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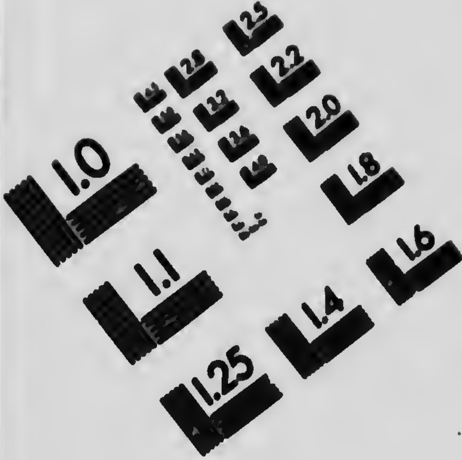
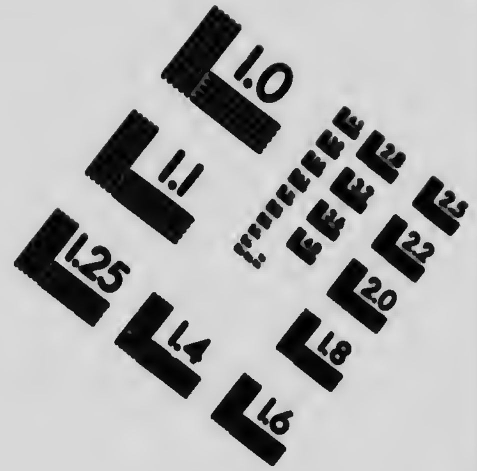
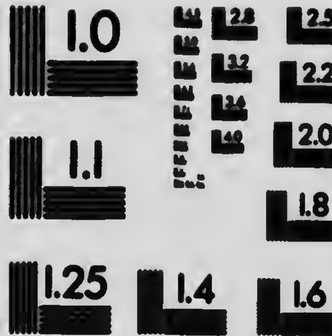
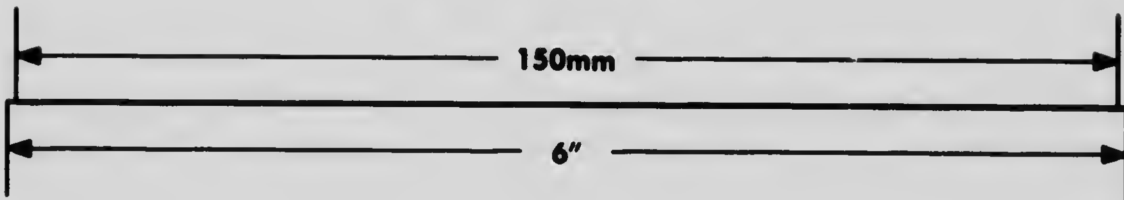

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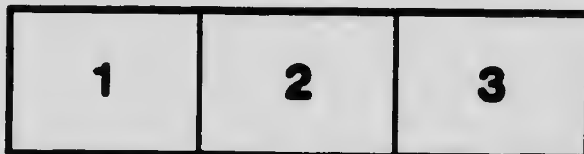

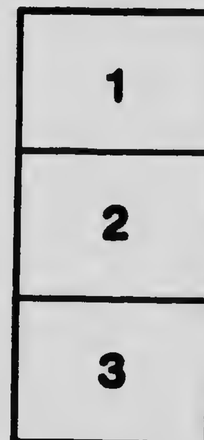

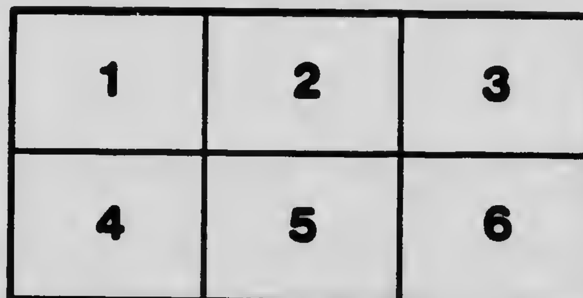

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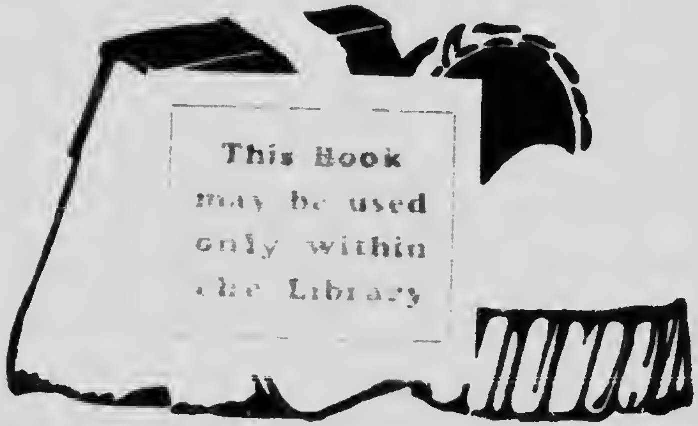

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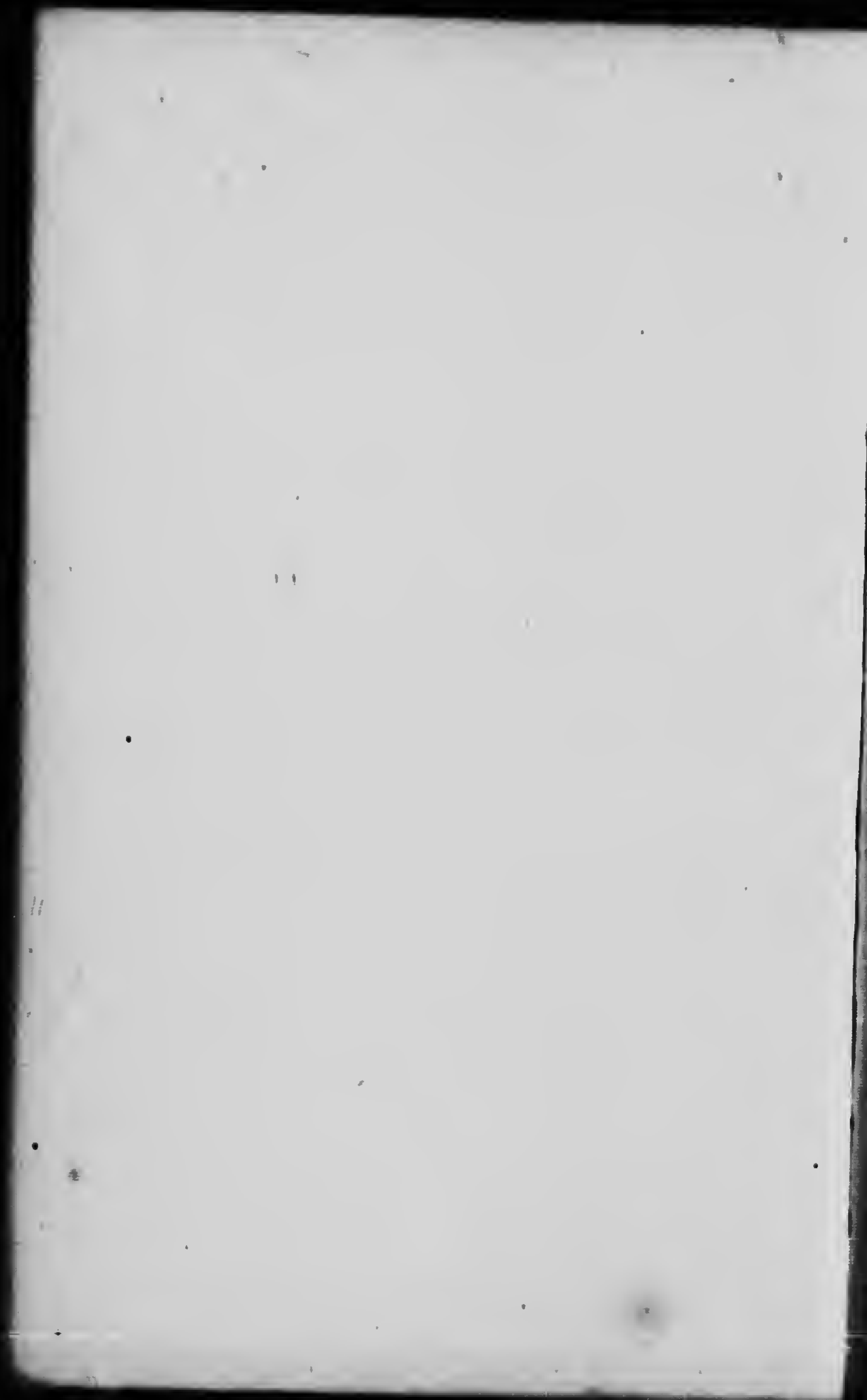

THE POWDER-PUFF

THE
POWDER-PUFF

A LADIES' BREVIARY

FROM THE GERMAN
OF
FRANZ BLEI

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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE given elsewhere a short account of the life of my late friend, the Prince Hippolytus. My poor effort met with some approval, and aroused considerable curiosity in the Prince's writings, of which it offered some few examples. The manuscript notes which he left were entrusted to my care, to be dealt with exactly as I thought best. The present volume contains a portion of them. It is fragmentary, not only because it was not the Prince's intention to write a book, but also because his subject was from its nature inexhaustible.

No doubt many people will hasten to declare that this posthumous publication corroborates afresh one of the many foolish criticisms which have been passed on his Highness. The shade of the departed will be as little troubled by that as the living man was moved by the epithets "epicure," "amateur," "æsthete," and so on; for he never cultivated the airs and graces of assumed

dignity, though these may have their own kind o
success.

But I will not entertain the fair reader with th
critical inanities of an age apparently unable t
tolerate a spirit like his. To him levity and gravit
appealed equally. He followed alike the dictate
of fancy and of passion. His eyes beamed wit
inspiration, while the sceptical smile of experienc
was upon his lips. Above all—and this is th
essential—he refused to mould his features to th
mask which life, the great mask-maker, imposes o
us all. Perhaps the Prince went unmasked, an
so seemed to a masked world the only masker i
it: or, had he paid dear for many masks an
worn them out? for he had no desire for dis
tinction; he preferred always to remain incognit
and repudiated deference to the judgment o
others. He used to say: "Why should I pa
more heed to the opinion of Mr. X., who cal
me a cynic or something else, than to the lampoo
which a drunken plebeian has thrown into m
carriage? They are just alike, only the latter i
primitive and therefore more excusable."

The water-mark of this Paper Age is lack o
culture and shameless conceit. Every new fo

mula invented to describe the nature of the Prince was welcome to him; every factor into which he was resolved was to him only an addition to his joy in his own unity. The more that was contested—with his own misleading collusion—the more certain he was of possessing it unimpaired.

But enough of this, gentle lady. You never knew the Prince, and you will gratify his shade if you will consider his earthly life—rumour. He used to say: "Consciousness of the Ego means nothing at all extraordinary in every-day life. The simple idea of the Objective and Subjective Self has been elaborated into a philosophical theory, which now rests on a mere antithesis without actual existence. In real fact, I am all, and all is I."

