when the wounds are healed. Do you still see him?

EVA: He comes now and then. People might talk if he were to stay away entirely. Today he is coming for another reason, that is, to bring me my letters. But I had not finished telling you.

IRENE: You were speaking of the day on which you met.

EVA: Yes, on that day he began by irritating me. I cannot abide cynicism in men. He made a number of cynical remarks, and I treated him coolly, somewhat rudely, in fact. But his answers were delicately courteous, and nothing ruffled his Olympian calm.

IRENE: What did he say?

EVA *(involuntarily imitating Clarence's intonation):* "Dear lady," he said, and let his beautiful eyes dwell upon mine, "there are two kinds of cynicism. One kind is cheap enough—it is the sophomore's. But there is yet another kind that is dear, dearly bought"—and here his voice trembled—"it is the cynicism of the mature man."

IRENE *(speaking from the depth of her experience)* "The old story. When a man tries to be interesting to women, he abuses them. At times this method repels, but if the man is handsome, it fills us with the burning desire to teach him better.

EVA: Have you made that observation, too? There is nothing more alluring than to teach a man or to save him.

IRENE: Because it flatters us—and him. And yet no one has ever saved another anything better than, at most—his life; or taught him more than the multiplication table and the alphabet. But I interrupted you.

EVA: And so I wrote to him.

IRENE: Wrote to him?

EVA: It was not exactly necessary, but I felt that I owed him a certain reparation. And then he came to one of my At Homes.

IRENE: How did he behave?

EVA: He remained only a few minutes. But there was a glimmer in his eyes, a quiver in his voice, even when he said things that, coming from another, would have seemed commonplace. He is a man of precious words.

IRENE: And did you give him to understand that you cared for him?

EVA: Not yet. I expected him to take the initial step.

IRENE: And did he not?

EVA: No, not directly. He always made it appear as if he, not I, were the object of desire.

IRENE: And so he was.

EVA: Perhaps. But that smile of his, that look, that sigh, were not all these declarations of love—traps, it may be. He never gave himself fully. His words were few and equivocal.

IRENE: A kind of masculine Sphinx?

EVA: That hits it. But I doubt whether his riddle is a *bona fide* one, whether it admits of a solution. To try earnestly to solve it may be to rack one's brain to no purpose.

IRENE: Perhaps he has himself forgotten the solution. . . .

EVA: Who can tell? And then came that letter . . .

IRENE: What letter?

EVA *(taking from her desk a number of pale blue letters, one of which she hands* Irene). Here, read!

IRENE *(raising the letter to her face).* H'm, perfumed! *(Examining the paper critically.)* A strange handwriting; almost too dainty for a man . . . *(Looking up.)* But what is the matter with you; was the charm so profound?

EVA: It is nothing. Only memories that intoxicate my brain. A certain animal magnetism that flowed from him and that adheres to the very paper. But I have done with that. I shall return to my husband.

IRENE: For how long?

EVA *(hurt).* Fie! But read it, I beg of you.

IRENE *(still looking at the letter).* No signature, no date, strange . . .

EVA *(bending over her):* But read, read!

IRENE *(reading aloud):* "Upon a golden throne sate a gleaming idol . . . And it had a soul, but all those who came thither knew it not . . . And they were not to know it . . . For it was the awful punishment of the silent idol that it had a soul and might not reveal it, if it would not endure the agonies of the lost . . . And once in seven years the most powerful of the idols, to whom belongs all might in Heaven and upon Earth, sent its messenger and tempter to break the iron fetters of that quivering soul . . . and show it . . . soaring high above all waters, the Saviour from afar . . . Then Heaven and Hell lamented its immeasurable sorrow, which neither could assuage . . . since it was too deep for the light and for the darkness" . . . *(She lays the letter aside).* A confession? But do you realize that the man who wrote it is an artist?

EVA: In fragment, perhaps. He has all qualities of the lover and the poet, and is neither.

IRENE: Only a fragment himself, then?

EVA: I sometimes thought, you know, that God intended to make a great artist of him, and being disturbed in His creative act, made—a charlatan . . .

IRENE: You are hard on him. You show that your love still suffers from the convulsions of death. When love is buried, we grow more merciful. And did he write more letters in this style?

EVA: No. But once when we were together and I asked him to solve me his riddle, he smiled mysteriously and said: "Dear lady, you must understand that I am a great work of art. Invisible springs set me in motion, and all about me must be harmony, complete harmony. In the melody of love the slightest discord is fatal." And, oh, how his lips shone; and how a strange, heavy atmosphere seemed to float about him as at high mass in some great cathedral . . .

IRENE: What a poseur!

EVA: It is easy for you to talk. You do not know him. *(Takes a photograph from her desk.)* Look, here he is.

IRENE *(scrutinizing the picture attentively).* Weak, and yet brutal. These melancholy eyes—brown, I suppose?

EVA *(nods).*

IRENE *(continuing):* The brutality lies in the lower part of his face. It might be the effigy of a Roman emperor, cruel and self-conscious to the verge of madness . . .

EVA: Do you think so too? How very remarkable! He said almost the same thing. It was one night after the theatre. It had rained, and the street-lights were reflected on the wet, shimmering pavement. We walked a short distance. His arm rested heavily upon mine. He was inexpressibly beautiful, and golden words flowed from his lips. And then it was that for once he seemed to reveal himself entirely. . . . He gathered his coat about him as though it were the royal purple . . . He seemed like a phantom from perished ages . . . And then with dreamy, bell-like voice, he gave me the key to the riddle of his life. "Dear child," he said, "I am born out of my due time—two thousand years too late . . . I should have been an emperor in Rome . . . Yet no . . . not even that . . . For the Caesars were dependent on popular favor . . . In a remoter antiquity I should have been born, then, when the purple conferred the privilege of splendid madness . . . I should have yielded the sceptre of an Asiatic monarch, of that king of the Persians who lashed the sea with chains . . . and I am"—Here his voice sank, and the sentence remained unfinished. And so great was the man's fascination that I lost sight of the grotesqueness of his assumption and should have liked to kneel at his feet under the very arc-lights of New York! . . . That was the climacteric moment of our love. And then *(she shudders)*—banality.

IRENE: You are too exacting, my dear. Even Caesar, were he alive today, would have his boots blacked; even Isaiah would trim his beard. And in his love, was he imperial there too?

EVA *(blushing slightly):* The strange thing was that after he had expended all his arts to win me, he was unpassionate—almost cold.

IRENE: That is strange indeed . . . But I must make the acquaintance of this marvel.

EVA: Take care!

IRENE: Pah! After your confession! *(To herself.)* I wonder if she really understands him?

(The bell rings.)

(A maid comes in and whispers to Eva.)

EVA *(softly):* It is he.

(She sinks upon a chair and takes up her cigarette again.)

IRENE *(steps before the mirror, patting her hair).*

(Without, soft steps are heard like those of a great, sleek cat.)

(CURTAIN)

II

(On board a small Yacht. Irene *and* Clarence. *The rays of the sun cast silver crosses into the green water. There is a yearning as of summer in the air.)*

*(*Clarence *would attract attention even in a crowded thoroughfare by virtue of his beautiful eyes, a fact of which he is quite conscious. His gestures are carefully studied. He inclines to stoutness. His dark hair, combed back from his forehead, is beginning to show traces of gray.)*

*(*Irene *leans against the railing, holding a painted parasol with which she tries to shield* Clarence *and herself from the rays of the sun, which, however, are not penetrating enough to make the shade necessary.)*

IRENE: And do you call that love?

CLARENCE: Grosser things have been called so.

IRENE: And what would you call it?

CLARENCE: Vulgar sensuality.

IRENE: Even "the love that moves the sun and all the stars"?

CLARENCE *(smiling):* Oh, Oscar Wilde? Yes, even that.

IRENE: And this subtle attraction between you and me?

CLARENCE: I feel that even it would come under the definition of Montaigne to the effect that love—

IRENE: I know. But why that adjective? Why should the play of the senses be called vulgar?

CLARENCE *(with subtlety):* Because both never feel the same.

IRENE: Is that not too harsh a judgment?

CLARENCE: Be honest.

IRENE: Even if I am honest. We women— But something twitches about your lips. *(After a moment's consideration, slowly.)* I fear that you are a hopeless cynic.

CLARENCE *(wearily, letting his beautiful eyes rest upon her and laying his hand lightly on her shoulder):* My dear lady, you make a grave mistake. I am not *(his voice begins to tremble)* a cynic in the ordinary acceptance of that word.

IRENE *(looking at him full of anticipation):* You are *nothing* in the common acceptation.

CLARENCE *(receiving the compliment with a graceful inclination of his head):* Do you see, there are two kinds of cynicism—

IRENE *(looks at him sharply).*

CLARENCE: Two kinds, I say. One is cheap—it is that of the sophomore, but there is another kind, that is dear *(his voice trembles),* dearly bought, and that *(with the air of a tragic heroine)* is the cynicism of the mature man.

IRENE *(to herself):* The identical words. That is going far! *(An idea takes hold of her; then, as if carried away.)* Oh, I believe that you have suffered deeply.

CLARENCE *(is silent and looks at the sky).*

IRENE *(continuing):* And the shadow of that suffering floats before you as the veil in the temple before the Holy of Holies.

CLARENCE *(is flattered, smiles, and lets his hand rest somewhat more heavily upon her shoulder).*

IRENE: And that shadow must hide a mystery deeper than love . . .

CLARENCE *(looks at her in some astonishment. Then to himself):* She knows.

IRENE: And in all your wanderings through life you have never *(consciously seductive)*—never found the woman to whose eyes you could lift the veil?

CLARENCE *(calmly to himself):* She does not know.

(He encircles her closer. The proximity of the Man-Animal begins to stir her blood.)

CLARENCE: There are things incommunicable which the strong must bear alone.

IRENE: Oh, I know them too. In long nights they stand at one's bedside like souls in travail to be born. I too—

CLARENCE: Who knows whether it would be a blessing were they to gain form and life? . . .

IRENE: Does not all nature strive after expression in flesh or sound?

CLARENCE: And what if the forms assumed by our secrets be nightmares and fearsome monstrosities?

IRENE: Better a hideous phantom of stone than one that hounds down thought in the innermost convolutions of the brain . . .

CLARENCE: And so you would know the secret of my life; *my* secret . . .

(She looks deep into the elfin beauty of his eyes. The pressure of his arm upon her shoulder is relaxed. He seems to throw his whole nervous energy into his voice, whose silver sound has a weird resonance like that of a great bell tolled at the bottom of the sea.)

CLARENCE: I will relate to you a parable. If you understand it, it is well; if you do not understand it *(caressing each syllable)* it is better. *(With solemnity.)* Upon a golden throne—

(She starts.)

CLARENCE: Upon a golden throne sate a gleaming idol . . . And it had a soul . . . But all who came thither knew it not . . . And they were not to know it . . . For it was the awful punishment of this silent idol that it had a soul and might not reveal it . . . if it would not endure the agonies of the lost . . .