Am I not, therefore, right about the Prince's life, when I ask you to regard it as invention?

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THE POWDER-PUFF

MORALITY FOR WOMEN

In these days a great many common forces are at work dissolving the association of cultivated society, by confounding the fundamental differences between the sexes. It is therefore necessary to be perpetually emphasising them, and even to exaggerate them deliberately. The fullest forms of life were developed in times peculiar for the widest distinction between the sexes, and the generation which speaks and acts as though women were *par excellence* "human beings"—if we may give that term more than its natural meaning —will relapse into brutality and confusion. The women who are *par excellence* human beings, because they are incapable of attaining to feminine rank, together with the men who are *par excellence* human beings, because they are deficient in the masculine qualities, form a horde of barbarians driven from their inheritance. They proclaim their secret envy by blatant contempt, and demand

an equality which is to render their disinheritance more endurable.

Those who demonstrate, from the bulk of the female brain, that women can learn to practise all the restless activities of men, are worthy opponents of those who demonstrate the contrary. The girl with a mannish *allure*, who inveighs against the known salacity of men, is on a par with her sister who eagerly fosters Free Love, and with their other sister who bears children without marriage to a man as devoted to Free Love as herself, merely in order to show that she professes the "Higher Morality," which, according to her programme, dates the beginning of a New World.

"Higher Morality" is another name for wrong feelings in the guise of ideas, and for evil manners become inveterate, because they are being constantly nourished by perverted instincts. Whoever fails, for any reason whatsoever, to dominate the moral practice of those about him, will lay the blame on the practice which he thus rejects, but it is *flatus vocis* if he therefore claims to be destined for a higher morality. This is his way of concealing an incapacity.

Morality is the power over Form. There are some weaklings who want to conceal that they are weak, and they do it by saying that morality

is weakness. It is always noticeable that those who speak thus do not make the best of their own lives by developing them to their fullest form.

For some reason or other, we are agreed not to do certain things openly nor except at stated times; any one with good taste and a sense of order will conform himself. No lady would think of wearing to-day a hat of last year's fashion, for it would make her remarkable in a manner highly distasteful to her. At seaside places they appear in public very scantily dressed and quite *décolletés*, but in no other circumstances of time or place.

Morality follows the same law of taste and conformity as Fashion. Take care, ladies, lest what is called the moral law should mean more to you than the formal rule of external life, with which you must conform, as with a new fashion. Speak of morals with the same seriousness as spring fashions, never flippantly or frivolously, in the belief that you must explain to your friends that you do not take those beautiful laws seriously. You had better talk of morals as little as you talk of the way to beat up an egg—both are practices, and no subject for conversation. Accept these forms, not as an organised system of arbitrary rules, but rather as the purely intelligent

compliance with life itself. Do nothing merely for the sake of these forms—after all, you beat up the egg in order to eat it—but in all you do, never forget to give them their due consideration. Your beauty does not in the least need the reputation of an *esprit fort* to become remarkable.

St. Simon tells a story of an old Archbishop who received his mistress, the Duchesse de Lesdiguières, every day. He used to walk with her in his beautiful park at Conflans, followed at some distance by gardeners with rakes, to obliterate their footprints on the path. At least, let gardeners thus follow you. So-called pre-judgments are far more cruelly executed than judgments, and allow of no appeal.

You have degenerate or unfortunate sisters, who can find no welfare in the quiet course of events. So they begin breaking loose from all rules and forms, and invite Free Love, too often with the scarcely disguised hope of at least inspiring courage in some timid man. Keep such women and such talk at a distance, if you value freedom of action more than freedom of speech.

Never betray more intelligence than your beauty can carry unscathed, lest you too should appear to be playing the false game of exchanged functions. Rather represent yourself as a little

stupider than you are. Your intelligence can never sink below the standard which is set by your beauty.

Do not believe the doctrines of false teachers who offer you Nature or Art, modesty or boldness, one or the other, as alternatives, since their antithesis is only hypothetical.

LOVE

There are some women who engage in love because they think they have a right to it, or because they have heard about it, or because they are bored or curious. Such women will experience every degree of disillusionment. They may take this warning: Hold back, unless you are prepared for a game in which you may lose all, and yet may win all. The result does not depend on the man, but only on the power of your beauty. You must know exactly what you have to give him, and what you want from him in return. The sooner you know this the better, and you cannot buy the knowledge too dearly, for it may bring you victory in life. If it comes too late it is useless; you will indeed know then what you can give, but you will no longer find a man to give you anything in return.

You must only be mistaken once, if at all—the first time. A first mistake may be excused by the delusions of girlish dreams. Do not spend too many years over your dreams. The fact

that girls are no longer married at sixteen, as our grandmothers were, is one of the chief causes of all those calamities which we include in the term "The Woman Question." A dream indulged too long acquires a painful reality, and intervenes, a third person, in your first embrace. No doubt it is stifled in that process, but though it is dead, it will go through a sentimental resurrection, and ruin your complexion.

Annie D., a beautiful Swedish blonde, says that a woman must love if she would give herself gracefully. But what woman would not contrive to give a man the illusion that she loves him? And we are only considering illusion here; we are talking of women who do not really love, but have heard of love, think they have a right to it, and so forth.

It is important in all cases, especially for the sake of your reputation, to keep your line of retreat open. If you chance to disappoint a man—in other words, if you do not succeed in giving him that precise suggestion of yourself which corresponds with the need which you perceive in him—do not endeavour to improve matters by showing yourself to him in another light. Do nothing. Throw up the game. Devote all your skill to retreat. It must appear a conquest which you are not inclined to follow up.

Avoid words as much as you can; many words may easily betray feeling,—indeed, many words do betray it, whatever you may employ them to say, if you talk of the matter itself, or only of the weather. Never forget that you are responsible for your own failures. Never attempt to reproach the man, for you will only awaken him from his reverie of love; his eyes will be opened suddenly, and the damage will be yours.

THE JEALOUSY OF MEN

When Herr B. does not happen to be present, the story is told how he once surprised his wife with four lovers. Lovers were to be expected; the surprise merely consisted in their number, for B. had expected to find five. When he saw the four from his hiding-place,—by the way, it was also known to his wife,—he said to himself: "Two . . three . . . four of them . . . then she is a fourfold woman, and I must develop a fourfold xistence for her satisfaction." That is a very imple sum. Four women require four men, four omen in one require four men in one. There is othing surprising in that.

Some of the causes of jealousy in men are banal ough; the fear of being compared with others, r instance, which makes many men attach so uch importance to the virginity of their wives hough in some cases there are other reasons). a woman only knows one man, she knows ne, and she must console herself with the good pe, which easily degenerates into an evil super-

stition, that all men are alike. Most jealous husbands have grounds for finding this superstition of their wives a very convenient one.

A less banal reason for men's jealousy is taste. There are some women whom infidelity caricatures, since only fidelity becomes them. A man cannot bear bad taste in his wife; that is his form of jealousy.

Want of imagination in a man is another cause of jealousy; he cannot realise anything, and is therefore furious. Herr B., on the contrary, was acutely imaginative. The fact that he left his wife when she reached her seventh lover and he could no longer compete with so many, was only owing to personal inaptitude, not to any error in reckoning.

That jealousy may be a means of attraction is shown by the story of an elderly husband and a young wife. He invited a younger friend to stay at his country house. The friend fell in love with the wife, and to a moderate degree she also fell in love with him. On the occasion of their first perfectly harmless demonstration—he was only holding her hands—they were surprised by the husband. The friend left the house at once, and awaited the husband's challenge. But a letter from him arrived, to the effect that, since even jealousy had not had the desired result,

there was only one course left. He first shot his wife, whom he dearly loved, and then himself, to whom she was sincerely attached.

Herr von L. was quite different. After a long period of ill-health, when death was approaching, he bid good-bye to his wife, in order, as he affirmed, to seek health in prolonged travelling. Every month the woman received a letter from her husband, from abroad, in various parts of the world, every month for eleven and a half years—quite a short, pleasant letter—the last, exactly on her forty-fifth birthday. It said: "I am writing this in my last hour, which has not unexpectedly overtaken me eight days after our parting. During this time I have prepared 137 letters for you, and left them with people who will send them to you every month. This is No. 138, and unfortunately the last. But when you receive it, you will be exactly forty-five years old, and M., with whom you betrayed me, will no longer be willing to marry you after a year's widowhood, as he would certainly have done eleven and a half years earlier. I die perfectly satisfied with the thought that I have prevented you from legitimising your infidelity by marriage." The insensate jealousy of a dying man thus caused the poor woman to imagine that she was betraying her husband, when he had been

eleven years dead already, and yet not dead. Since her lover had also died a fortnight before the arrival of letter No. 138, the lady found herself in highly ambiguous mourning.

The tragedies of jealousy are more instinct than any others with the element of comedy. When Lord A. heard that his wife had just left him with a lover, he hastily sent his carriage after them—considering it unseemly for a Lady A. to drive in a hired vehicle.

A banker who was away in London heard that his wife in Vienna was driving out every day with her lover, and always had the best horses in the stable harnessed for her use. So he made his servant write to the coachman that he was to take out the old chestnuts instead, since they were quite good enough for the purpose. Among the tragedies of jealousy, with their eternally similar accompaniment of murder and suicide, we must not lose sight of the sublimer variations so oppositely shown in the behaviour of these two gentlemen; for they really promote morality.

CHASTITY

WHOEVER supposes that Amfortas was an easy prey to Kundry does not think much of women, and believes that the whole of female art is expressed in a few movements of the body and sidelong glances, and that these are more than enough to achieve the victory which is their object. Amfortas may be presented in a hopelessly ludicrous situation, and taken anything but seriously. And this will always be done, according as we assume the reality of experience, and call Amfortas by an ordinary name. But in the metaphysical personality, not only all possibilities but all conceptions must be regarded as logically real.

Every lover exaggerates the qualities and characteristics of his mistress; as we say, he reads his own ideas into her. Besides, all men, in another sense, grow into and in woman, invade her, as air invades a vacuum. Many of a man's secrets a woman knows by instinct, and the remainder she lures out of him in those moments of weakness which only men have; these are

the hours of a woman's strength. She lures his secrets from him by making herself the prize, or does what comes to the same thing, for in women's opinion that prize is a fiction of men. Thus a woman is the guardian of a man's riddles. He stands before her, as it were before his own obscurity of ideas, shuddering and astounded. We cannot hear the sound of our own voices, we grow delirious when we hear them, and seek delirium in order that we may hear them.

Amfortas was the last but one of a long line, which perhaps began with a poet, or with the "next best"; since young girls often have no resource except another man, whereby to reach the man they want. Parsifal was the last of the line, unless he began a new one, which might be called the cerebral line. For men, who were formerly nothing but passion, are now nothing but intellect; their smooth, hard foreheads are like stones, from which it is the delight of women to strike fire.

The ascetic saints who retire into the desert have a fragile sanctity. The assaults of their day-dreams are stronger than all the temptations of earthly nights, that glisten in the moonlight and bathe in fragrance. Scourges discipline the soul, but stimulate the blood. Ascetics are weakly sensualists.

Amfortas developed the curious antithesis of his position into a philosophy of some bromidic effect. His brain contrived a whole arsenal against the fiend in his blood, whose craving was so fantastic that he personified it as Anteros, and endowed it with all the strength and power of this world—*diabolus in lumbis.* His heated phantasy invented strange words for it, to protect him with the horror of their sound. And the opponents grew as they confronted one another. Secretly, behind the back of his senseless-sensual demon of desire, Amfortas built ramparts and moats against the enemy, a steep castle on a craggy height, and he went on building himself in, stronger and closer, with his lusty enemy. Amfortas imagined himself pure spirituality already, but when they came to close quarters it was he who succumbed. He lost the spear, and the wound remained. The unphilosophical brute, Klingsor, who was looking on, laughed till he cried.

Just as kindness is preached by the cruel who find no joy in cruelty, and cruelty by those who are kind and yet not happy, so is the man angry with anticipated anger against the woman he loves, because every woman loved is his future enemy. It is clear that Amfortas only so resisted the female because he loved it. But since

he was a Christian neo-Platonist, and worshipped the Idea, he complicated the matter. He hoped for love without any cessation of mechanical activity, and for permanent desire, lasting separation, and eternal joy in the moment of reunion. He quite approved of separate bedrooms—with a glass wall, and without a door. Stars that shine afar off, seen near, are but plump and portly trifles. The distant Woman turns, close at hand, into Mrs. X. To the Woman a man can pray with abandon, but Mrs. X. demands the authorised version.

Amfortas made of his heart a murderer's den. He thought he could render himself extremely unattractive and repulsive by wearing a hairy garment, eating locusts, and not shaving, like Austrians on their travels. With all his wisdom, he was such a child as not to know that what he meant for coldest discouragement, acted as the strongest temptation. For philosophy (even pure mathematics) has sex for Kundry. And Amfortas was, like Weininger, only an ordinary psychologist concerning women, that is to say, utterly ignorant. The one step that would have delivered him from all his troubles and placed him beyond all desire, he never took.

To borrow from Philosophy: Death, even the partial kind referred to here, settles no dif-

rences, for it removes one of the parties, nd with him therefore all possibility of moral ain. Besides, it is not only Lucretia who anted to know Tarquin first, before she stabbed rself.

Kundry always assumes the complementary olour of the man whom she wishes to seize pon. The man may invent for himself the most accessible position, but the woman will always nd the place immediately, and establish her minine nature there, as a matter of course. he *nuance* in Amfortas's case seemed a delicate c. For that very reason, the attempt was at- ctive; every effort assumed an air of grandeur. at is to say, they were, in this case, primitive Nature herself, for to be like Nature is the hest attainment of women in the eyes of men. ter, when it was Kundry's task to tempt the re fool, she appeared before him pale, with a llor confected by the essences of all the cen- ies. For Parsifal she lay on a flowery couch, d the luxuriant flowers which were her maidens, ered to her wax-red mouth with gorgeous stiff arel. But to Amfortas she came a brown, shy d of the woods, almost an animal. From ind a wild thorn-bush, clad in tatters, through ch gleamed her firm, bronzed flesh, she crept ss the way, that led him over the short pass

of unconsciousness into the long, dreary valley
piteous tears. For Kundry, the rambler, ten
tress above all others, denied him the return
his first inebriation—and so, the former light
no longer a star, "the feminine" became a wom
and love the iron garotte of lust, and no lon
a flowery wreath of desire or a cloud image
the idea. So, on the recollection of that shini
ideal mirror, fell the dark shadows of experien
and defiled it; and Amfortas wept for the spoil
of his fair career. To him did not belong stren
to take refuge with his sanctity in evil sanctifi
for Satanity is only attainable by strength,
of necessity; and Amfortas possessed insig
but not strength, just as Parsifal had holin
without wisdom. Parsifal was only wise throu
sympathy, and sympathy is an impulse,
genius acts, not on impulse, but of set purp
The hour will certainly come when Parsifal
ask Kundry, whom he has endowed with the sec
of his sympathy, why she no longer wears
garments that she once wore in the flow
meadow? Alas, how quickly she will ring
her maid!

Yes, chastity is an instrument against Eros,
since the instrument itself comes from Eros,
use will not produce new melodies, it will o
vary the old ones. A chaste man is a perman

temptation to women; no desert is wide enough to hinder them from finding him. He who thought himself alone, lives in a harem, where the handkerchief is thrown to him from a thousand hands, and he is buried under a mountain of batiste, cambric, and lace.

FEELINGS

To have extraordinary feelings, and express them violently, is a vulgar habit, like the use of superlatives; it increases in proportion as the capacity for feeling decreases. In our time, wherever such explosions occur, they are ridiculous, tedious, or dangerous, and generally not genuine. Take the case of uncontrolled grief over a death; the survivor hastens to seize the rare opportunity of fully exhibiting his sensitiveness.

It is an abuse, and also shows a false sense of value, when a man threatens his mistress with a revolver because she prefers some one else. A mad dog causes far greater excitement than a dying man. Who will hold his sides with laughter even at the most amusing play? A straw tickling the soles of the feet produces a much stronger effect. But every man must contrive to be peculiar, so he pushes and jostles his way out of the crowd, with his joys and sorrows, in order to distinguish himself from others. It is sentimental snobbishness when each individual

claims to possess unusually strong, violent, and peculiar feelings. "No woman will ever love you as I do," and "You can never be so happy with another man as you are with me"—all such stories, down to the *roman passionel*, and up to the most unusual sentimental incidents, only show bad taste, vulgarity, fear of the commonplace; they are stupid attempts to appear important. In them, every emotion is expressed by the wrong word or gesture. A drama is mounted, but a little dog spoils the whole. I once knew a young man with a consumptive mistress, who had a little muff-dog called Affi. I was the host of this *larmoyant ménage*, when one night the woman had a hæmorrhage, and was put to bed, unconscious. The lover sat up with her to nurse her, and the little dog lay at the foot of the bed. Next morning, when I received no answer to my knock, I went into the room. The poor woman in the bed lay with dropped jaw. Half sitting on the floor near the bed was the man, holding the dead woman's hand, and snoring. Affi had jumped up, and was barking. When he recognised me, he stopped barking, sniffed at the man's head on the edge of the bed, and bit his nose. Thus the little beast readjusted the situation, which threatened to exceed the bounds of the common-

place. Thus it rehearsed a striking if somewhat too pointed epilogue on the abundance of feeling shown by the pair of lovers, who had always thought themselves very extraordinary and very splendid.

As for artists and fools, their madness is their livelihood, but the ordinary man never departs far from the commonplace without risk and annoyance to himself and others. Excessive sentimentality generally destroys all real feeling, and fails to call forth any response from the feelings of other people.

DELILAH

Nearly allied to the perversity which makes a woman fall in love with a tenor (a thing that may often happen), is the error which attracts her towards poets. In the first case she believes in the padded hero's heroism in all the situations of life, even after he has perspired through a performance and rubbed off his paint at the end of it. In the case of poets the sentiment is only superficially more complex; in reality, the woman is here also the victim of an illusion. Here, too, she imagines that the Intensive must naturally be traceable extensively also, and that this Extension is the splendid lot that falls to her. She thinks that poets are made for her, and she for poets. But this is a flattering mistake, for a woman underrates greatness, or despises it as useless, or hates it as cruel. She cannot realise that she alone does not satisfy the poet's imagination, and that it may be far removed from her. The roving genius attracts her. She thinks that she will be his muse, and becomes his most

faithful public or impresario, like Mrs. E. H., who proves to all who do not want to know, that her husband is a poet. The poor woman has long ago awakened from her short double illusion of a poet and a lover-poet, and now sacrifices herself in despair to a shadow; for what else is she to do?

What an awakening!—the Duchess of Albany's, on the death of Alfieri, whose muse she imagined herself to be, and whose victim she was! She came from the house, where she had shut herself in with him for decades, stept out into the sun, and chafed her hands: how cold it was within! And that was a love against which the world had set itself, which had persisted against the world.

Beatrice! lily-white symbol of dawn to a dark life! An age in which no Dante is possible, and hence no Beatrice, will, at its best, achieve nothing more than the lady who used to visit poor young poets, like a crumpled fairy. She would remain a short while, rustle her skirts, and then begone. But she left behind her, besides her perfume, a valuable solitaire or some other jewel, as if by mistake. Of course, the poor young man would never restore the valuable object; he would sell it, even if he felt rather uncomfortable in doing so; he would then be able to complete

his great poem without anxiety, and become rich, and famous . . . so the lady imagined. But it never happened except as regards the sale of the jewel. In this way she got rid of a great deal of jewelry, but her dream of a celebrated genius, faultlessly attired, walking in one day and saying, "I owe all to you!" was not realised. Perhaps this lady was only a slight variation of the Mænad of fame—a very familiar type—who desires neither the man nor the poet, but simply her own notoriety by means of her companion's. She is not a woman at all, but a monstrosity, and so no more of her.

But the Delilah of the Philistines is perhaps the most striking symbol of women's desire to shear the locks of genius. She does not want to share his fame, nor be his muse, nor his public, nor his wife. What she wants is to destroy the poet's solidarity, which excites her like a young monk's vow of chastity. She wants tc be stronger than this demon monster, which abstracts the poet, so that he lets all around him despair and perish, for the divine need of a verse. The artist's isolation is woman's greatest rival. If she could only prevail over that! . . .

But the Marquise di Pescara was never Michael Angelo's mistress, and Raphael, who is supposed

to have died over his Fornarina, held in his failing hands, not the hand of his mistress, but his brush.

He whose locks were shorn was no genius, but a general; and if the like ever happened to a poet, he must have been but a bald one already.

MARRIAGE

[illegible]HE oldest chief of a clan, in war or at the chase, [illegible]cognised the sons of pure blood by their light-[illegible]arted valour and lively spirit, and the bastards [illegible] doubtful descent by their lack of those distinc-[illegible]ons. The desire to preserve purity of blood, [illegible]d transmit it to all descendants, determined the [illegible]an's choice from among the women. Debase-[illegible]nt of the blood by unfaithfulness cost the culprit [illegible] head. The man's occasional passion for a slave [illegible] not affect marriage, for the slave's children [illegible]re bastards in any case, and therefore base.

[illegible]ersonal bravery and physical beauty are [illegible] held in lower esteem than cunning and all [illegible]ds of mental agility—that is to say, bastard-[illegible]lities. The sport is for the astonished spec-[illegible]ors. Whether marriage has declined under [illegible]se modern forces, or whether, on the contrary, [illegible] lamentable decline has established the pre-[illegible]nence of bastards, may be determined accord-[illegible] to taste. In any case, the talent for making [illegible]ney on the Stock Exchange does not depend [illegible] pure ancestry endowed with a similar talent.