IRENE *(is carried away in spite of herself by a sense of wonder and by the extraordinary beauty of his elocution).*

CLARENCE *(as if with a personal application)* . . . And once in seven years the most powerful of the idols to whom belongs all might in Heaven and upon Earth sent its messenger and temper to break the iron fetters of that quivering soul . . . and show it . . . soaring high above all waters, the Saviour from afar . . . Then Heaven and Hell lamented its immeasurable sorrow which neither could assuage . . . since it was too deep for the light and for the darkness . . .

(She recognizes perfectly the absurdity of the situation, but his voice intoxicates her like new wine. The Woman-Animal awakens, and she yields with conscious abandon to the magic of the moment.)

CLARENCE: You are astonished and you—understand.

IRENE *(with a shade of irony):* You are a great mystery.

CLARENCE *(failing despite his subtlety to note her delicate raillery):* You are mistaken—a work of art.

IRENE *(to herself):* This is too much. *(His remark has destroyed something of the sensuous charm, and it is rather curiosity than any other feeling that prompts her to inquire further.)* An artist rather.

CLARENCE: No. A great work of art. Mysterious springs set me in motion, contrivances so delicate that even the exquisite scales in the treasure houses of great nations could not weigh them. All about me must be harmony *(now almost intoning his words)* complete harmony. In the melody of love the faintest discord is fatal . . .

(He comes nearer and again places his arm about her. Something like a magnetic fluid seems to emanate from him. She almost hears the throbbing of his pulses and fights with different emotions of which finally curiosity still gets the upper hand.)

CLARENCE *(significantly):* You understand me.

IRENE *(falling unconsciously into the same dramatic tone):* I understand you.

IRENE *(to herself):* I wonder what he is driving at. *(Aloud.)* Language is cruelly inadequate.

CLARENCE: When two souls are in complete harmony one always knows what the other feels.

IRENE: I have never known so happy an understanding.

CLARENCE *(as if reviving memories from an unspeakable distance of time):* I had a friend once . . . And he loved me . . . And often we walked the long paths, speaking no word . . . Those were the evenings on which our conversations were most satisfying . . . And on a certain night it came to pass that I accompanied him from Fourteenth Street to his dwelling. Silently we pursued our way, each busy with his thoughts . . . But at Eighty-ninth Street when we bade farewell to each other he opened his lips and there was sorrow in his voice . . . "Clarence," he said, "at the corner of Fifty-ninth Street you were in the wrong" . . .

IRENE *(to herself):* That at least he did not tell her. *(Aloud.)* How you contrive to find the right expression for everything—so delicate at once and profound. You should have been a poet or a—

CLARENCE *(straightening himself like a beautiful wild animal about to display all its charms before its mate. If he were a cat he would emit sparks at this moment. Then with a deep, melodious, dreamy voice):* No, that is not my vocation. I am born out of my due time . . . I should have been born two thousand years ago . . . I should have been an emperor in Rome . . . No—

IRENE *(whose desire to show that she sees through him overcomes every other feeling).* I know. You should have been a Persian king, a Darius who in his splendid madness had the ocean lashed.

CLARENCE *(taken aback for a moment; then with immovable calm):* Why must women *always* misquote? Xerxes was the man's name.

IRENE: I have heard every remark that you made before.

CLARENCE: That is impossible, for one was new.

IRENE: And is it thus that you seek to impress me?

CLARENCE *(coming very near and taking her hands in his):* Certainly. And that I should try to do so proves how much store I set by you . . .

IRENE: If you are a master of language, why do you not at least clothe your thought in new forms?

CLARENCE: It is because I *am* a master of language that I refrain from doing so. If I have found perfect expression for anything, should I not be the merest tyro to change one jot or tittle?

IRENE: But all that smacks of the merest posing!

CLARENCE: Pose! Pose! What higher compliment can I pay you than to appear before you in my fairest raiment?

IRENE *(whose power and wish to resist dwindle equally):* And do you play this trick with all women?

CLARENCE: With all whom I love . . . And *(embracing her with both arms)* is my method not justified by its success? Have I not won my game?

(His lips touch hers and she suffers to be kissed. His head sinks upon her bosom. The air is heavy, athrill with summer, drenched with fragrance. There is triumph in her eyes, weariness in his.)

(CURTAIN)

THE THREE BROTHERS AND THE FAIRY

A Parable.

By HELEN WOLJESKA.

ONCE upon a time there were three beautiful brothers. The castle of the eldest towered high above a northern sea. The castle of the twins stood far inland amid a fertile, rolling plain. And close to them lived five near relatives; four of these honest fishermen, the fifth herded his goats among the mountain slopes. Their other neighbors were not kin to them; a brilliant nobleman, who in his youth had lived a wanton's life and now approached a profligate's decay—a treacherous bandit chief, wily and wild—a giant dull of superhuman strength—and finally a swarthy potentate, who after a magnificent career had fallen into a long-lasting stupor, and during it had been despoiled of treasures, but now at last showed signs of re-awakening.

These men all worshipped at the shrine of one most lovely and benignant fairy-queen, who showered gifts and favors on them all. . . . Until it happened that the eldest brother desired to possess the prize alone. And he pursued his end with so much skill that finally it seemed as though the Fairy would never more smile kindly upon others.

Meanwhile the years rolled on. The eldest brother had entered middle-age, while the twins glowed in the full bloom of virile youth. And then, behold! the Fairy cast her golden eyes upon them; she saw how strong they were, how straight and tall, how true their speech, how clear and keen their gaze, how powerful their grip—and she withdrew her favors from the eldest of the brothers, and one by one bestowed them on the twins.

The eldest brother's heart now filled with rage, with burning, deadly hatred did it fill. He wished to kill his brothers. But not in single combat would he meet them; from every side the foe should fall upon them! He went about from neighbor unto neighbor, he wanted the whole country up in arms. And cunningly he spoke to every one. To the old Profligate he spoke revenge, reminding him of the great hand to hand fight in which one of the twins, a child, had triumphed. To the dull Giant he insinuated that the twins' lands were fair and very fertile, and suitably located close to his. He whispered to the bandit-chief of daggers, thrust safely in the unsuspecting heart. He promised to the swarthy Potentate some of the jewels he had taken from him, should he assist him with his sword and strength. To the five cousins many gains he foretold. He even traveled far across the seas and hired savage men, yellow and black, to fight for him. Lastly the Profligate's small bastard son, and a young swineherd of the Giant's clan, a ruthless, outlawed boy, were both instructed to do all mischief possible to the brothers.

The twins were well aware of these proceedings. They knew they had themselves alone to trust. Bravely and diligently they perfected the skill and power of their young blond bodies, and more than ever did the Fairy love them.

Finally, at a signal from their brother, all Hell was loosened against the valiant twins. The only friendly hand outstretched to help them—it was the hand of the dark Potentate. While the five cousins, careful of their safety, stood at the edge of the wide, fateful plain, and watched the combat terribly unfold.

They saw the brothers tear each other's flesh, they saw the blood flow and the daggers gleam, they heard the dreadful blasphemies of hate, the crash of weapons, and the groans of pain, as the titanic struggle ebbed and flowed.

It is not over yet. Bleeding and maimed, both sides fight on, locked in the grip of death. And the fair Fairy's head is turned away. What should she do with worshippers bled white? She needs the strong and sound, the keen and young.

Her name is "World's Trade."

BALZAC

By MICHAEL MONAHAN.

IN a recent paper of mine on "Balzac the Lover" (published in the October Phoenix) critical questions would have been improper and were, therefore, avoided; but as we had much to say upon his relations with women as influencing and coloring his art, I wish now to note his attitude toward his creations generally. And this the more that I believe an injustice is done him by the run of English critics who maintain that he has over-stressed the evil in human nature and thereby flawed the integrity of his work. Even Mr. Saintsbury, who has done so much for the English understanding of Balzac, is not without qualms and doubts on this score; for the Englishman is a moralist before anything else, and yet he will not hesitate to judge a Frenchman, to whom art was the supreme consideration!

I am of George Moore's opinion that Balzac's achievement as a whole is scarcely inferior to any work of the human mind. I believe that in the creation of veritable human types, in the mastery of passion, synthetic grasp of life, and profound divination of motive, with the ability to exhibit these powers and faculties in a drama of compelling interest and original invention, which offers the unexpected turns of reality itself—Balzac has no equal among the novelists of the world.

TO consider only our own literature and the giants thereof —Scott, Dickens and Thackeray—the fame of the first named is so greatly diminished and his books are so generally neglected today that it seems needless to urge the comparison. Whatever be the merits of Scott's works—and no books were in their time more famous or more praised—they seem to lack the *principle of life* which keeps the world ever freshly interested in Balzac. As for Dickens or Thackeray, these great writers amuse us with their humor and satire, or touch us with pathos, or delight us with sketches of character, throughout their numerous productions. But will any competent critic pretend that in the stern business of reproducing life in its potential reality and passion in its hidden play—of making men and women whose destinies thrill us like those of people we have known, and even more, for such art transcends our actual experience while borrowing its verity therefrom—will any good critic assert that the achievement of Balzac in this wise has been fairly matched by either Thackeray or Dickens? We do not expect that Taine, a Frenchman, would allow it, but even the thoroughly English Mr. Saintsbury forbears to make this claim. In point of strict, uncomplimentary fact, the work of the famous Englishmen named, as compared with that of Balzac, might be expressed in one of Dickens's titles, *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices;* and this is said by one who is proud to call himself their life-long lover and admirer! Neither of these admirable writers was dominated by the artistic idea in a degree at all comparable with Balzac, nor has either of them brought to the making of a novel anything like the amount of brains which the Frenchman put into his greater books. Please observe that I mean *brains*—intellectual and creative force rather than literary graces or merits of any sort palliative of artistic shortcoming or inability to hit the mark. Both Dickens and Thackeray are not seldom delightful in their conceded failures. What charming digressions in the *Philip*, yes, even in the more formidable *Virginians*, and where is Dickens more savorously himself than in parts of *Little Dorrit* and *Our Mutual Friend*, both books that defy artistic classification?

THE difference between the French master and these great English writers is mainly an artistic one. They have many fine qualities and literary merits, but strictly speaking, they never have a *story*—well, let us say, almost never. Dickens at least was on the way to achieving it. Was it indolence or incapacity or want of the artistic instinct that caused their failure? I cannot say, and the point may be indifferent to English readers, since Thackeray's style and Dickens's humor are readily accepted in lieu of a story. It is otherwise with Balzac to whom creation and construction were all, who imposed a rule of artistic brevity upon himself, and thought out his novel completely before sketching the first chapter. Nearly always he has a good story and not seldom a great one—the mechanism of plot, the interplay of passion and all human motives merely regarded. Yet Balzac is not weak or inferior in other respects because of his cunning structure, his deep-laid architectonics. Each story is informed with a vital thought and philosophy as necessary to it as air to the lungs. It is doubtful if any writer of fiction ever possessed the same capacity for abstract thought, united with a like power to reproduce the living drama of life.

OSCAR WILDE remarked that even the servants in Balzac's novels have genius, and it is true that his characters generally are by this trait unmatched in modern fiction; that is to say, their creator has charged them with his own force and fire. But while they possess this uncommon life, they are not all of a piece, so to say, but cunningly differentiated; no two of his rascals or honest folk, though of similar type, are the same in essence. Now as there are about two thousand *living* people in the *Comedy*, the simple fact just stated establishes the immense creative power of Balzac.