The former distinctions of rank are now nothin
but distinctions of wealth; in so-called progressi
countries, like the United States, even distinctio
of culture now mean only distinctions of mone
In Europe things have not gone quite so f
yet. At any rate, marriage nowadays is primari
a pure matter of business. That the wares do n
always, as in Turkey, remain the property of t
purchaser, but sometimes pass into other han
through unfaithfulness, or change their owner b
means of divorce, are facts so frequent that
have become morally quite indifferent to them
and children laugh at them in the theatres. Man
a husband seems to think that the contract of ma
riage includes unfaithfulness, not always solely h
own. He avoids absurdity himself as long
possible, by laughing at Menelaus. When there
a public scandal and he can no longer do that, h
shoots himself, or gets a divorce; that is all. Th
annulment of monogamous marriage by merel
going through a few formalities, entirely doe
away with the idea on which it is founded. Onl
one thing more is needed practically to rid th
world of it altogether: the abolition of dowrie
Couples would then be constrained to remai
faithful to one another from inherent nobility o
feeling, and curb their unruly instincts from a sens
of duty to the race. Thus the man would say, "

not betray a woman who bears my name," the woman, "I will bear children to no man this one." Logic, we see, leads to Utopia.

he shameful system of money-marriages began er Louis XIV., who ruined the provincial lity by attracting them to his court. A hun- years later, the elder Mirabeau drew atten- to the havoc this policy had caused. The ns, who were forced to make rich marriages to le them to live at court, used to call the om *fumer ses terres.* And another hundred later, marriages for money became a matter urse, not even requiring cynical excuses. The has confirmed this, by treating marriage as a mercial contract, and divorce as the termina- of a partnership, and by protecting the ests of the children with regard to their cial position.

the comedy is played. The deceived hus- at whom every one laughs; the faithless sure of every one's sympathies; the friend lives irresponsibly in what is nothing but a ng-house of paid pleasure,—enjoys the com- of the wife, the husband's cigars, his shooting, is absurdity,—delights every one, as cunning s does. The betrayed husband is banker to fe, who gives her love to another *gratis.*

France a law was passed, forbidding a

divorced woman to marry the co-respondent. "Thank God!" said the lovers, and continued without restraint, paying the sixteen-franc fines for *flagrant délit*. But just imagine a law, that the adulterer must marry the divorced woman—that is to say, become his wife's banker and sooner or later her Menelaus! "Fly with me and be my wife," is the sentimentality of fiction. Not more than one faithless woman in a hundred is prepared to give up her obliging banker in order to begin fresh dealings with a conceivably mistrustful confederate. There is then no appreciable difference between the professional courtesan and the woman who betrays her husband without leaving him, because he provides her with all the comforts of life—the real difference is, that the faithless wife lies, while the other woman is perfectly honest. And yet, all this is only a *bêtise* of social criticism.

To measure and condemn the present time by the code of a chivalrous past is indeed idle pedantry, but it is a sign of incapacity to take a comfortable refuge in an artificial future humanity, and from thence bitterly revile the house in which we actually live. To recognise and criticise a state of affairs is not to abolish it, and does not generally even mean that we regulate our own lives accordingly.

The people of to-day only demand respect for their masks. For the most part they are of unhonoured race, and unpleasing aspect, and they know it, for they inwardly address one another as they would dogs. Let us acquiesce in their demand courteously, as it were with the long staves that heralds used, to keep back the crowd from the sovereign. Courtesy creates the widest distance, and is the only method of living to oneself, without annoyance, in the midst of any kind of democracy. That we talk morality and avoid ethics, that we demand manners and not duties of a higher order, that we are, in a word, Castiglione and not Ekkehard, this proves the power of all sorts of democracy, even over individualists, and it is our ideology to persist in regarding society as consisting of many individuals.

Then do not let us say, after the manner of Cato, that the modern money-marriage, with or without unfaithfulness, is no marriage at all—for vice is as stupid as virtue. Rather let us say that it is a theme for rhetoric, and leave every one a right to his own stupidity: the husband, to dishonour; the wife, to her place of assignation; and the friend, to the husband's wife. The operetta has no less merit than the sanguinary dramas of police reports.

SUPERIORITY

A QUITE inexperienced young girl once said: "It is a delightful idea that I have it in my power one day to make a man's happiness." She received from a philosopher the following answer: "And how worthless will that man then seem to you, for the very reason that you, a woman, could make his happiness!"

A man is very proud of being able to philosophise, and places a woman below himself, because the philosopher is dearer to her than philosophy; because she does not want to be loved for eternity, but for a long time; because she merely wants to travel to Nice, and not to the moon; because she is practical, and not theoretical.

The accomplishments of men are many, the accomplishment of women is only one—to be wholly women—and that means to have absolutely nothing whatever of the man in them, not even the capacity for thought. "Il est plus important pour une femme de savoir assembler deux nuances d'étoffes que deux idées."

Superiority

If comparisons could be made, then the complete woman would have precedence of the complete man; for she is closer to life, even under the refinements of culture; and we measure things by life. When man, the dreary complement of women, is opposed to her, she shows at once her whole nature, her splendid feline energy. We need her near us, we need her claws, that we may not become inhuman.

The superiority of woman is, that she introduces into life the requisite element of error. Hence, we can never be too positive, thank God!

MODESTY

CERTAIN people, entangled in doubtful ethical terms, think that a woman's modesty increases with her beauty. They have lost the use of their eyes, for the reverse is the fact. If anything else besides training, taste, and tact can increase the modesty of a woman, which up to a certain moment is natural to her, it is certainly not the consciousness of beauty, but rather of some physical defect. A light woman must be beautiful, and it is not her profession but her beauty that makes her immodest. How, then, can the result of a physical advantage be considered objectionable? It is the nature of beauty to be less modest than ugliness. The immodesty of ugly women, when it does occur, lacks sufficient reason, and is therefore indecent.

PASSION

WHEN our pride, our pride as men (for that is the only kind there is), must be humbled, and a penalty must be exacted for our excessive joy, our insolence in liberty, then this punishment, humiliation, becomes a sensual emotion. The penalty is paid with our soul's blood; the humiliation is the portal to Hell. The voluptuous know nothing of passion. They commit sacrilege against the god whom they believe they serve. The pure know more from what they know not than the voluptuous from their practice. The passion of love is emotion without works. The voluptuous seek satisfaction; but the passionate know that death follows after. In them the flesh becomes heart. Nothing wearies them: neither custom, satiety, tedium, nor disgrace. Their year is one long, feverish spring; we must ever look its glowing splendours in the face.

The passions of women only suffer from want; short satisfaction irritates their long desires.

The suffering of man is acuter, for, try as he may, he can never become animal enough in this paradise, which is Hell.

A woman suffers when she is alone. A man suffers when he cannot be alone. Out of his solitude he must follow the smile, the call, the beckoning hand. He must spurn his own life from him. He must go forward, with the dreadful certainty of his loss, to find in that loss his only happiness. The hangman, Passion, has four helpers, who drag the struggling man down into the dark court: they are Thought, Desire, Fear, Despair.

Why are you cold? Do you not stand in the fiery furnace of passion, in the fierce heat of your desire? And yet you cry out with the cold! Do not think that passion is the evil in you whereof you may become guiltless. . . . Passion has this in common with religion, namely, the belief that it can sin against itself. Suffering is purification. In the timeless moments of abandonment, a woman shuts her eyes, so that she may not be seen, as if she desired to protect herself from the completeness of her surrender. A man frowns and shuts his eyes to everything; he sinks, he is ready for night and death. . . . And afterwards, by day, words halt between them, they avoid each other, and one another's touch. They feel

strange; they may say, "We are in love," but what they know is, "We are damned."

Oh, my dear friend, read this very cursorily, that you may not remember it. Our hearts are not strong enough for us to see death behind our love. Some are chosen for the purpose, and they bear a sign. But your meeting eyebrows are not that sign, nor is the dimple in your left cheek when you laugh. And your husband will assure you every week that . . .

MOTHERS

A CHILDLESS woman interprets no mystery. Her aims are human conceptions, originating and perishing with her. Only a fruitful marriage is a sacrament—that is to say, something beyond our comprehension, bound by invisible threads to eternity. The mother guards the great inheritance; she gives her child the power of smiling and of speech. She does not only bear her child, she creates him.

The sympathy which we men always have for women, and women never have for men, arises from the feeling that is always in us: "My mother gave her life for me, in pain, and sleepless nights." Our love for women we owe to our mothers. I say "love," for that term includes sensual passion, and has the wider meaning; it endows the woman we love with the dignity which we know from our mothers. Without it, all is confusion in woman; mind and soul are disunited, evil passions and despair alternately dominate the poor creature who has loved without the dignity of love. . . .

Is it not well known that great sensualists are afraid of sensuality?—for it always ends badly with them. St. Bernard called it the "Saccus" of mortality. Hence comes the struggle of man against the wild beast in woman, which is nothing but Lust, and is covered all over with a mane. The man does not enter the cage where the beast slinks and prowls, fascinated by its own fawning, to deprive it of the smoking breath which scorches it, nor to extract the claws which wound it. He must bind it fast, or it will tear him to pieces. Its fiery breath, its claws, its fawning he never takes from it. He binds the beast, and loves it while he binds it, for he is his mother's son. Love includes lust. If he does not love the beast it will tear him to pieces. Hence, great sensualists are afraid of sensuality.

FIDELITY

Every evening at seven, the woman who is called "The Widow of the Calle Paradiso" comes out of the Merceria, goes slowly past the cathedral, and strolls under the arcades of the new law-court — a pale, slim person, with undefined features rendered still more indistinct by two red patches on her cheeks, which she has applied hastily in the dark passage of the house. She carries on her calling passively, without solicitation, awaiting with resignation what the night may bring her. She is always dressed entirely in black. None of the loiterers, who all know her as "The Widow of the Calle Paradiso," has seen her for years wearing any other colour.

One evening, years ago, a German couple on their wedding tour were mounting the steps of the hotel. They were one of those many couples who trail through Italy their reciprocal boredom, and their intimacy mingled with complete mutual ignorance. The man was seized with an obscure feeling of horror at the strange woman his wife, walking so wearily in front of him to duty or

pleasure, as the case might be. Perhaps he was tired of the oft-repeated words, and wanted a solitary breathing-space, or perhaps he spoke the truth, for he said that he wanted to buy some cigars, and would return immediately.

He soon lost himself in the narrow streets, and there he met a girl who caught him by his cloak, saying, "Milordo." He followed her. At the last house in the Calle Paradiso she entered the doorway, which was close to the canal. A railing now prevents a false step such as the German took that evening—or perhaps he took it on purpose. At any rate, he sank immediately, and since the water is deep there and he wore a heavy cloak, he was taken out dead. They carried him to a *farmacia*, where papers were found on him indicating his name and address, and word was sent to the hotel. After a short while his wife arrived. Screaming as if demented, she threw herself on the body, kissing it, and crying out, "How did it happen? how did it happen?" Then the girl stepped forward a little and said the few words necessary. What the wife had before bathed with her tears she now spat upon, and then departed without another word. She deposited at the hotel money for the transport of the body, and left by the next train to return home to her mamma.

But the following evening, the girl came out of the Merceria, dressed in mourning, and she has worn mourning since that day, faithful to a stranger, because his wife spat on what she had but just embraced. This is why she is called "The Widow of the Calle Paradiso."