There is yet another way of coming at the question of his supremacy, which idea (if the reader please!) is original with the present humble critic. When Balzac prepares a contest or an intrigue among his *people*, he arms both sides with such resources of talent and courage, of resolution and finesse, of check and countercheck, that the reader is transported as before a living drama. Perhaps the biggest novelist you can think of could take one side of a Balzacian situation or duel of this kind, but the effort would surely exhaust him. Alone the Master can handle both! Observe, I make the point that there is very much more than literature in the novels of Balzac. There have been some infertile stylists who thought they could re-write Balzac's books to their betterment, but literary graces are of small value compared to the creative content of the *Human Comedy*. The man who carried a world in his brain may be indulged now and then in a slight lapse or obscurity—we have had to pardon a great deal more even to Shakespeare!

FOR my part I find every species of literary style and merit in Balzac, but the fiery fugue of his invention, the constant marvel of his divining genius always draws me from the form to the substance, even if I read him in French. To the giant laboring at the furnace of creation, to the great artist evoking and individualizing a vast multitude of souls

and finding for them appropriate destinies, the matter of literary form seemed less exigent no doubt than it did and does to writers whose "style" is all their capital. In art there is room for a Balzac as well as a Bourget, but we must not lose sight of the major values. Like Arthur Symons, I can say that Balzac's style seems always adequate to me—when the wonder of his creative power gives me leave to think of it. The question, however, is one of little or no significance to the English reader who can obtain our author in a good translation.

Something was said in our first article in regard to the working habits of Balzac, and especially as to the seclusion and quiet, the almost cloistral freedom from interruption and distraction with which he guarded his creative task. In this aspect no writer of whom we have knowledge interests us so much, for the reason that Balzac's labors were as heroic as his genius was undoubted. Now in the country, now in the heart of Paris he raised his Ivory Tower, cutting himself off from society in order to see it with the *x*-ray of imagination. He worked as if in a hallucination or creative trance, jealously limiting his hours of sleep, desisting only from complete exhaustion. At all times he seemed to be persuaded of the actual existence of his characters. To Jules Sandeau, speaking of his sister's illness, he replied with an apparent lack of feeling: "Let us come back to reality—let us talk of *Eugénie Grandet.*"

THIS is proof, not of his selfishness (as has been asserted) but of his complete absorption in the imaginative world. The *clairvoyant* always dominated in Balzac, and herein I think is the supreme attraction of his work.

There have been men of great literary or artistic genius who were idle or reluctant or indifferent workers; the world is in the habit of making apology for them, feeling that they could have done better had they tried. Balzac never asked this kind of indulgence for himself and he would not hear of it for others. His immense interest for us lies in the fact that he was at once a great original genius and an amazing, almost unrivaled worker.

Let us notice his own theories of work and inspiration; he has set them forth without reserve in *Cousine Bette,* and as an artistic *credo* there is nothing to compare with them. This little manual of Balzac's artistic faith and practice is contained within two or three pages—golden maxims to those who are capable of receiving and profiting by them. For the young artist and literary aspirant I take these counsels of Balzac's to be the most valuable ever written; the words of a man for whom genius had done much, but who regarded the richest endowments of mind and spirit as worthless without constant labor and application. In truth, since his day the world has had less patience than formerly with the gifted idler or fainéant in art, and it now demands production as the proof of genius.

TO begin with, Courage is the word! according to Balzac. I summarize:

"Intellectual work, labor in the upper regions of mental effort, is one of the grandest achievements of man. That which deserves real glory in Art—for by Art we must understand every creation of the mind—is courage above all things, a sort of courage of which the vulgar have no conception.

"Perpetual work is the Law of Art, as it is the law of life, for Art is idealized creation. Hence great artists and poets wait neither for commissions nor for purchasers. They are constantly creating—today, tomorrow, always. The result is the habit of work, the unfailing apprehension of the difficulties which keep them in close intercourse with the Muse and her productive forces. Canova lived in his studio, as Voltaire lived in his study; so must Homer and Phidias have lived.

"To nurse, to dream, to conceive of fine works is a delightful occupation—it is like smoking enchanted cigarettes. The work then floats in all the grace of infancy, in the wild joy of conception. . . . But gestation, fruition, the laborious rearing of the offspring, putting it to bed every night full fed with milk, embracing it anew every morning with the inexhaustible affection of a mother's heart, licking it clean, dressing it a hundred times in the richest garb only to be instantly destroyed; then never to be cast down at the convulsions of this headlong life till the living masterpiece is perfected which in sculpture speaks to every eye, in literature to every intellect, in painting to every memory, in music to every heart! This is the task of execution.

"The habit of creativeness, the indefatigable love of motherhood which makes a mother—that miracle of nature which Raphael so well understood—the maternity of the brain, in short, so difficult to develop, is lost with prodigious ease.

"Inspiration is the opportunity of genius. She does not indeed dance on the razor's edge; she is in the air and flies away with the swiftness of a crow; she wears no scarf by which the poet can clutch her; her hair is a flame; she vanishes like the lovely rose and the white flamingo—the sportsman's despair."

And hearken to this, O you writers and artists of little courage, who content yourselves with an elegant dilettanteism—you fainthearted lovers who fear to come to close grips with the Muse!

"If the artist does not throw himself into his work as Curtius sprang into the gulf, as a soldier leads a forlorn hope without a moment's thought, and if when he is in the crater he does not dig on as a miner does when the earth has fallen in on him; if he contemplates the difficulties before him instead of conquering them one by one, like the lovers in fairy tales, who to win their princesses overcome ever-new enchantments—the work remains incomplete; it perishes in the studio where creativeness becomes impossible, and the artist looks on at the suicide of his own talent."

THESE theories are exemplified by the sculptor *Steinbock* (*Cousine Bette*), gifted, but without will or courage or persistence, who talked admirably about art and in the eyes of the world maintained his reputation as a great artist by his powers of conversation and criticism. Balzac calls such men "half-artists" and admits that they even seem superior to the true artists, who are taxed with conceit, selfishness, contempt for the laws of society. But he adds, great men are the slaves of their work.

In point of richness and fertility of ideas Balzac has no peer among writers of fiction; he pours them forth in all his books, and the stream rarely shows a falling off, but seems always at the full. This inexhaustible fecundity of thought is, I think, peculiar to him. True, it tempts him to many a digression which in such a writer, say, as Walter Scott, one would skip *sans* apology. But some of Balzac's richest ore is to be found in his excursions from the main theme. I need instance only the famous chapter on the occult sciences in *Cousin Pons* and the matchless chronicle of Napoleon in the *Country Doctor*. . . .

Was there ever a man so enormously interested in life—for whom no subject was too great or too small? Religion, politics, government, law, medicine, economics, mesmerism, astrology, second-sight, alchemy, criminology—this is to name but a few of the subjects he has touched, and memorably touched, in his books. Some of his penetrating thoughts have since his time fructified in the domain of occult science; the charlatanism of which he was accused by certain critics, on account of his interest in the "forbidden sciences" and his partiality for treating of these in his books, is now judged to have been a legitimate exercise of his great powers. It is true that some of his "pet notions" have been hardly dealt with since his day, and as a social prophet he failed to reckon sufficiently with forces that are now big with destiny in his own France. Balzac was in truth far from infallible—a

genius constantly in eruption is bound to throw off much *scoriae,* for which the world has no use. But that he is always pregnant, suggestive, interesting, who will deny, or that his idiosyncrasy makes up for his worst blunders and least attractive "manias"?

OF the debt which writers since his time have contracted toward Balzac, it is needless to say much; no worker in fiction has escaped his influence. He is the founder of the modern novel as he remains its greatest master; later writers have modified his methods, but all have learned from him and appropriated without scruple.

George Moore remarks that Maupassant merely cut him up into walking sticks! Daudet and others have made such use of the *Comedy* as their abilities or their limitations permitted; many a pretentious structure has been raised of materials borrowed from the Balzacian pyramid. Among English writers of high rank, Thackeray is his greatest debtor, having indeed learned of the French master some of the best lessons of his art. Even Dickens's debt is large, and it is worth noting that with more generosity than the author of *Vanity Fair,* he has acknowledged the supremacy of Balzac. Coming down to our time, Robert Louis Stevenson was an unwearied student of Balzac and a cordial appreciator of his genius; Mr. Saintsbury allows that this ingenious and admired writer owed to Balzac some of his happiest conceptions. In fine, the great work of the Frenchman has been as a quarry to two generations of industrious artists—and artisans!

A serious charge against Balzac is that he has libeled human nature, representing its evil possibilities by types of character that are abhorrent to the general conscience and not justifiable by the canons of Art. In other words, it is held that Balzac has no right to introduce us to such people as *Hulot* and *Bette,* the *Marneffes, Philippe Bridau, Flore Brazier, et al.:* their depravity is overdrawn and, in any event, it is not fit for our eyes or nostrils. This, of course, is rather the English than the French position—(though it is not without a strong voicing in France, where the virtuous *bourgeoisie* know little more of our author than *Eugénie Grandet* and *Ursule Mirouet.* English sentiment requires a compromise in dealing with such specimens of human baseness and perversity, which was no part of Balzac's artistic method. His practice may have limited his popularity—it will always limit his acceptance among us—but it affirms his greatness as a master painter of life His own words on this point are memorable. When his sister remonstrated with him in regard to his evil characters, urging him to modify them or turn them to better courses, he replied: "They can't change, my dear. They are fathomers of abysses; but they will be able to guide others. The wisest persons are not always the best pilots. It's not my fault. I haven't invented human nature. I observe it, in past and present; and I try to depict it as it is. Impostures in this kind persuade no one."

AGAIN, if during the serial publication of a story he were entreated to save some guilty one or black sheep among his creations—the sentimental public being much given to such appeals—he would exclaim: "Don't bother me. Truth above all. Those people have no backbone. What happens to them is inevitable. So much the worse for them!"

This is somewhat different from the legend which represents Dickens as letting the sentimental public decide the fate of his characters.

Cousin Bette is a noxious dose even for the fanatic Balzacian, and in truth this book lacks moral beauty to a point of being almost pathological—on first reading it, I thought myself wandering through the streets of Hell! Nevertheless, the art of the book is as great as it is terrible, and Mr. Saintsbury is one English critic who concedes the fact, ranking it with the greatest parts of the *Comedy.* No doubt it is his English patriotism which inclines him to prefer *Becky Sharp* to *Valérie,* but we need not forget that the latter "flower of evil" has even a more doughty champion in Taine. *Valérie* is in truth one of the most finished characters of Balzac; she may be less "respectable," but she is fully as convincing as *Becky,* though not, of course, equally acceptable from an English point of view. Does Balzac realize his wicked heroine more intensely, favored to this end, as he was, by the greater license accorded him? I am not sure, but I fancy she stays with us longer. *Hulot* always went back to her (nobody ever left her, she naïvely said), and so does the fit reader enamored of the great creations of art.

AS for *Bette* herself, she is without a rival in Balzac or elsewhere—the perfect culmination of his studies in female wickedness, the Black Pearl that he drew from his profound and labored alchemy of souls. There are but few characters in fiction so vividly and terribly realized that we never lose the fear which the mere sight of the printed page where they have their life imparts; and of these is the incomparable *Bette.* But indeed her quality is such that it cannot be suggested in a few lines of description. I always go back to the book in order to further probe her secret, and after many readings I have not yet found it. Like *Iago* she seems in her villainy without adequate motive, but with this difference, that we feel she is justified according to her terrible inner code and the workings of her dark nature. The chronicle of her goings and comings, her plots and counterplots, her sleepless pursuit of vengeance nourished by a savage virginity, is all of the very stuff of Balzac's power. Her death amid the sincere grief of the unsuspecting victims of her fury and hatred—hating and seeking to injure them to her latest breath—is a thing made credible only by the force of the genius which depicts it. She remains perhaps the chief enigma and the supreme triumph of Balzac's art.

Mr. Saintsbury perceives the full beauty of *Lisbeth* (which is much for an Englishman) but excellent critic as he is, I cannot follow him where he appears to doubt whether Balzac has made the most of *Hulot's* vice, and even ventures to remark that he was not happy in treating this "particular deadly sin." I wonder where Mr. Saintsbury would direct us for more competent treatment! So much depends upon *Hulot,* the blind unconscious tragedian of the piece, that if he be a failure the work cannot be called great. But Mr. Saintsbury ranks it with the author's very greatest work! Something wrong here undoubtedly.

I GRANT that *Hulot* is "rather disgusting" and a "wholly idiotic old fribble," especially toward the end of his bad courses; his creator so depicted him with deliberate intent. But take him for all in all, from the time when he was still "handsome Hector" in his hearty, libidinous middle age—to the latest glimpse of him in his ever prurient senility, and I maintain that the *Baron Hulot d'Ervy* ranks with the most successful figures of the *Comedy,* or if you please, of the literature of fiction. He is drawn with a certainty of touch which leaves no doubt of his reality. Where in literature do we find such another picture of the libertine sacrificing all that men hold dear and sacred to the vile master passion that consumes him, body and soul? The picture of *Hulot* in his final stage of depravity, when he had sunk to cretinism and the last dregs of sensuality, indifferent to the death of his wife whose virtues he acknowledged and whom in his careless

way he had loved—is as great a thing as you shall find in Balzac, repellent as it may be to English susceptibilities. The moral, too, is fearfully convincing; it makes you believe in God, the Devil, and Balzac!

The writers who have accused Balzac of libeling human nature in such characters as *Hulot* have failed to make out their case.

To George Sand who had protested against certain characterizations in this book (and they will always be objected to, since they are beyond the pale of conventional treatment) the author thus justified his method:

"You seek to paint man as he ought to be. I take him as he is. Believe me, we are both right. I am fond of exceptional beings. I am one myself. Moreover, I need them to give relief to my common characters, and I never sacrifice them without necessity."

IN this connection it is interesting to recall that Balzac's *Pere Goriot,* perhaps the most powerful novel of the nineteenth century, was long attacked as immoral. His books, or many of them, are on the Catholic Index as taboo to the faithful, though he was, by profession at least, attached to Royalism and the Church, and though he wrote *Jesus Christ in Flanders.* Henley, liberal critic and admirer of Balzac as he was, did not scruple to accuse the author of a leaning toward Sadism, for which he claimed to have found warrant in certain parts of the *Comedy.* After this one is relieved to find that the noble Lamartine who had full opportunity of knowing Balzac, pronounced him a good man—one indeed whose conscience had a peculiar repulsion from evil.

The risk incurred in attempting to deduce a writer's moral bias or personal character from his literary creations has not seldom been pointed out, but it will always attract a certain type of critic.

It sometimes happens upon the disclosure of a crime or scandal peculiarly shocking—like a plague spot suddenly uncovered in the community—that people will exclaim against it as incredible, as if to compliment human nature or indemnify the cause of morality in general. They do not wish to admit the possibility of such deeds, the existence of such malefactors; as judging the admission itself to be a criminal offense. This seems to fairly represent the attitude of certain—mostly English—critics on the question before us. They refuse to allow that the human character can be as bad as Balzac depicts it, and even if so, it ought not to be described at all! In a word, there is no validity in the critical objection to Balzac's treatment of evil in his novels (whatever religious casuistry might make of it). The question, as we have seen, did not trouble our author. In his own phrase, he did not invent human nature or the evil thereof—he observed it and described it as a necessary element of his great task—the history of a complete society. We may allow that Balzac's divinatory genius urged him to sound the uttermost depths of human wickedness—the farthest reaches of the lawless will. But one should be as gifted as the author of the *Human Comedy* himself to determine the question whether it sometimes led him astray or falsified his picture of life.

TO conclude: The world created by Balzac in his *Human Comedy* has places to suit tastes the most diverse, and one can move on until he finds a scene to his liking. I know not if it be true, as some English critics contend, that Balzac has portrayed the evil that is in human nature more convincingly than the good; at any rate, the question cannot be allowed to impeach his art. Frenchmen like Taine make no difficulty of accepting the *Comedy* on this score.

In my view, there is within the wide compass of this world of Balzac's creation many a haunted spot, many a wondrous enthralling region where the light of genius dwells in such heart-troubling power and beauty as may be found only in the work of a very few writers, and these the great masters of the literary art.

UNDERSTANDING GERMANY

By WILLIAM SIMON.

"GERMANY'S peace ambitions in no wise resemble strivings for undisputed world dominion." If this be the case, what do the Germans mean when they talk of "peace ambitions"? Did they not satisfy their peace ambitions before the war? If not, why not? Men like Methesius, Liefmann, Kiliani, Hettner, von Schulze-Gaevernitz, Stresemann, Dernburg, von Buelow and many others have written extensively about these questions and there is good ground for thinking that their opinions express public sentiment in Germany towards the subject. In dealing with Germany's ante and post-bellum relations these men invariably set out from this consideration: The Imperialist movement more than anything else needs a thorough airing before a reasonable understanding of Germany's ambitions may be acquired. Religiously refraining from stating my personal standpoint I have found this to be the gist of their opinion:

It is necessary to discriminate carefully between two kinds of imperalist movements. There is Imperialism *and* Imperialism. In point of ways and means they differ vastly. Broadly speaking we distinguish two fundamental types—British Imperialism and its antithesis, German Imperialism. The British type may be expressed briefly by the maxim: "Only one power shall rule the world, that is I and no one else." The German antithesis of this professes that the world need not tolerate any master. Germany's rights must not be encroached upon by shutting her out from the highways of the world. She must not be barred from preaching German Kultur abroad. We may, therefore, define British Imperialism as *positive* or better still *destructive* dogmatism, paradoxical as this may sound. German Imperialism, however, reacts *negatively,* while at the same time it is impregnated with *constructive* elements. The Teutonic belief in *laisser faire,* in co-operative progressivism, in Kultur, is battling against Anglo-Saxon lust for domination, territorial aggrandizement and power. At first blush, we might be prone to regard this antithesis as something too far fetched, a policy sprung from fancy and national conceit.

That German policy, however, generates imperialistic "tendencies so vastly different from and superior to those of England" cannot be denied. It is, far more, a brutal fact, a necessity, a weighty historical "why and wherefore." England, the old man of the sea, has assiduously conquered the

world throne, and, iron-willed, insists upon defending it with undivided energy. Not in spite of, but because of being a young virile power, Germany, under the circumstances, has no other choice than to forge ahead under far more stringent conditions. Grappling with a situation which bristles with difficulties of its own, Germany evidently cannot hope to create a sphere of Teutonic influence comparable to that of the British lion. Three centuries have been frittered away. Germany simply drifted along and awoke three centuries too late. In a world political sense she cannot, therefore, count upon catching up entirely with England, at least, not with antiquated methods. The world's principal spoils have been pocketed; to undo this is now impossible. Even a clean-cut victory of the German cause would hardly permit of large conquests on the British style. As it is, the sacrifices necessary for this would be too costly, and to incorporate such possessions securely would likewise be a task too difficult to perform. Germany learned her lesson in 1870. "The difficulties between France and Germany are over the French-speaking population in Lorraine; the small internal differences in Germany are the result of some millions of Poles and 30,000 Danes who dwell in the empire." It has been rightly emphasized that the German people's desire was and would be only peace and safety. To plan the conquest of foreign countries amounts to sheer madness, a scheme which no responsible German politician ever advocated. As Dr. Dernburg says: "Germany's ambitions for territorial aggrandizement have never existed. All assertions to the contrary are untrue, and simply invented for the purpose of rousing suspicion among the neutral countries." Hence hardly any demand for "annexations," unless military and economic security is involved, has emanated from Teutonic circles in this war which, as far as Germany is concerned, has taken a course favorable beyond all expectations.

Thus, in the opinion of German intellectuals, conclusive evidence points towards a policy of non-territorial aggrandizement. German ambitions have been cruelly misinterpreted. With her mind focused on nothing more or less than *commercial and cultural elbowroom*—her "place in the sun"—Germany covets an unreserved right to transport her immense surplus of stock manufactures to every zone and in exchange import whatever raw materials she stands in need of.

To expect her to fall back entirely and to depend solely upon her own industries is surely preposterous. Wider markets are necessary to the labor and industrial enterprise engaged in her vast production of natural and manufactured products. The world must be open to her as buyer and seller—and must remain so. On her territory, about 50,000 square miles less than that of Texas, there live 70,000,000 people. To feed them from the products of that soil is an impossibility, even granted it be under a high stage of cultivation. Though we at present behold the singular spectacle of a self-sustaining Germany in war time, we are nevertheless aware of great hardships to which the people are subjected. We also know that they are fed on a reduced scale such as they would never accept in times of peace. If Germany, therefore, cannot attain unrestricted freedom in trading with the outside world, then she must export her men, expatriate them to other more fortunate lands. In the cultural domain also Germany desires import as well as export facilities. More than anxious to spread her intellectual achievements abroad, Germany has set her heart upon seeing the world's intuitions, speculations and decisions tinged with a proper sprinkling of Germanic habits. Her training and science, her art and soul, language and literature, discipline and aesthetics have as yet not nearly enough fertilized the world's development. In short, she means to evolve, to further the future of mankind, not single-handed, not monopolistic, yet making a point of her own share. The Germans, very much the same as any strong virile power, are supersaturated with an inextinguishable desire for action, for great doings; they demand a voice in the Areopagus of the nations. They hold they have something original, something valuable to offer. Thus, logical inference from these principles leads towards a policy, well defined in sum and substance. It cannot be part of Germany's program, simply to kick England off the fence and take her place for the sole purpose of instituting a new regime in the fashion of bygone days. Germany, however, has the right to demand, and will demand commercial freedom, freedom of the seas. Open water routes, that is, immunity of private property at sea in war time, open markets for all nations, that is, no special spheres of interest for any nation, or better still, no political backing for the benefit of any market, but the "open door," especially in those regions still waiting to get in touch with regulated trade exchange—these are the issues, the *sine qua non*, in the light of which Germany views the terms of peace. German foreign policies of recent years have been governed by this principle in dealing with the more intolerant western powers, in Morocco, in Asia Minor, in China, and elsewhere. The principle of the "open door" is to be recognized henceforth not merely theoretically, in essays and in speeches, but shall be exercised in actual practice. All kinds of tricks, subtle and sly, have been resorted to for the purpose of eliminating German influence by roundabout methods. All along, the designs aimed at the exclusion of German competitors from the construction of railroads, industrial plants, harbors, etc., and the measures adopted with a view to barring Germany, openly or stealthily, from international loan negotiations, have been bitterly complained of. All the known tactics dragged from musty closets for the throttling of German competitors, restrictions, machinations, back-stairs calumnies, they all served one end: to run up a Chinese wall against Germany. German exporters were obliged to meet individually the combinations which their foreign rivals were not only permitted, but encouraged to form. It is difficult to exaggerate the extent to which the Entente governments were not only encouraging such organizations, but were employing governmental powers in aid of it. True, intrigues of that sort availed them little in the end; Teutonic prowess stood on the threshold of success. Alas, for this reason the world was set on fire; the knot could not be untied by peaceful weapons; it was cut by the sword.