. . . .

Without feeling any diminution of his love for Marie, Andreas suddenly felt a longing for Gelasire, and try as he might to overcome it, it was too late. When he looked at Marie his heart contracted, and life without her seemed an eternal mourning, but without Gelasire it seemed like death. He saw too that Gelasire loved him in return. He could not forget the one without betraying the other, for they both loved him. Whichever he chose, he was bound to lose; whatever he did would be a crime. So the women lived in disquiet, and he in despair. Gelasire was ashamed of the robbery from her friend; Marie was jealous on Andreas's behalf, for she saw that he was unhappy and preoccupied.

Then one day Gelasire left the house secretly. The other two were not surprised, and it was as if they joined hands in the hope of oblivion. But it did not last long. No news came of Gelasire. The image of the absent woman grew clearer, and Andreas made comparisons. Then

all at once it came upon him painfully that Marie was less dear to him, that he loved her less than Gelasire, for whom his desire increased with absence. One night he held Marie in his arms, but he thought only of Gelasire; and when he realised the horror of it, he left the trembling woman, weeping for sorrow and shame. Marie whispered to him sadly—

"Andreas, why are you so unhappy?"

Then he felt that he would die if she opposed his happiness.

"What is it? You must know that I would do anything for you!"

"There is only one thing that I want, and that you can never consent to."

"Are you so sure of that?" So saying, she drew him towards her trembling, for he did not believe what she was saying, until at last, once, quite softly, slipped out the word "Gelasire"; then there was a silence; and then she said—

"You love her, do you not, Andreas?"

"Yes, yes; I think only of her, Marie!"

Never before had Andreas been so thrilled by Marie as on that strange night, when she thus triumphed over jealousy, and he embraced her, completely possessed and benumbed by her, with a superhuman, incomprehensible passion. Yet

he did not forget the other woman, and felt strange towards his wife the next morning.

A few days passed, when one evening he met both women in the garden. Marie asked: "Must I leave you?" He pressed her in his arms, and the tender Gelasire, too, begged her to stay. When Gelasire parted from them both a year later, they knew what true love is.

. . . . . .

In some such words as these, the painter Max Arthur Stremel told me the first story, and somehow thus I found the second written in an old manuscript.

Constancy in love, then, seems to be regardless of the incident of physical contact, provided love contains, beside sensuality, that inexpressible, incomprehensible something, which we divine, and seek by all the ways of our senses; for we have no other way for knocking at the door of the body, that the soul may open to us.

The incident of the widow borders on the ridiculous, the other on the frivolous; yet the absurdity and the frivolity are only for those who will never allow themselves such expansion of the bounds of their circumstances, and therefore generally distrust and dislike it.

THE EXCHANGE

Mr. M.'s wife found her husband was all that she wanted: a very correct man, if somewhat fat, always attentive to his wife's wishes, and always ready to fulfil them without a word. Her wishes lay in spending money on various objects—jewelry, dress, establishment, horses, or entertaining. She was no ordinary woman in this respect, in that she not only considered the statement "Money is everything" a highly inspired remark, but she quite honestly believed it, and lived up to it. She had no ideas whatever and less feeling; her beauty was a figurehead. At the risk of impoliteness, she must be called a goose.

She asked me to recommend a tutor for her boy, a child of seven, and I sent her a young man whom she engaged. He was remarkably well versed in all the duties of such a position. In other respects, he was but a poor devil, far from prepossessing, with a spotted face, large red hands, and two left feet—indeed, anything but the tutor-hero of a domestic romance.

This individual immediately fell in love with the lady. He held long conversations with her, and was full of admiration for her "soul" and her subtle intellect. The lady grew thoughtful. Her devotees had long become tedious to her by their ravings over her physical attractions, which she took for granted. Now it was quite a different matter! And this was not a manœuvre of the spotted tutor's, but mere honest simplicity. Of course, sentimental language was the easiest in which this timid lover could express his feelings, but he spoke in good faith, and without any intention of employing a means of seduction; for Mrs. M. was transported by the love of a man who discovered a soul in her, and herself led him on to the point of declaring his affections.

She became another woman. She began to be ashamed of her wealth, or rather of the way in which she lived for it. She developed feelings, romance, and "soul" (so to say) through this love-affair, which lasted during the whole two years that the man was tutor in the house. When he left it, without his mistress, he had become a cold, calculating man, with a hard expression and a firm determination to make himself rich: "Money is everything." He succeeded, and he is now manager of a big bank,

and the terror of all who have any dealings with him.

Love exchanged their souls. He became, through his love, what the lady had been; she became what the sentimental youth had been; for in her choice of all the lovers with whom she afterwards supplemented her "too prosaic" husband, she remained true to her converted self—she only chose those who could understand her feelings and accompany her on her higher flights.

THE ARTISTIC TASTE OF THE TIME

The artistic demands of the present day become more and more sensational, and eliminate more and more strictly the purely imaginative, or reduce it to the level of logical comprehension. This is the case in all those theatrical pieces which unfold a so-called problem, but really a "current event" from the newspapers, by a fable in dialogue. I see clearly that people no longer have the patience to let these theatrical problems evolve for two hours and a half, considering that *Simplizissimus* puts the whole case in a jest of three lines. So poets and theatrical managers must invent something else.

The silent, sensational pieces of the kinetoscope, plays *à la* Sherlock Holmes, elaborate spectacles, artistically simple dramas, problem novels, little songs of lesser poets sung in a cabaret, grand opera, certain symphonic poems, are all mere varieties of the forms of expression demanded at the moment, but they are not really expressive

and do not supply the artistic demand. The feeling which prompts this is of a more sensitive kind, and profits to the utmost by the abolition of all artistic limitations, and the consequent diminution of technique. Artistic enjoyment is Passion become Intellect, but "Intellect" does not necessarily signify "Intelligence." The intellect is entirely expended on life as it grows more complicated, so the nerves only are left for art.

There are two mediums which render to the nerves the best and fullest service—music in its present development, and the theatre. That the latest efforts in *décor* arise from a stronger interest in the drama, can only be maintained by one ignorant that the drama of the stage presupposes a uniform society—the populace in the case of the ancients, the court in the case of the old English drama and Racine. As a matter of fact, exactly the reverse is the case: there is a diminished interest in the drama, implying an increased interest in the actor; and the sensation of the spectacle, the actor, and the green-room, which has replaced that lost interest, encourages managers to perform those scenic feats which do not expand the dramatic stage, but have distorted its meaning.

Moreover, the average theatrical public—a

discordant crowd collected together before the unity of a work—is the worst and, artistically speaking, the crudest judge, as indeed can be inferred from the pieces played oftenest. People with more sensitive feelings and sounder judgment have long since ceased going to the theatres, as much on account of the audience as of the stage.

The stage, unfortunately, cannot yet dispense altogether with the spoken word, and therefore makes some intellectual demands, however modest these may usually be. But it is music which goes further in providing nervous sensibility with a stimulant to all kinds of indistinct feelings, for, although itself formed by thought, music is yet not instinct with thought. It becomes more and more the art of such as are ill provided by fate. For hours, it is to them a thrilling consolation and an illusive happiness, in spite of uncomfortable concert-stalls and the close proximity of a crowd. Nowhere is there so much deformed, ugly, unfortunate, damaged humanity to be seen as in a concert-room, all seeking to forget through the medium of music, and, for a while, forgetting. The new music—not "Tristan," nor Brahms, nor Wolf, nor Otto Vrieslander, nor Reger, but all the rest—is therefore full of this ugliness, full of enmity against the straight line, in order to apply more powerful stimulants to dull sensation, and

to make a fuller interpretation possible through the instincts. It charms cripples into heroes, and old maids into heroines of romance; but only to those who refuse to admit the inward influence of music does it seem so oppressively banal, so tasteless and obvious, so turgid and spasmodic, so crude and formless.

This development of the stage and of music threatens two institutions, the circus and the music-hall. Already mimic plays are to be seen in the former, and trick-riders in the latter. Boundaries are being effaced; there hardly remains as much order as in a warehouse; everything is to be found in one department. But who buys?

Poor poets! they grow rarer every day. Soon they will have died out. But it appears people cannot do without them, so they take refuge in calling every playwright a poet, either in order to conceal their shame at admiring a mere purveyor of jests or tears, or else from infatuation with their own intellectuality.

THE MORAL ILLUSION

I WILL assume, in common with certain uneducated journalists, the actual existence of what they call "the æsthete," that is to say, of the man who bears no other relation to life than the æsthetic, and puts on it a purely artistic value. Some day this æsthete discovers that ethical problems are beginning to take up their position hard on the boundaries of the purely artistic world which he has conceived. At first he wonders that such a thing should be possible; then these problems block out the finest view from his highest outlook, and he is annoyed. Then he is overcome by doubt and curiosity. What if there should be some error in the æsthetic view of life? So he abandons his realm and lives as a simple, private individual in the other, the ethical realm. Æsthetic egoism has received a slight shock, and the egoist betakes himself to the category of ethics. There he makes this discovery, that what he had taken to be a realm in itself, namely, the realm of

morality, is nothing but the connecting hinterland to his æsthetic realm, which thus stretches to the boundaries of life; and he makes a note of what follows, in his book of travels.

Something or other induces us to seek the meaning and relation of our life in ethics, and to characterise ethics as the essential life. But ethics are neither an End nor a solution; they are a Means. They are to life what the plot is to a play, the subject to a picture, the theme to a poem, namely, the Means of variety in form. Without ethics, form, which is life, would undergo no variation, and would die out; for form is the very being of things, and the only solution. Ethics owe their utility as a formative Means to their illusionary existence.

Now, what causes ethics to be thus invested with the character of an End and a solution, and given the dominant *rôle* in life? It is the interest of the drama. For we are playing a drama, and we only know ourselves as players in masks. But the drama requires us to take our disguise "in earnest"; that is why we play so thoroughly and so "naturally." This illusion is the result of our erection of the ethical Means into an End in itself. The comparison between "the true" and "the beautiful" which is made in the interests of the drama—that is to say, of

variety in form—is an æsthetic Means. But we have reasons, dramatic reasons, for declaring the ethical Means to be the End of our existence. We must act as if we were playing for the sake of the plot, else there would be a gap in the piece, as if the impersonator of Schiller's Posa were to take it into his head to leave the stage suddenly in the middle of his speech to the King. It would do away with the illusion. The same disturbance would occur in life if the illusion of the ethical End were not respected.

Æsthetic enjoyment—the Passion-Intellect—caused by a Greek tragedy does not become moral suffering, when life presents a similar tragedy, after the fall of the curtain. Suffering in life, after a restless search for expression, finds it in form—prayer or imprecation, thought or handiwork—and is thereby solved. Despair is only a gesture; even the desperate know no more of it than its formal expression.

The ethical Means produced the extreme forms—Borgia and Francis of Assisi. Such formal solutions are the only definite ones which we have. The ethical Means follows changes of time, fashion, and taste, and finds its utility in those changes, but illusion endows it all the time with the inseparable quality of an aim in itself, and a self-contained End. For otherwise there would

be no drama of life, no plot in the piece, no object that produces colour. Whether the plot be invented by a nation, a school, or an individual is immaterial.

The ethical Means branches off into individual moral Means, owing to the need of form for greater variety in form. Such moral codes will always be frequent when there is no really controlling class, and society is disintegrating. But if, at any period, this moral split becomes too wide, if the ethical Means is threatened with dissolution into many moral Means, the object of each moral Means, to re-create an illusion, will be all the more difficult, seeing that these codes often cancel each other; then a strong revulsion to ethics will appear. The Ethos of Christianity thus opposed the morality of later antiquity, and the Ethos of the Reformation the morality of the Catholic Church. Thus the "grain of truth is saved" from religions and philosophies; Monistic Leagues and Goethe Societies are founded; and corroboration of the ethical Means is sought in fresh knowledge, such as scientific discovery. All this signifies that we resist morality for the sake of the Ethos, in order to establish more firmly our illusion that the Ethos is an End in itself.

It is obviously difficult to make the plot of

a fifty-act play clear. The actors lose the interminable thread, and so act plays within the play, because they can take more liberties with morality than with the Ethos. Thus there is a continual tendency to increase the formative power of the ethical Means by splitting it up into moral systems; a continual danger of thereby losing it as our illusionary End in life; and a continual effort to re-establish and confirm the inseparable and final character of ethics—the "universal human," "the humanistic," "the purely ethical." Otherwise there can be no proper drama.

There are some players in the drama of life to whom are assigned the duties of manager and inspector, who have to see that we actors all regard the ethical Means as the End, so that the drama may preserve the seriousness necessary to enable us to continue it. But each player, more or less, keeps watch over the others as well, and must do so that they may play in unison. The appointed inspectors range from police agents to the pundits of Monism. The rules of the drama, which ordain that the Means shall be regarded as the End, are laid down in codes of law, creeds, ethical treatises, and official speeches. Besides this, they are spread by oral circulation and injunction. He who disturbs the

unison is punished in the drama with evil report, abuse, imprisonment, or murder. He is only punished dramatically; for even his disturbance assists the action and is even sometimes provoked, as I am doing now. But the Means, which illusion makes into an End, will bear anything—for the sake of variety in form.

We permit ourselves a smile at an ancient *répertoire* and a worn-out plot, but we always emphasise the absolute character of ethics. We leave the moral chips, and cling to the trunk of the Ethos. But the *répertoire* that we play, we take very seriously, and we are forced to do so, for we dare not do away with the ethical illusion, or we fall, and lie motionless; and form is destroyed. Only one thing can do away with the illusion, because that thing is stronger than we, namely, death, which is formlessness.

I acknowledge that the drama is in the right. I see it, and must acknowledge it. But that is a very far-reaching fatalism. The doctrine derivable from it might run thus: "Differentiate your Means, that is, ethics, so that your form may be enriched at any rate by this one variety, the joy you feel in it."

Certainly it must be admitted that there are only finite solutions, such as form, and that our

conception of the infinite is conditioned by these finite solutions.

Without regarding the ethical Means as an End, we cannot attain the End of life, namely, form with its modifications; we should never find a solution; and without a solution, not only would everything appear meaningless to us, but we should immediately die. Everything else that we call a Means we suspect, because we have recognised it as a Means from the very beginning. But the power of the ethical Means over the others is absolute, for it is we ourselves who transform it into an End, so that we may not lose it as a Means, and with it our drama, which is our life.

For there are other Means besides, which vary the form of life, but we always recognise them as a Means. Invention is one; art is one; wealth is one; and there are others. But we always know that they are Means only.

We prize everything that exists according to the penetration, the power, and the peculiarity of its forms, although we look for power, peculiarity, and the "meaning of the whole" in the Ethos alone, and are obliged to act as if the whole were established for the sake of ethics. In this, we are just like an ignorant man who prizes the picture of a ham for the sake of the

illusion of the ham, or who watches a play so seriously that he warns innocence against the villain, from his seat in the gallery.

Not until people and things have long since ceased to play their parts, and become history, are we inclined to regard them "merely æsthetically," and to preface a reference to one of these former actors with the words *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. We should call the man a foolish pedant who should write a big book on Cæsar Borgia, and express in it nothing but moral indignation at "the monster." This æstheticising of old and worn-out moral Means clearly reveals their inherent character as an End.

Between life and art the difference is only one of convention. Art is the perpetual and necessary demonstration, that form is the meaning of life. In terms of the ethical drama, one might call it an appeal to the bad conscience of mankind. It is constantly questioning, and touches the ethical illusion. We free ourselves from it by not "taking it seriously."

A word about "decadence." It is exhaustion of Means. Use exhausts Means. This is visible in the monotony of form, which begins to seek its modifications in itself, becomes ingenious, "purely artistic," and supersedes life by symbolism. Then life is once more vehemently preached to art, the

ethical Means is again emphasised as the End, and the word "decadence" becomes an insult. There are certain people who will not take their parts in the drama, and want to act a piece of their own! Away with them!

The revival through Catholicism of antique forms—the metaphysical virtues—is a fine example of maintaining the Means as the End by the preservation of form. Clearer examples may be found in the arts, those segments of life's circle: the "hollow-sounding" forms of euphuism, of the idyllic, of the sickly sentimental. Or take the strong accentuation of Means as an End at the close of the eighteenth century—the Ethos of Schiller, or at the beginning of the modern period—Misery—in both cases with the result of a rich development in form. But to enumerate examples would be to write a history of life.

What has been said will not serve for doctrine. The thoughts are not new enough for that. It is only at the breaking-point that they can be bent to the End which every system must possess if it is to be useful as a Means. Nevertheless, the theory of politics and pedagogy might derive much profit from it; æsthetics no less. Brahmin theorists speak of illusion and the necessity for it; Richard Avenarius and Ernest Mach

have indicated the origin of the ideological conceptions of Time, Space, and Causation; Nietzsche said, "Become what thou art," thereby suppressing the ethical category of "becoming." But it is obvious that elements which indicate the ethical End as an æsthetic Means can only be included in the drama of life, under suspicion; however great be the talent, it cannot do more than open doors or turn up lights.

Does any one ask for proofs of what has been said? Alas, the demand for them is the strongest proof of all. That which is bound with a steel cable need not be further secured by a linen thread.

THE ADVENTURESS

"There are very few proper women who are not weary of their trade."—Even if we allow for the bitterness of the writer, and the exaggeration that gives paradoxical piquancy to a passing remark, there remains enough truth in this sentence for reflection. We will not pursue the manifold causes of this weariness, for each would be a history, and many of them banal. Let us ask rather: What do these women invent as an expedient against their ennui? A lover, or two, or three, or lovers in general? Most frequently a woman does try another man as an expedient against her husband, only to realise soon that she is living just as she was before, except that she is, so to speak, doubly wearied. I have met women of that kind who reproached or praised themselves for having the instincts of courtesans. But their instincts were merely unsatisfied, and their ideas of a courtesan's profession totally erroneous, based only on the authority of obscure writers of the lowest grade, stultified by the worst

and feeblest kind of exaggeration, who misrepresent the courtesan as an allegory of the true woman. But, no more of this depressing nonsense.

The women I have met who were tired of propriety, and could venture to speak almost without disguise to an old man like me, were women made restless by life, and frightened because it runs out like a thread from a reel. They were women ill provided by fate with the gracious gift of frivolity, who could not make up their minds to grow old, and lay awake at night asking themselves: "Has it come to this? Is it all over? Is there nothing more to follow?"

As Mrs. A. H. once said: "Something quite extraordinarily splendid must occur in life, if death is not to be merely a cruel *bêtise*."—Adventures! Yes, but how are we to wait for them? They must be attracted by the force of a strong will. We must not allow ourselves to be possessed by them, as by a man. The adventurer subdues chance to his will, and makes it serve his purpose. But, what power and intelligence does this require! Here, feelings are only a hindrance. Take an example.

About the year 1836, Thérèse Lachmann, a Russo-Polish Jewess of fifteen, married a small tailor. A year later, she left him and her child,

and went to Paris, where she induced the pianist Hertz to represent her as his wife. The pianist ruined himself in California, and Thérèse was reduced to poverty, and was carried to the hospital dangerously ill. Théophile Gautier visited her there, and she said: "If I ever get out of this, I shall some day have the finest house in Paris. Remember that, Théo."

Living for men had brought her to misery, now she determined to live on men. Later, I once heard her arguing with Taine: "Circumstances do not exist; every individual must create his own opportunity for reaching his goal. I once knew a very poor woman who desired to live in luxury. She retired for three years, shut herself up, and thought about it," then after a pause she added: "I was that woman."

She came out of hospital and discovered a far-seeing *couturière* who dressed her on credit. "The rest is your affair," said the woman.

Thérèse went to London and got hold of Lord Stanley, then the Duc de Guiches, then De Grammont. I must observe that this hetairism was only apparently an end, it was actually a means. Finally the Marquis Araujo de Païva, a very rich, handsome Portuguese, brought up in England, offered her his hand and fortune. She accepted both, but twenty-four hours after the

wedding, she said to her husband: "My dear sir, you have had what you wanted. I am not the wife for you. I am socially impossible. I am a ——. We will part." She was the Marquise de Païva, as she desired to be, and she had the money, which she needed. (Païva subsequently shot himself, completely ruined.)

The Marquise met Count Henckel von Donnersmark, travelling. She was everywhere where he was, but in such a way that he believed it was he who was always where the Marquise was. She did not yield to him until her breakfast in a Berlin hotel was reduced to nothing but a few sandwiches; then, she cost him millions every year. Her palace in the Champs Elysées was the finest in Paris, and nowhere was better fare to be had, a fact particularly appreciated by Gautier. She had four staff-officers: Emile de Girardin kept her *au courant* with politics; De Rheims took charge of her finances; Arsène Houssaye, the *demi-mondain* who always wanted to be *mondain*, collected gossip; and little Dumont, the Brummell of *gourmandise*, superintended the table. Delacroix came to the house, and St. Victor; later on Taine, and the De Goncourts, whose eyes were always making inventories; Hohenlohe too, and Gambetta.

Many anecdotes might be told, such as the

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story of the young lover who could only offer ten thousand francs. They were accepted in return for a grant of favours to last so long as the ten notes took to burn. The young man came, and even brought with him twelve notes. He made no difficulties, and when the last note had burnt out like his pleasure, he told her, with a smile, that the twelve notes which lay there, a pile of ashes, were photographs made by a friend of his. For this he received a box on the ear.

After the war, the Marquise aspired to politics like La Castiglione and Mercy-Argenteau, but she was mistrusted on account of her German connection, and Gambetta advised her, in all friendliness, to leave France. She went to the neighbourhood of Berlin, where she died, early in the eighties.

She really had the appearance of an old duchess, and had frequently been one of the most beautiful women in a Paris full of beautiful women, the Paris of the Second Empire. No man ever really loved her, and she loved no man. But she had attained her desire, a life of fabulous luxury, for which men gave her the means—were indeed forced to give them by the influence of a strong will in a sound body.