BOOKS AND MEN

THE GREATEST AMERICAN POET

By GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

THERE was a time when I was absolutely convinced that the greatest American poet was George Sylvester Viereck. Today I have modified my opinion. For the poet, unlike the actor and the singer, must compete not only with the living but also with the dead. The greatest of all American poets, dead or living, is unquestionably Poe. The greatness of any artist rests on three premises. He must express his thought, his thought must have universal significance, and he must express it better than any one else. In other words he must impress it with the stamp of finality. There is no American poet, with the exception of Poe, who has fulfilled all three requirements. Whitman fulfilled two. I am not sure that he fulfilled the last. It is by no means certain that a greater may not arise who will lend to "Leaves of Grass" a finality of expression beyond Whitman's. There are lines in Whitman that achieve this finality, but his poems, like the sonnets of Shakespeare are marred by much that is distinctly inferior. Nevertheless he still towers by far above all his imitators in prose and verse.

Poe left only a slender book of verse, but each poem strikes an individual note. It strikes it masterfully. We cannot conceive of a more intense sound in the great harmony of the world. It is for this reason that his verse constitutes the greatest contribution of the New World to the poetry of the old. Yet this truth is more clearly recognized in the Old World than among us. At one time the daughter of a professor who subsequently achieved considerable success in the arena of politics, was my guest at a dinner. She was a cultured girl, college-bred. We discussed American poetry. "Who do you think is the greatest American poet?" I asked. "Sidney Lanier," she replied without hesitation. "What of Poe?" I interrogated. "Poe? I have never read him." This illustrates the provincialism that rests upon our so-called intellectuals. The young lady hailed from the South. Hence Sidney Lanier was her poet. Had she been cradled in New England, she would probably have selected Longfellow or Whittier.

Poe, in his own life, fought this provincialism. He fought above all the little pedants of New England who look upon the United States merely as a replica of their motherland. They would never dream of making the United States original. Their only hope is to make it as much as possible like England—poor snobs—whose greatest pride in life is to be mistaken for an Englishman! Yet these men dominate literary criticism in our own day even as they did in the days of Poe. No one who fails to bow before the English-made conventions of this group, is considered worthy of recognition unless he shocks them like Whitman or attacks them with the scalpel of his own critical analysis—like Poe. But both Poe and Whitman were dead before New England seriously recognized their distinction. They gained a little favor when they were taken up by the French. But today they are again forgotten, or it would not be possible for the daughter of a New England scholar to confess her ignorance of Poe. In fact, if the lines of Poe were singing in the minds of the New England criticasters, they would hardly revel in rubbish, merely because it is imported from the old country, nor would their own verse be a second rate copy of last year's fashion in London. Perhaps it is fortunate that these little minds do not appreciate Poe; if they did they would imitate him, and imitate him badly. Bad imitations ultimately impair the original. Every prophet is slain by his disciples. Every authentic poet is obscured for generations by imitators.

I FEEL as though I knew Poe, although he died many years before my time. I have met Stedman, who knew Poe. But I feel that I knew him better than Stedman. I met Stedman only once—I believe at the Authors' Club. We were going to have a real talk about Poe. Shortly afterwards he died. Among his papers was a note: "Be sure to write to Viereck." Stedman was a good fellow, but he patronized Poe just as poor Gilder patronized Whitman. I also knew a man who had once made a loan of ten dollars to Poe. He told the story at every occasion. He hoped to achieve immortality by clinging to the coat tails of his lyric debtor. But even this opportunity is lost to him. I have forgotten his name. I have walked along Broadway, where Poe used to walk wearily. I have been at Poe's grave in Baltimore. I have worshipped him in the little house in Fordham where he lived with Virginia Clemm.

A lovely poetic tribute by Edwin Markham will be preserved for posterity in the place where the great poet lived. But the farcical Hall of Fame, attached to New York University, is still without a tablet in honor of Poe. Or perhaps the preposterous mediocrities who dole out immortality to Americans, in the spirit in which the superintendent of a Sunday school distributes little red and white tickets for good behavior, have changed their minds and admitted Poe. It would be the last insult of philistinism to genius. Let me quote here the memorable quatrain of Father Tabb—in itself no mean monument to the poet:

Into your charnel House of Fame
Only the dead shall go;
But write not there the living name
Of Edgar Allan Poe.

I HAVE not met Poe. My readers have not met him. But I have met his brother in the spirit, Hanns Heinz Ewers. And Ewers has written an essay on Poe that has just been published in English; it is the finest tribute to Poe in any language. Ewers understands Poe, because he is like Poe. He takes up Poe's story where Poe dropped it. We all remember Poe's famous essay on how he wrote "The Raven." Poe told us a good deal about his craft. But there was much that he dared not say. Ewers has the courage that Poe lacked. Our knowledge of Poe is not complete without Ewers—who as a stylist is not the equal of Poe. But he outrivals him in imagination. He lacks the note of grewsome tenderness that is characteristic of Poe. But in depicting the horrible he almost surpasses him. I am now speaking of Poe as a story writer, not of Poe as a lyrist. As a lyrist Ewers and Poe are antipodes. But in their prose, and in their temperament they are very much alike, except in one important aspect. The difference between Poe and Ewers is the difference between Europe and America. As Adele Lewisohn remarks in her remarkable introduction to her own masterly translation of the little book: "He (Ewers) is able to mirror the soul of Poe because they are intellectual kinsmen. Both are at home in "the misty-mid region of Weir," both dwell "out of space, out of time!" Both have exploited

the realm of Horror. In fact Ewers has gone beyond Poe because to him was revealed the mystery of sex; to Poe sex was a sealed book"—notwithstanding Alexander Harvey.

Hanns Heinz Ewers has written the tales that Poe might have written, if he had lived in a country where genius is less restricted. His Mandragora is the perverse sister of Berenice and Lenore. Ewers is most voluble where Poe was most reticent. Poe would have admired the works of Hanns Heinz Ewers as much as he admired the tales of E. T. A. Hoffman. In fact, Poe was more drawn toward Germany than toward England. In that respect he differed from almost all the poets of his generation. Poe, like Whitman, was an American. He was also a cosmopolitan. But he was not an Englishman. Whitman was not a cosmopolitan. He was solely an American. Both poets owe nothing to England. Poe, as I said, would have understood Ewers. There is no question that Ewers understands Poe. He is both a cosmopolitan and a German. He despises the way of the prig whether that prig be German or Anglo-Saxon.

He drank—he did not drink. That is the way the Anglo-Saxons dispute about their poets. They permit Milton to starve; they steal his whole life's work from Shakespeare. They delve into Byron's and Shelley's family histories with crooked fingers; they calumniate Rossetti and Swinburne; lock Wilde into prison and point their finger at Charles Lamb and Poe—because they drank!

After all, I am happy that I am a German. Germany's great men were permitted to be immoral—that is, not quite exactly as moral as the good middle class and the priests. The German says: "Goethe was our great poet." He knows that he was not so very moral, but he does not take that fact too much to heart. The Englishman says:—"Byron was immoral, therefore he *cannot* have been a great poet." Only in England could Kingsley—that offensive preacher of morality—have uttered that remark about Heine, which has become a familiar quotation—"Do not speak of him,—he was a wicked man."

If, however, it is unalterable, if the nations on all sides acknowledge and love the "immoral" English poets, the Englishman is at last forced to speak—then he lies. He does not renounce his hypocrisy; he simply says: "Later investigation has proved that the man was not at all immoral,—he was highly moral, quite pure and innocent." In this fashion the English have "saved the honor" of Byron. It will not be long ere they turn a Saul Wilde into a Paul. Thus in the case of Poe, an Ingram followed a Griswold with the "Oh, no, he really did not drink."

The English are now permitted to appreciate Edgar Allan Poe, since it is officially attested that he was a moral being.

But we, who make not the slightest claim to middle class morality,—we love him, even if he drank. Yes, even more we love him because of his drink, because we know that just from this poison which destroyed his body pure blossoms shot forth, whose artistic worth is imperishable.

EWERS believes that every poet needs some artificial stimulation. The pressure of every day life, the consciousness of the futility of all human endeavor, is so staggering that every mortal genius who is not a born fighter needs a crutch to stay him. Most poets lean upon the staff of their colossal conceit. Without delusions of grandeur, it would be impossible to go on with life's heavy burden. What conceit does for some, narcotics or drink accomplish for others. Few artists have been able to go on without some artificial Paradise—to borrow a term from the vocabulary of Baudelaire. What is an artist? "A pioneer of culture in the newly discovered land of the unconscious," replies Ewers.

How few are worthy to be called artists under this lofty definition of that proud title! E. T. A. Hoffmann deserves it, and Jean Paul and Villiers and Baudelaire—and certainly also *Edgar Allan Poe;* this much even the Griswolds must concede to the artist who, in so many of his stories, entered that secret country of the soul of which no one before him, and least of all the scientists, had the slightest presentiment.

The eternal land of our longing lies dreamily before us in grey, misty clouds,—the vast land of the unknown. The beggar lies huddled in the warm sunshine,—the contented town folks hug their fire places.

But there are people whose tormenting desires are so great that they must emerge from the realm *which we know. Robur et aes triplex* must protect their breasts when they leave the sunny land of the known, when they steer through the grey murderous floods to Avalon. And many, many perish shamefully without having cast even a single glance behind the clouds. Only a few can complete the journey. They discover a new land,—accept it in the name of a new culture; they have extended the borders of consciousness a little further.

The artists are these first explorers. After them come the hordes of expeditions of discoverers in order to survey and investigate the country—land registrars and rent collectors—and men of science.

Now it is certain that the so-called poisons, which we call narcotics, are as potent as other means to lead us beyond the threshold of the conscious. If one succeeds in getting a firm footing in this "other world," exchanging the metaphysical for something positive, one creates a new work of art, and is, in the noblest sense, an artist.

It may be necessary here to accentuate that quality of wisdom which insists, of course, that there can be no idea of creation in intoxication. Or, on the other hand, that no intoxicant in the world can develop in a man qualities which he does not possess.

The Griswolds and the Ingrams could take any amount of wine, could smoke any amount of opium, eat any amount of hashish, nevertheless they would still be unable to create works of art.