Her house in Paris was sold by auction, and

rearranged as a restaurant. As a friend remarked, it was thus restored to its original use. As to the Count von Donnersmark, he had been forced to marry her, in order to bring the money back into the family.

Does this example excite emulation? Can it do so? If so, there must be in a woman's life alternate courses, dependent on caprice, a kind of sampling of this or that. But no individual life can ever be a pattern to others, which they can follow if they choose. The adventurer sacrifices nothing, he always makes others sacrifice to him. If he is once forced to do otherwise, he falls under the wheels, and generally remains there.

AN INDISCRETION

In January 1669, Barbin, in Paris, published a little book which contained nothing but five unsigned and unaddressed letters. A short preface explains that they are translated from the Portuguese, and were written to a French nobleman who held a post in the Portuguese service. The letters themselves showed that the writer was a nun. The slim *duodecimo* volume attracted much attention. Without rhetoric or literary ambition, in language which is solely that of totally unconcealed passion, and with the violent directness of a soul in the clutches of pain, these letters describe the condition of a woman who in the same hour had won and lost everything.

Such letters were unknown in that age of epistolary literature, which, even when intended to deal with the tender feelings, could only render them by fine learned quotations, like Mlle. de Scudéry turning over the leaves of Corneille to find striking expressions for her grief.

The Portuguese Letters made an end of the literary pattern letter. They spoke the language of the very heart itself, and the time was ripe for that expression: it spread very rapidly, and has continued in unimpaired significance, through succeeding generations, until our own time.

It was already known to St. Simon that these letters were addressed to the young Marquis de Chamilly, later Maréchal of France, and the hero of many battles. That the nun who wrote them was Mariana Alcoforado, in the convent of Beja, only became known by chance in 1810. Boissonade discovered the fact, recorded by a contemporary hand in a copy of the first edition. Subsequent efforts succeeded in reconstructing the preceding events so far as they concern the hero.

Chamilly, who was then twenty-six, fought in 1664 as commander of a regiment of dragoons, on the Portuguese side, against Spain, and distinguished himself in many ways in the battles which gave Portugal her independence. With the surrender of the Castle of Ferreira, the siege of which was conducted by the Marquis, the war was practically at an end. On his way to Lisbon, the youthful hero passed through Beja, which was not far off. His horse stepped slowly through the cheering crowd that filled

the street; roses and fans were showered from the windows as if on a toreador. The young man raised his eyes, and there, leaning over the balcony of the Convent of Maria Concepcion, was a nun, whose eyes impelled the rider to dismount from his horse and remain.—"I only saw you riding past, and so lost the peace of my life."

To the gallant Chamilly this love was a short episode on a march between two engagements. He spends no more time with a woman than with a besieged fortress—that is, until surrender. He is untroubled by the misery which he inflicts. But for the nun of Beja, the flower of this love is the bitter-sweet of all joy and all sorrow. She tries every means of detaining the faithless man, but in vain. Her sorrow is so great that the Mother, otherwise so severe, is gentle and kind to her, and the convent sisters are full of sympathy. "All are moved by my love; you alone remain indifferent, and write me cold letters, which always thoughtlessly repeat the same things; and you leave half the page empty, so that I may see how soon you would be rid of the burden of writing to me."

Hopeless in her inmost heart, she tries to deceive herself. "Can you ever be happy with a love less ardent than mine? You may perhaps find more beautiful women elsewhere—though you

always told me how beautiful I was—but you will never find so much love again—and, after all, the rest is nothing. But do not write to me such indifferent things, and do not take the trouble to remind me to think of you. Indeed, I cannot forget you, and I cannot forget that you let me hope that you would return to me for a while." And in the third letter she says: "I cannot succeed in persuading myself to wish that you may cease to think of me; no, I am furiously jealous of everything that can make you happy, that can touch your heart and mind. I know not why I write to you. I see quite clearly that you have nothing more than pity for me, and your pity is no good to me. I am furious with myself when I think of all that I have sacrificed for you, and what I have suffered from the anger of my relatives, the heavy punishments of my Order, and worst of all, your ingratitude. And yet, all the time, I know only too well that my real feeling is other than this, and that I would bear far worse than all this for your love."

The day soon came when Sister Mariana waited in vain even for the Marquis's short, indifferent letters. Once more for the last time she cries aloud, then draws the veil closer round her head and retires to the grey solitude of her convent, a stranger to all feasts and company. Meanwhile,

the young Maréchal in Paris, when enough has been said of exploits, takes from his *portefeuille* the letters of the Portuguese nun, to show his comrades; laughingly boasting that not only Bellona but Venus too was gracious to him, and that the saying, *Pilosus aut fortis aut libidinosus*, is after all a rule not without exceptions. And to remove the doubts of those who disbelieved in the Portuguese, he commissioned the witty Gascon, Pierre Girardin de Guilleragues, to translate the letters into excellent French, and have them printed at Barbin's in the Rue de l'Abbesse. It is maintained that this was consistent with the *galanterie* of those days. But at any rate in those days the love of a beautiful woman was already a title to fame for the man she loved. People envied the fortunate soldier, and went into raptures over the letters of the nun of Beja, while she looked down from the pomegranate-garden of her convent to the Guadiana, on which her lover had sailed away; soon to return, as he smilingly waved to her; never to meet her again, as he thought to himself with a sigh of relief.

CAMARGO

On the 12th of May 1768, three gentlemen were standing before a little old house in the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre. There was no answer to their ring, and Duclos reiterated what Grimm and Helvetius had been arguing with him the whole way: "I assure you, Camargo has been dead for fifteen years." "Is Mademoiselle at home?" asked Helvetius of the centenarian servant who at last answered the door. She showed the three gentlemen into the salon. Here there was nothing but Camargo, in every *rôle*, and with all her charms, except a Madonna hung with dusty wreaths and drapery. A door opened, and six dogs rushed into the salon. "She is brave," said Grimm; "they are big dogs." Then came Camargo, with an Angora cat under her arm. She still wore the fashions of twenty years ago. "These are my retainers now," she said; "they are better than the old ones. Down, Marquis; lie down, Duke, Baron, in there. . . . Excuse my companions, but may I ask . . . ?"

The three gentlemen had become rather embarrassed. Duclos began: "Well, it is a serious matter——"

"—and you will forgive us when you hear the reason," continued Grimm.

"You make me as inquisitive as if I were twenty, and I am an old woman."

"The heart does not grow old," Helvetius remarked gallantly.

"Alas, only those say that who have never loved. Love itself does not grow old, for it dies as a child, but the heart . . ."

Helvetius protested: "What you say proves how young your heart has remained."

"Perhaps; but, with wrinkles and white hair, it is a coinage out of currency. But what is it that you want?"

The gentlemen again became embarrassed. Helvetius thought he might venture, on the strength of the gallant things he had just said. "Well, we were at breakfast, and we were talking about the delights of our youth. Then we all named Camargo. Which of us would not have given his life in those days for an hour with her!"

"Oh, let me die in peace," interrupted the old lady, casting down her eyes. The gentlemen had been rather exuberant on the way, expecting a comical situation, a joke at the expense of an

old woman who had loved much in her youth. Comic she certainly was, but it was impossible to laugh. Helvetius found it very difficult to go on.

"One man at our breakfast maintained that it was he whom you had loved best. He was rather drunk. We argued and grew excited. Then the calmest amongst us, Herr Grimm, proposed that we three should go to you, and ask you whom you had loved best. Was it the Comte de Melun? the Duc de Richelieu? the Marquis de Croismare? the Baron de Viomesnil? the Vicomte de Jumillac? Was it a poet or an Abbé?"

"Come, take The Court Directory at once! You are mad! I will not answer you."

"We were also arguing," said Helvetius, stroking two dogs at once, "about the period when short ballet-skirts were introduced."

The old dancer rose and took Helvetius by the hand. "Come with me." She led him into the bedroom of the six dogs and the cat, and their mistress, where confusion reigned.

"Take this little casket." They returned to the salon. Camargo took from the little box a very faded picture: "There, now!" It was difficult to recognise the portrait of a man. "Well?" she asked.

"Oh, let me look! No, that is not our boastful friend."

"I never look at it," said Camargo; "portraits are for people who have no time to remember. So, now go home, and tell your friend that he drank too much. And if you talk about me again, then say something nice." She rose.

"Who was he?" asked Grimm, returning the portrait.

"I only once told that to some one who surprised me in tears over it—the old monkey, Fontenelle, who had two brains and no heart. He worried me for a whole hour, and after listening to the story without a word, he said in his aristocratic voice: 'That is very pretty.' What is the good of a man being a poet and philosopher if he cannot understand a story like that?" She was silent. After a little, she sat down again, whereupon the gentlemen likewise resumed their seats.

"Do tell it to us," begged Helvetius; "we deserve to hear it more than that old egoist."

"Well, certainly the Lord knows what you expect to hear, and yet it is all only about a dancer.

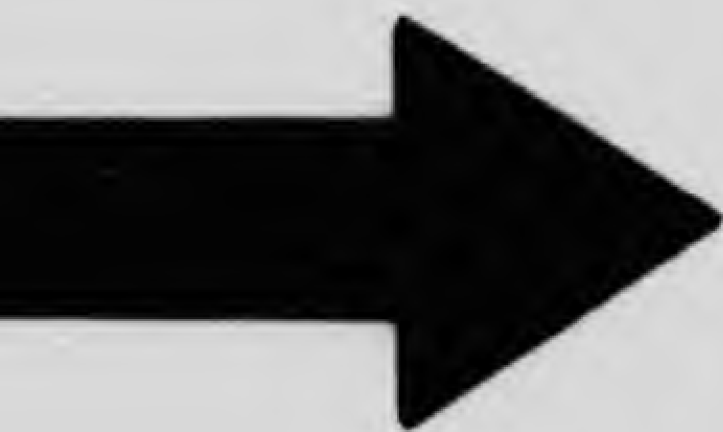
"I was twenty years old . . . but no doubt you still remember the scandal . . . when Count Melun ran away with me and my sister Sophie. He wanted me; and my sister, a little thing of thirteen, positively insisted on being carried off too. She would have betrayed us to Papa, who was very

proud of his great-uncle, the Cardinal, and his other great-uncle, the Grand Inquisitor; so we took her with us. At first Melun refused. 'My dear child,' he said, 'your dolls will cry.' To which Sophie, very saucy as she always was, replied: 'I am thirteen, and I have been dancing in the *Rape of Psyche* for eight weeks.' So we took her with us to Melun, to the Rue St. Gervais. The next day I wrote to the manager that the doctor had forbidden me to dance for three weeks. Eight days later, I called on the manager, myself announced my recovery, and danced the same evening. All this does not do the Count much credit, but do you think there are many men who could be amusing for eight days running? I liked him, but then—the theatre!"

"Then, this picture is Melun?" asked Duclos.