But the intoxication caused by narcotics is liable, under certain conditions, when accompanied by other causes, to create a state of ecstasy later on, and in this state of ecstasy every one produces the highest that his intelligence is capable of conceiving.

Edgar Allan Poe drank. And, as with all of us, his body proportionately reacted unfavorably against the poison of the alcohol, deadened as it was by the drink-habits of generations of ancestors; so he drank heavily. He got drunk. But he got drunk purposely, he did it in order to get the drunkard's understanding, from which he later on, perhaps, years later, could create new *art values.*

Ewers is mistaken in one thing. Poe did not drink heavily. His mind, however, was so delicately poised, that at times even the slightest stimulant seemed to affect him powerfully. I believe that Poe owed this instability to drugs, not to drink. But whatever his nepenthe may have been, I can readily believe that he sought it deliberately to escape from the fogs and fogies of New England. Everything conspired to make him miserable. He himself says somewhere:

> I could not love except where Death
> Was mingled with the Beauty's breath,
> Or Hymen, Time and Destiny
> Were stalking between her and me.

These are Poe's worst lines. They were written in youth. But they are also the truest. None realizes this more keenly than Ewers. The spirit of Poe must have whispered his secrets into the ear of Ewers. This is how Ewers has envisaged the poet:

A Hell was to him what Paradise is to others,—a well beloved, a blessed Hell, but the flames of which nevertheless scorched. For Virginia,—to whose dying eyes we are indebted for Morella, and Ligeia, Berenice and Lenore,—was doomed before she had given her hand to the Poet. He knew that she had consumption, that the glowing red of her cheeks lied, knew that from the depth of her liquid, shimmering eyes the inexorable sickness grinned forth. When at night he stroked the beloved locks he know: "So many days yet she will live," and the next morning again "Another day less." It was a dying woman who kissed his lips, a dying woman, whose lovely head rested next to his at night. When he awoke disturbed by the coughing and rattling in her panting lungs—the white linen seemed to him a shroud, the cold drops on her brow, the sweat of death, a lingering death, lasting for years, a visible slow fading of the beloved—this was the only "happiness" of this most unhappy of all poets.

Poe dead was greater than Poe living. It is difficult to overestimate his influence. He is the father of the modern magazine story. Without Poe there would be no Gouverneur Morris. Without Poe there would be no Conan Doyle and no Gaboriau, and no Maupassant. The so-called Decadents of France, England and Germany derive their technique, their theory of art, directly from Poe. Baudelaire and Mallarmé acknowledge his mastership. Swinburne pays tribute to him. "Never before him," as Ewers aptly remarks, "did any one so dismember his own work of art, and dissect it to its last shred. "Poe," he goes on to say, quoting "Eureka," that curious prose poem, deeper than Emerson in its philosophy, startlingly modern in its scientific hypotheses, "Poe is a pathfinder—and is the first to disclose what is called Modern Thought."

If he anticipated Zola's coined expression of technical production, if he furthermore set up the Parnassian art principle independent of this, he bridged the gap of half a century and made a demand so ultra-modern that, even today, only a small part of the advanced spirits understand it in its whole radical magnitude.

The fertility of the literature of the cultured peoples will through Poe's spirit first attain full development in this century. The past one judged him by a few outward trivialities, a hawing and hemming, which certainly brought a fortune to Jules Verne and Conan Doyle, the fortunate imitators. It is certain that the starving poet only wrote these things for his daily bread. The Sea and Moon Journeys of Gordon Pym and Hans Pfaal, etc., also several of his detective stories as, for instance "The Murder in The Rue Morgue," "The Purloined Letter," "The Gold Bug," were certainly called into existence only by the desire to have warmth, food and drink. For Poe knew hunger. Therefore he wrote those things, as he also did translations, and worked at all possible sorts of scientific books. Surely, each single story, even the weakest, far surpasses any adventure of the eminent Sherlock Holmes. Why does the great public, and especially the English speaking public, in spite of all this, swallow Doyle's ridiculous detective stories with enthusiasm, and lay those of Poe aside?

Nothing is easier to understand. Poe's characters are like those of Dostoevski's, so real, his composition is so faultless, so holds the imagination of the reader without possibility of escape in its nets, that even the bravest cannot resist a shudder, an agonizing, murderous shudder, which resembles a cruel nightmare.

In the works of popular imitators this fear is nothing more than a pleasant sensation, which not for one moment permits the reader to doubt the outcome of the farce.

POE, as I have said, was both an American and a cosmopolite. Ewers likewise possesses both the national and the cosmopolitan spirit. He describes the creed of international culture in words worthy to be chiseled in marble.

Everything about me, and all else which is beautiful on this earth, is the sacred, inviolable property of the cultured people, who stand above all other nations. That Nation is the true ruler, the true possessor. No other master is tolerated by beauty. To understand this means to understand the world. Edgar Allan Poe was the first to do this.

These words were true when they were written. Will they still be true after the war? For truth, like life, changes. It is never the same. All things are relative. Everything flows. Only Pragmatism leads us on the path of sanity out of chaos. But it is only a temporary path, a makeshift, a transition.

The truth of today may be the lie of tomorrow. One man's truth is another man's poison. What is truth in your mouth, may be a lie in mine. No one can tell if Armageddon will be followed by a new nationalism or a new internationalism. If anything can survive the baptism of fire and of blood, it is Beauty. Poe's "Annabel Lee" will outlast the new kingdom of Poland. The map may change, but Poe's songs will never lose their music, until a new and alien civilization turns the world topsy turvy. GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK.

AN ALTERED CIRCUMSTANCE

By ALEXANDER HARVEY.

NOTHING in this miserable room of mine that I could pawn for bread! Twice within the week had my landlady reminded me that the trivial sum I owed for rent was overdue.

I lifted a worn and tattered volume on the subject of anatomy from the crazy table on which my little medical library reposed. A despairing inspection of its shabby state confirmed me in my fear. The maddest and most romantic Jew in Elizabethan drama would never have risked his farthing upon my entire treasure. Within the week I hoped to pass the examination that was to win me the precious privilege of practicing as a physician in New York. It seemed now that I must die of hunger in the streets meanwhile.

As I placed my poor book among its poorer companions and fell into a mood of pity for the fate that made them mine, a knocking knuckle sounded at the door. I ignored it altogether. I could not pay the rent. The hour of my doom had struck. I would yield it no welcome.

"Oh! You are in."

My landlady had not awaited my summons. She stood before me in her tall severity, a black-browed symbol of the last of all things. I smiled at her. Odd as it seemed to me then, I could smile into that grave face of hers.

"I have no money."

I said this with a sigh, although I had no longing for her pity. I thought I heard a sigh upon her own lips as she sank upon that rickety chair beside the table.

"But I have not come for the rent."

I fixed my gaze intently upon the head of dark hair that met my eye as her head drooped. She looked up at me suddenly.

"I have had to take refuge here," she explained, "from that man."

"Your husband?"

She bowed her head and for an interval there was silence. I had never taken too seriously the complaints this landlady perpetually made against him to whom she loved to refer as her brute of a husband. My landlord did not appear to me in the least brutal. He was, I understood, a sort of truckman, very irregularly employed for the time being in consequence of the congested traffic conditions in the city of New York.

"What has he done to you now?"

My voice had in it a ring of much impatience. The grievances of this woman had grown preposterous to me. That she saw at once. The dark eyes flashed proudly in her head. I had affronted this creature. I would be reminded of the rent.

Before the words escaped her lips, the door was flung wide open. My landlord stood upon the threshold.

"Will you give me that money?"

I thought at first this question must be meant for me. The landlord, however, was gazing steadily at his wife. He did not heed my presence in the least. The woman stood up to confront him and they eyed one another defiantly.

"That money!" She stepped back a pace. "It's mine."

"I say it's mine!"

"You shan't have it!"

HE seized her by the wrist, and I saw him give her arm a wrench. Her struggles to be free brought the masses of her hair in confusion about her shoulders. She strove to bite him. His persistent twisting of the arm he held drew from her at last a cry of anguish. A crumpled green bank note fell from her hand to the floor. He fled with it from the room.

"Brute!" The door had slammed behind her husband, but she screamed so loudly that he must have heard her. "I hate you!"

When she sank once more upon the rickety chair and made a cushion for her head with an arm, I emerged from the spell wrought by this scene of violence. My movement must have been a very slight one, yet her ear detected it. I found her suddenly looking up at me through the masses of that hair.

"Coward!"

She did not hiss the word. She did not hurl it at me as she might have hurled a curse. She smiled. That smile was to me a whip of which I felt the sting on my cheek.

"But," I protested feebly and with a most humiliating sense of the feebleness with which I protested, "what would you have had me do?"

"Kill him!"

I marvelled at the music in her voice. It had a cruel emphasis and yet a power that subdued my spirit. She understood me at that moment far beter than I understood myself.

"Kill him!" She stood up at this repetition of her behest, speaking in that slow and thrilling tone. "Be a man!"

Never until then did it occur to me that she was beautiful. I observed the liquid quality of her eyes, and strove to avert mine from them. I could not. Her face was very white and she pushed those coils of hair away from it with gestures of a miraculous seduction.

"Here!" Her voice revealed how thoroughly she realized the conquest she had made of me. "Use this."

It was a carving knife. She thrust it into my hand before I could reply to her. The suasion with which she urged me to the door was not gentle.

"There is no one in the house but ourselves."

SHE addressed me in a whisper as I hesitated on the edge of the stairs outside. I glanced at the long, keen knife in my hand. I turned once more to gaze into the eyes of the woman. Then I stole down, step by step, the woman peering over the railings all the time.

Not until I reached the kitchen in the basement did I come upon the man. By this time I had thrust the knife into my belt and there it was hidden underneath the coat I wore. My landlord was making a frugal meal of bread and cheese at a little deal table in the corner beside a wash tub.

"Aha!" He seemed disconcerted at beholding me. "Did you pay the rent?"

"I will pay your wife in full," I assured him as I drew near, "this very night."

"Aha!" This must have been his favorite oath. "Has my wife sent you here to murder me? Every time we get a tenant he comes to me with that intention. Where's the carving knife?"

These revelations left me motionless and staring. He took advantage of my great surprise to hurl himself upon me. I did not dodge in time, but as he seized my arm I got a good grasp upon his shoulder. Our turnings and circlings about the kitchen so disarranged my clothing that he could see the knife at my belt easily. The sight inspired him to make a demand in tones that reached the roof for a surrender of this trophy. I merely seized the empty bottle on the table as the pair of us described fantastic angles all about it. A purpose to hit my landlord on the head was in my own mind, and this had been anticipated by himself. He snatched the bottle as I poised it menacingly in the air, and then he brought it down upon my head. I stood dazed. He had that knife out of my belt in a flash.

"Aha!" He cried aloud triumphantly. "Don't be afraid."

I HAD taken refuge in the cupboard, shutting the door upon myself quickly and completely. My landlord made no further effort to pursue me. I could hear him moving about the kitchen. At last I heard the sound of that knife. It seemed to undergo a process of sharpening. I heard its scraping.

"I tell you again I'm not going to hurt you."

A note of such perfect sincerity informed the voice of my landlord that I ventured to set the cupboard door ajar. He knelt at present in front of the stove. I observed him closely as he moved the knife back and forth. No look of ferocity inflamed that face of his.

"What do you mean to do?"

He replied to my question almost as soon as I had asked it by making a thrust at his breast. I managed to leap upon him in a fashion sufficiently agile to avert a fatality, although I could see that he had cut himself. I clutched the hand that held the knife. He tried to free himself but I did not let go.

"Let me die, I tell you! I can not trouble her then."

Once more the pair of us described fantastic circles. We knocked the table over. We fell into that tub. We broke all the dishes in the place. He called his wife the vilest names. He said that I might have her, but he added that my fate if I took her must be as dreadful as his own. He took a solemn oath to die, die, die!

Words more dreadful still he mouthed above the din we made and then he fell. It proved an easy task to rob him of that knife, for he had fainted. Loss of blood from that trickling wound of his had made this victory for me. I stripped him of his shirt and improvised a bandage from it for his chest.

"Will he live?"

My landlady stared at us through the broken pane of glass in the kitchen door. She had bound up that hair.

"He is not much hurt," I told her, "but he has received a shock."

SHE trod delicately among the broken dishes and the lumps of coal until she reached that knife. This she lifted from the floor and put into the oven. I followed every movement of hers with my eye intently, as if I looked upon some absorbing scene in a theatre.

"Philip!"

She had knelt beside her husband, but he lay as I had left him, breathing easily. She made her way next, with that characteristically delicate step, to the sink. There she filled a bowl with water, taking it to the side of our patient and kneeling at his head. She put her lips to his forehead.

"Philip, my darling!" How perfect the note of love in her voice! "Speak! Tell me you are all right."

"And you," I said, bending over her to whisper the words, "and you put that knife into my hand and sent me here to kill him. What has changed your mind?"

"Fool!" she cried, pillowing her husband's head upon her bosom. "Fool! He needs me now!"

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF FOREIGN LOANS

By ERNST HANS NEUFELD.

UNCONTROLLED by government authority, our national savings have been, and are, at the mercy of any foreign power, and subject to raids by the agents of such foreign powers. Our own savings may thus be used to the detriment of our own potential strength, our own financial stability.

SAVINGS USED TO STRENGTHEN FOREIGN NATIONS.

Our savings have actually been taken from us directly to strengthen the fighting power of foreign nations—all potential enemies. Thereby we have been weakened in our relative strength. We are further weakened by the proportionate disappearance of capital from our home market, and the incapacity arising therefrom of the home industries, factories, mines and railways, all employing home labor, to secure capital for the employment of his home labor and for expansion at home.

The total absence of any legislative check against this country being drained of its funds by foreign governments will, if unchecked, result in a similar position with regard to our finances as already experienced with regard to our food and our labor. For the more convenient feeding of foreign and potentially enemy powers our 110,000,000 population is to-day thrown on either shorter rations or on more expensive rations, for the convenience of these same foreign and potentially enemy powers and for the strengthening of their more or less depleted exchecquer and dottering finances our own home industries are penalized by high rate of interest and are practically deprived of cheap money for expansion.

OUR INVESTORS HAVE NO EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN BONDS.

Unfortunately, our investors have neither knowledge nor experience in foreign government bonds. They are not able to judge for themselves as to the veracity exhibited in the prospectuses of the agents of such foreign powers flooding this country with all sorts of statements of the financial position of their borrowing principals.

The total absence of any legislative check upon such statements on behalf of our government and legislative machinery to cut the volume of borrowing of such foreign powers here, now threatened again, gives the latter boundless opportunities to cause this country losses and damage.

European countries, particularly lender countries like France and Germany, have long realized the part which government control of national savings gives to the country whose foreign investments are thus government controlled.

Such countries utilize this power diplomatically and politically against foreign nations by granting or withholding admission of their loans.

NO BANKER CAN OFFER AMERICAN SECURITIES IN FRANCE.

In France particularly no banker is entitled to offer foreign, for example, American, securities; no stock exchange is authorized to deal in them without specific permission being first asked for and granted by the French Minister of Finance.

The right—to give or to deny—the admission of foreign securities gives the French Government a strong lever in its relation to foreign powers in need of credit. It is this right on which, for the last twenty years, the political alliances of France, particularly with Russia, have been built. This right alone made this alliance possible. France willed it to gain Russia as a military ally, to make Russia as a military ally perpetually stronger and thereby to make Germany proportionately weaker.

CHECK UPON VERACITY OF BANKERS.

Apart from this power of admitting or refusing foreign securities, another check is required.

This, too, is partly in operation in France.

The French government makes a banker issuing foreign securities already admitted for circulation in France by the Minister of Finance, and all dealers dealing therein civilly and criminally responsible for statements made in his, the issuing banker's or dealers' prospectus, circular, or letter with regard to such foreign securities.

This check upon the veracity of bankers issuing foreign securities is but partly efficient. The large profit derived by such issues have been frequently found to be but cheaply acquired by a term of imprisonment by the less scrupulous.

AMERICAN COMPANIES HAVE DEARLY PURCHASED THEIR EXPERIENCE.

Many American mining, railway and public utility companies, who obtained their funds in France prior to the operation of the war, have dearly purchased their experience.

A far more efficient check could be established by the operation of a properly organized government department demanding the prospectus relating to foreign securities intended to be issued, together with proofs of the statements therein contained, to be first submitted to this department for investigation and approval, along with application for admission for flotation in this country.

The French government is further utilizing this power as a means of revenue. It taxes the securities with regard to their normal value, and likewise taxes independent therefrom the coupon or dividend.

This is but an extension of the idea of import duties as protection for home industries to home savings.

The United States have never been a lender country. It never had a very large class of investors. But it is a lender country now, and its investors need protection.

The United States has created by this war a number of enemies, and however amicable, in a diplomatic sense of the word, our relations with foreign powers may be for the moment, we can ill afford to throw away an element of power of such potent as the power to give or to deny the admission of foreign bonds and stocks.

THE ANGLO-JAPANESE COMBINATION.

General Scott, who no doubt is one of our most competent soldiers, is now demanding an army of 3,000,000, and substantiated his demand by repeatedly and distinctly referring to the Anglo-Japanese combination as a combination of potentially enemy powers. If an authority of such undisputed standing deems it an imperative necessity of mobilizing a fighting force of 3,000,000 men, it is indeed a necessity not less imperative to husband our resources and to make use of our right to give or to deny credit.

But there is an additional reason that makes the adaptation of such laws particularly expedient at this very moment. The Allies are already in the most serious manner interfering with our export, blacklisting our merchants, keeping our mails, invading the three-mile radius along our coast, and threaten us openly to put us at a disadvantage with regard to trading after the expiration of the war. They are doing this at a time when their military forces are engaged elsewhere. As soon as their military forces will be

freed the trade war waged upon us may or may not adopt serious dimensions.

The power of our government to "give or to deny credit,' the right of admission of the bonds of those foreign and potentially enemy powers now dependent on our credit, may form a most powerful weapon in the hands of our Executive after the war and likewise as a powerful accelerator to bring peace about and to be used as and when expedient.

Naturally in case of so-called guaranteed loans the authority of such government department must extend automatically to the acceptance or refusal of admittance of any collateral security. Otherwise this country would be flooded with all the fifth-rate railway bonds of half-bankrupt South American and other provincial governments now held by Belgium, France and England.

This protection is the more needed just now, the more the Allies individually and jointly will be compelled to come here for further credit.

And by such means we could use our savings to help countries which give us commercial preference, and we could strengthen our economic and military allies economically and militarily, so that finally the Monroe Doctrine will become a reality, backed up by the guns of American dreadnoughts and not by mere notes.

This legislation would be purely domestic.

From a fiscal point of view, it would make the foreign borrower, a potentially foreign enemy, pay towards the building up of our defensive forces.

It furnishes our Executive with an additional means—apart from an embargo on food—to enforce peace.

A DEFENSE OF SECOND CHILDHOOD

By B. RUSSELL HERTS.

CHILDREN are the inarticulate geniuses of every generation. Those who grow up remain inarticulate; those who grow articulate remain children. The concept that "a little child shall lead them" need not necessarily refer only to children of any special age. Certainly childhood is more an attitude of mind than a condition of mentality. Who among us has not seen perfectly genuine children who were far more capable of the realities than their parents, though their parents supported them, ruled them and, sadly enough, controlled the progress of their characters? Between these fettered children and their more effective elders, the chief difference seems generally to be that the children are clear minded, fearless, and unpractical, while their parents are muddleheaded, conservative and practical. That may be why the young cannot take care of themselves, which means simply that they cannot crush others for their own benefit, or look out first, last, and all the time for their own personal advantage. This is the very essence of taking care of oneself. What else could it be?

Caring for oneself is a condition that we grow to in maturity, and few of us are fortunate enough to avoid it. It is an ugly condition from any point of view, a damnable one, from that of every religious teacher, that ever lived. But most of the world is so thoroughly imbued with it that it actually becomes proud of its possession, and when someone does not measure up to standard, we call him a fool, a nincompoop, or a charlatan.

SUCH is the state of the majority of mankind, from twenty onward. At a late age some few recover from the evil of maturity and start on the road to leadership. Unfortunately, they seldom become childish enough to succeed. But at least there drops from them the mist of materialism that has been gathered about them ever since they have come of age, that cloak of fascinating fabric which envelops one's head and body, but which it is impossible to feel. These aged folk begin again to view life as it really is, to consider the true, inherent values, to examine it without prejudice, without scorn, without rancor, having nothing left to lose or gain, they are fearless and unafraid of all the petty stupidities that make cowards of the middle-aged. And of these rare ancient spirits we speak as if their minds were feeble, instead of free. We mention their resumption of childishness as if it were an ignoble act.

The grown-up masters of the world have made perhaps the worst muddle of it that has ever existed in history. Never has there been a greater premium placed upon successful dishonesty. Never have there been greater thieves and blackguards in the high places. It is an age of unquestioned political corruption, of undoubted commercial villainy, supported by a press that never dares or cares to speak the truth, except about the weak and influential. The mass of the people seem as dense as ever and their masters exploit them as never before in the history of the world.

This is the product of the practical man. The European war is a result of the mature deliberation of our practical diplomats. The vast danger of war in this country is the result of the commercial stupidity of our leading citizens. The struggle between capital and labor is the result of the sophistication of both sides.

THERE is a hardening process at work in every country, continually which takes the soft, imaginative minds of boys and girls and transforms them into the flat, stony, mental contrivances of the middle aged. We are not encouraged to think, any of us. We are forced to master one particular limited process, so that we shall become capable of going through that again and again and again so that we can earn our livelihood by it. Nothing but discouragement is offered by modern life to one who attempts to achieve breadth of vision and nobility of thought. The stolidity of maturity must be obvious to anyone, yet we go on turning glorified children into practical men and women.

Except in childhood, when do we ever achieve that attitude of genius which is, in brief, the looking at things and questions for themselves, without the thousand prejudices that we all acquire to cloud our vision and our understanding? Never, most of us, except if, late in life, the desire for struggle and worldly accomplishments has passed away, do we urge once more into our early clarity. And then forsooth, shall we be told that we are ready for the asylum or the grave.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE THEATRES

THE other day an English dramatist, the author of four or five dull plays, bitterly criticised America for failing to appreciate what he called the "theatre of the intellect." It appears that we have consistently refused to encourage the production of plays which in his mind were supremely important and necessary for the welfare of our souls. Curiously enough, all the plays mentioned by him were English products, and included three failures that he had written himself. He ended his tirade by stating that America was a commercial nation, incapable of understanding art, and that our refusal to join the Allies against the Prussian was the final proof of our national debasement. Well, let us look into his charge.

On Broadway there are at the present time about twenty-five plays—more or less successful. Out of these at least eighteen are the work of American dramatists. The others, almost without exception, are imported from England. Let us select only the best in each group, and compare them. Comparisons are only odious when we fail to measure up to the standards of our opponents. When we do measure up to these standards, or surpass them, comparisons are apt to be very gratifying. In this instance let the American eagle scream to his heart's content. For the best plays in New York to-day are, undoubtedly, far superior to those which have run the U-boat blockade established around John Bull's island.

* * *

To understand the importance of this achievement we must remember that we are competing with such veteran dramatists as William Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Sir James Barrie, Horace Annesly Vachell and J. Hartley Manners. But who will deny that "Good Gracious Annabelle," by Clare Kummer; "The Thirteenth Chair, "by Bayard Veiller; "Her Husband's Wife," by A. E. Thomas, and "The Yellow Jacket," by Benrimo, are not more entertaining, and profounder than "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "The Inca of Perusalem," "Upstairs and Down" and "The Lodger." The last play named is particularly British. It is widely advertised as coming from a long run at the Haymarket in London. It is supposed to be funny. Here is the gem of the play:

"Rich men don't leave their money about. If they did, they wouldn't be rich."

This epigram is actually advertised in the newspapers. On the strength of its humor, flashing brilliance and crystalline wit you are asked to pay two dollars for a seat. Ha! Ha! Ha!

* * *

I have again and again called the attention of the International readers to the excellent things that are being done at the Irving Place Theatre. Director Christian's latest production is Ibsen's "The Wild Duck." This sombre tragedy seems to me strangely beautiful. It has never before been acted in America. It is not likely ever to be popular, for it is so uncompromising, so unconcerned with the average theatre-goer's habits of body and soul, that I venture to state that most of those who witness it leave the theatre with a feeling of resentment. After all, we do not like to gaze into the mirror which reveals us as we actually are.

"The Wild Duck" is Ibsen's most sordid creation. In Hialmar any man in the world may see himself—and at his worst. And poor Gregers Werle, the always unlucky, always damaging other lives, is indeed a notable portrait. So is the coarse Gina. And the elusive, virginal face of the unfortunate Hedvig haunts one, too. Each character in the play is so outstanding, so clearly cut, that they stamp themselves upon the brain with painful intensity.

The theme of "The Wild Duck" is an unusual one for so realistic a dramatist as Ibsen. Ibsen here defends the value of illusions. Rob the average man of his illusions, he says, and you have deprived him of the one thing that makes for his happiness. Only the great can look upon the countenance of truth and live.

"The Wild Duck" explains why Ibsen is so hated throughout the world. He was despised in his own country, while inferior mediocrities were acclaimed by the mob and the classes. Only in Germany did he find peace and friends who understood him and his work. Once he returned to Norway. By this time he was a world figure. The enmity of organized Philistinism had done its work, fortunately for Ibsen, too well The Norwegians forthwith began to make his life unhappy. He immediately packed up and returned to Munich. "It was an opportunity to insult a poet which it would have been a sad pity to lose," he wrote with proud bitterness.

* * *

Maude Adams, like Peter Pan, never grows older. In Barrie's new play she is as kissable as ever. If in "Peter Pan" Barrie reveals the world as it seems to the imagination of little boys, he shows us in "A Kiss for Cinderella" life as it mirrors itself in the dreams of a poor little working girl. The play would not be Barrie if it were not whimsical. Barrie could invest even a Zeppelin with a certain whimsical charm.

Cinderella is doing her "bit." She is taking care of four little motherless children, a little English child, a little Belgian, a little French woman, and a little German, Gretchen. When the policeman, who is to become her fairy prince, asks her about the little enemy alien, she tells him that it is a Swiss, but she admits that it is "not quite Swiss." When she recuperates from her attack of pneumonia in the hospital, the first question she asks the kindly old bachelor who has adopted the children is: "Are you good to little Gretchen?" He replies in the affirmative. "Are you good to her even when she is bad?" "The children are always good," he remarks. "Then they are cheating you," she promptly declares. In spite of his sentimentalism Barrie and his heroine are both realists. Only they see more than the surface of things. In fact, the play is the most realistic of all the war plays we have seen. With a few deft touches Barrie shows us the atmosphere of London war times, when all is dark save for the occasional flash of a policman's lamp illuminating the dark momentarily like a glow worm. We see the changes wrought by the war. Little Cinderella has lost her position because, as her employer informs her, she is a "luxury." Most delightful is the scene at court. Such a court never was except in the imagination of the adorable Cinderella. It is dominated entirely by the censor and by Lord Times, a stern figure representing Lord Northcliffe's principal publicity organ. The royalties occupy golden rocking chairs. The King treats the entire court to ice cream. Mona Lisa and the Venus of Milo are among the characters of the play. And, of course, there is also Prince Charming. He, being a romantic bobby, presents his Princess with a pair of glass slippers in lieu of an engagement ring. That is his—Kiss for Cinderella. We know of no one but Barrie who could write such a play. We know of no one but Maude Adams who could carry it successfully across the footlights.

J. B. R.

* * *

Have you ever seen Vlasta Maslova dance? She is one

of the greatest of living dancers. Whenever she dances at the Palace I look in vain in the newspapers for comment upon her extraordinary achievement. But, alas, her glory is not discussed in our tribunes. In fact, there must be a conspiracy on foot to conceal the talents of this fascinating genius. For Maslova can dance, as greatly as Pavlowa, as finely as Nijinsky. She is at the Palace now, dancing at each performance with a beauty and a passion that is absolutely unparalelled. But why this silence on the part of our critics? Gentlemen, wake up! J. B. R.

IS MARK TWAIN REALLY DEAD?

(The following letter from Mrs. Emily Grant Hutchings is a startling reply to the above caption. According to Mrs. Hutchings the great humorist is very much alive, and in his immortal existence deems the living to be the dead. So much is Mark Twain alive that he actually dictated a story to William Marion Reedy. This posthumous story is shortly to be published by Mitchell Kennerley. The sincerity of either Mrs. Hutchings or William Marion Reedy cannot be doubted. Frankly we are baffled. If any of our readers can solve the problem we shall be grateful.)

DEAR Mr. Viereck:

Not five minutes ago I finished reading your "Esoteric Philosophy of Mark Twain," and the final sentence of that superb article has already driven me to my typewriter. "May we not hope that . . . some day, in some incarnation, we shall meet him again?"

I knew your philosophy, your despair of anything beyond this miserable farce and fiasco of existence, before I read your comments on Mark Twain's last published book, for I know Mr. Reedy as well as you do, and he has reflected you to us. But you do not believe what you tell yourself you believe—or you could never have written that final sentence. And so I want to tell you that Mark is so much alive that he looks upon us as dead ones. He has been coming to our home for almost two years, sometimes twice a week, sometimes at longer intervals, and while we have never seen him he is quite as real a personality as we are.

One afternoon we took him to Mr. Reedy's home and Brother Billy took down a chapter of the story Mark was dictating. He tried afterward to convince himself that perhaps it was not Mark Twain at all but merely the abnormal working of Mrs. Hays's mind; but when Mitchell Kennerley, who is publishing that first posthumous story, suggested making some changes in the text, I asked Mr. Reedy what I ought to do about it. His reply was: "You can't make any changes in that story. It isn't your work, or Mrs. Hays's. If Mark let those passages stand after revision, they have to stand."

Then suddenly he wheeled in his chair and said: "I'll tell you what you do, Emily. Send for Mrs. Hays and get Mark on the board. He'll give Mitchell an answer that will settle the discussion."

The first story he dictated, through Mrs. Hays, is a boy story which might be classed with "Tom Sawyer" except for the fact that it has a deep purpose, one which I did not perceive until I read the comments on "The Mysterious Stranger." I have not permitted myself the luxury of reading that book, and shall not, so long as Mark wishes to use me as a small but essential part of the curious physical mechanism by which he effects his earth connection. If Mrs. Hays should read Mark Twain it could be charged that her mind was somehow reproducing or duplicating him. And those who hold to an empiric and, I believe, generally discarded theory of psychology, would assert that the contents of my mind and my husband's, as we sit with Mrs. Hays, might filter through to hers. However, I have read enough of this story to understand what Mark means by his occasional comment on the "bitterness" of his later years.

When we saw the first advertisement of "The Mysterious Stranger" we asked Mark what kind of a story it was and he said: "A bitter story, not so wholesome as 'Jap,' and not humorous like 'The Furrow'." He promised us, when we finished "Up the Furrow to Fortune," that he would tell us the things he had learned since passing "the curtain." He has used the word death only once, and then he made apology for it.

We had been in the habit of sitting twice a week, and Mrs. Hays asked him whether it would be possible for us to work oftener. The thing that struck me when I came to read over my husband's scrupulously kept notes, was the reference to death as a going into the other room.

After he had completed "The Furrow" he said he wanted to give us a light piece of fiction before undertaking the serious revelation of the conditions under which he now lives. It is a fanciful story of a girl who fell from the planet Mars. When it had been written, rewritten and revised, I asked him what its title should be. He suggested several, one of which was "The Mysterious Stranger from Mars." Then he said:

"No that won't do. Cut out that mysterious stranger part. It might conflict."

That was fully a year before the Harper announcement of this new Mark Twain book and neither Mrs. Hays nor I had any intimation that there were Mark Twain manuscripts yet unpublished. He finally called the story "A Daughter of Mars."

We supposed that we were going to get the big revelation next but instead we got the story of "Jap Herron" which Mitchell Kennerley accepted for publication last April and on which my husband read proof most all summer.

But that aside, we have received another story, much longer and stronger than "Jap," of which I am now making the final copy. I told Mark one evening that Mr. Reedy had said that because Mrs. Hays was the daughter of a Missouri editor in a small town, the skeptics would say that "Jap Herron" was the product of her subconscious mind. His reply was:

"Very well, then, we'll give 'em another story—one that they can't put up to anybody but Mark Twain."

He has made it very plain to us that he is trying to establish his identity beyond a question before giving us the answer to the riddle of life and death. When he had dictated the last chapter of "Brent Roberts" he said:

"You may write 'Finis.' When we are settled again I am going to give you that fantasy I promised you, about the world beyond the portals. I hope they won't throw me out of heaven."

We have had no sittings during the past two months except for revision of "Brent Roberts," and there was very little of that. Mark said he was tired and did not want to go over the story in detail. I had marked discrepancies and repetitions in the copy as I typed it from my husband's note books, and in the main he said what he wanted to say, at the first dictation, and said it superbly. I am eager for the great revelation, which I hope he will transmit soon.

Sincerely yours,

EMILY GRANT HUTCHINGS.