"Oh no, that is Merteille! Wait, and I will tell you. Of course Sophie was soon sent home, and Melun and I were getting on pretty well together, when a cousin of his returned from the army, a regular cavalry lieutenant, swaggering and terrific. I did not like him at all. Suddenly, when we were alone, he spoke to me nicely and charmingly like a school-boy.

"One day we drove in Melun's carriage to the Bois, as he himself was to follow on horseback. I still remember it well. The carriage drove



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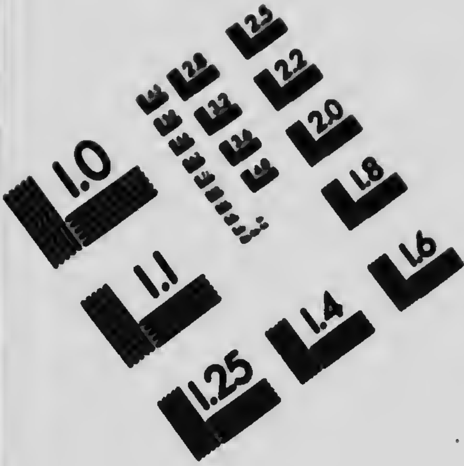
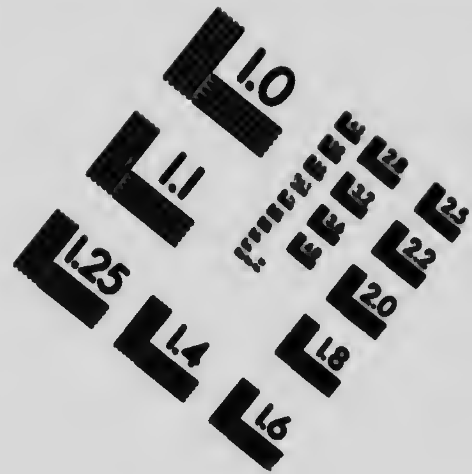
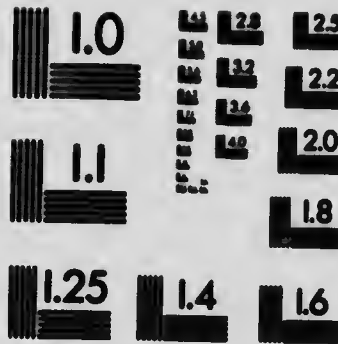
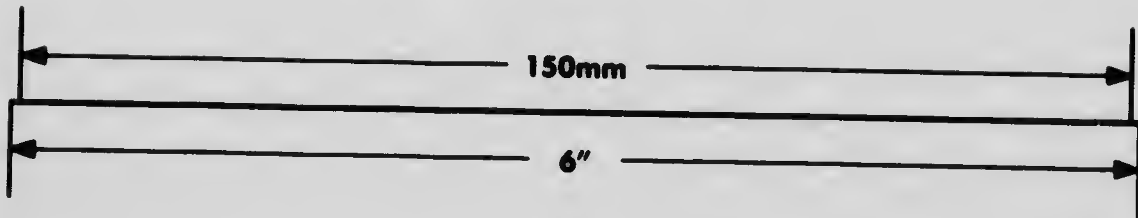

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slowly, and we were silent. The diamond of my ring reflected a ray of sunlight. Then he took my hand . . . yes, he took my hand. . . . One should always stop short at the beginning, it is always the best part. . . . At first the coachman would not drive where Merteille wished, for of course it was La Violette, Melun's coachman. But Merteille said something about a thrashing and fifty gold pieces; and after half-an-hour's rapid driving, I no longer recognised the neighbourhood. We drove over the Seine, and we found ourselves at Velaisy, in a little castle belonging to Merteille's brother, who was abroad. . . . Well, that evening there was a great scene at the opera about my abduction, and Melun, who had sought us in vain, and had gone to the theatre, became exasperated and was furious.

"For three months the opera mourned my absence. For three months I was lost at Velaisy, with—yes, La Tour painted his portrait for me. . . . Three months, and then I had to dance again. He went to the war in the Netherlands, and was killed there. Once, later, I was on the battlefield. The corn stood tall there. Here are a few ears of it." And the old dancer took from the casket a handful of straws. "It was only three months, but I have loved him my

whole life for those months. That is the story. Stupid, isn't it? But do not say 'How pretty,' like Fontenelle."

The three gentlemen took their leave. Helvetius told Camargo's story to his wife; Grimm made a note of it for his Court Journal; and as for Duclos, it suggested some moral reflections to him, for when, two years later, Mlle. Marianne Camargo was carried to her grave, he remarked: "It is quite fitting to give her a white pall like a virgin."

THE PALACE CAT OF FONTAINEBLEAU

DEAR BARONESS,—You were complaining that poets nowadays are so unsociable, that they are disagreeably mannish—by which you did not mean manly—and that, unless actually in love, which is rare enough, they have no talent for women. And when I asked you to name any former poet who did possess that talent, you were unable to do so. You did not remember the old gentleman whom you laughed at one morning when you were a little girl of eight, in the Park of St. Cloud, for his ridiculously thin legs, clothed in white silk stockings. The old gentleman was walking with the Empress, and you with your mamma. That old gentleman was Prosper, the poet who possessed the talent that you miss in modern poets. "Voilà les contes bleus qu'il vous faut pour vous plaire." Read *Colomba*, even if Lydie is only a weak imitation of his master, Stendhal's Mathilde: you will feel directly: "Voilà les contes bleus. . . ."

Mérimée was an amateur, and wrote to please women. When he could no longer please them, he ceased writing anything but his official reports. He used his art as a means, like the flower in his buttonhole or his yellow gloves. What the artist loses thereby in his art, he gains in his person. He gave all that he wrote a *mondaine* connection. It was of no consequence to Balzac that his *Vieille Fille* did not please Mme. de Hanska.

Observe how pleasantly conversational Mérimée is. He writes soberly, drily, thoughtfully, wisely, only intent on developing his subject, and preserving perfect consistency with the cool, dispassionate character of a teller of stories, whose reserve increases in proportion as a normally emotional audience expects passionate *épanchement*. Directly after Carmen's death, he discusses the meaning of some gipsy word, for he would not on any account misuse a tragic effect melodramatically—first, because it would be wanting in taste, and secondly, because he well knew that this calm *contenance* further stimulates his fair listeners' curiosity concerning him. It is the cool, refined coquetry of a woman, which makes a man tremble, for he knows that the panther is about to spring.

Mérimée secretly simulates passion, for he had come to practical terms with it in the most

gallant manner; he is prudent, egotistical, well-trained, and pledged to fortune, as he was from his youth.

In his books, the heroines are always women of the evil sort, evil even to cruelty. But his enjoyment of women was not like Stendhal's, merely strategical, but more varied. He talked to them about dress and philosophy, designed ball-gowns for them, and would go with them to Madame Palmyre, the great *faiseuse* in the Rue du Bac. Think of the unknown woman with whom he corresponded! He was not in love with her, but he behaved as if he were, and adopted the proper tone. Possibly she yielded to him later on, but that was about the time when you saw him in the Park, and therefore very late in the day. "Ce fut ridicule et court," said a friend of Chateaubriand's on a similar occasion of belated arrival.

When Mérimée received his first letter from Lady Seymour, he experienced the joy of a creator whom Nature follows, for here was the woman he had always invented in his stories. For nine years he wrote to this sentimental *coquette*, before he met her, and afterwards for thirty years more—the last letter, two hours before his death.

What he lost in his art, he gained in himself; and because the subject was everything to him in

his letters, just as in his novels,—and in this case he was himself the subject,—these letters are his immortality. They are not genuine, and not false; they are honest in their dishonesty and true in their affectation, as is always the case with feelings instinct with expression.

You see, dear Baroness, you would have liked that poet, for he would always have looked straight in your eyes while he composed, and in the midst of the poetising would have accompanied you to your dressmaker. But the poor man wore himself out. Such an amateur must come into the world with very great talents, if he is to endure to the end and accomplish great things; for he does not grow in himself, but wears himself out. Stendhal said of Mérimée, that he only allowed himself to feel once a year, and then only when no one was looking.

In his pessimistic old age, when he was no more than a spectator, with a salary of 30,000 francs, he appreciates the value of an impulsive act, though he had never done one himself. This spendthrift was not rich enough, and therefore he was poor in his old age.

Stendhal's treasures were never used up, although, indeed, he was a spendthrift too. Poets of to-day, dear Baroness . . .

THE BEAU

YESTERDAY evening, the 20th of May in the year 1838, my master, George Brummell, Esquire, was seized with apoplexy. Since the kind sisters whom he found at the Bon-Sauveur are more necessary to him now than a valet, I betook myself this morning to a little house outside the town, and as there is nothing more serious for me to do, I shall live there on my memories. I would not have them spoilt for me; I will not be forced to see my master dribbling at the corners of the mouth, spilling his wine over his jabot, and other sights worse still. No, God knows, I have no desire to play the melodramatic servant who grows idiotic with his master. As it is, there has been more sentiment of late than became my master's importance, and my position as his servant. There were moments, indeed, when my unbroken intimacy with him seriously threatened our distant and only possible relations.

Every Saturday I used to lay ten covers, and light all the tapers, for we were expecting a large company. The guests' arrival would be fixed for

seven o'clock, and I would announce the Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland, Lord Berwick, Lord Besborough, his Royal Highness the Duke of York, Lady Stanhope, Lord Erskine, Lord Melbourne, Mr. Sheridan, and the Duke of Northumberland. My master would advance a step or two at each arrival, give his welcome, and speak a few sentences; the company would then be seated; and my master would perform his duties as host in his best manner. At ten o'clock, I lit the company down stairs and commanded the carriages. When I returned upstairs to extinguish the lights and put away our Sèvres, my master sat by the fire, weeping. For no one but we two, my master and I, with nine empty chairs, had been present at this scene, played every Saturday night from seven to ten.

In reality our sole visitor was M. Leveux, who called pretty frequently for his rent, which we could never pay. We looked in vain for his Majesty when he passed through Caen. He had not forgotten that once at Watier's, while he was still the Prince, Mr. Brummell had bidden him ring for the waiter, and after their breach had inquired of Lord Erskine, with whom the Prince was walking, "Egad! and who is your fat friend?" Yes! his Majesty passed through the town but never visited us, although we had mara-

schino punch ready prepared for him, and at last sent it to the Hôtel d'Angleterre where he had alighted. When it actually came to this, that my master had to dress by himself in ridiculous haste, when they took him early one morning from his bed to the debtor's prison, things were practically at an end; we had become little better than common people, with nothing left to us but the past.

But there is one thing which I must place on record: we only foundered on the materialities of life, which confront men in old age when it no longer lies in our power to overcome them. Our moral idea, the idea of which we are but the puppets, still remains quite untouched. We have fulfilled our mission and left our work behind us. Napoleon at St. Helena still continued to conquer the world, because his power depended on himself, and not on others. So it is with us.

June 1, 1838.

In this retirement the days grow long, and are burdened with a heavy sweetness, like ripe fruit. Idleness quickly produces the effect of a quiet, many-sided activity. Spending an afternoon lazily in the sun, which is already quite hot, becomes an occupation, even actual work; so that any real business is tedious, and seems a foolish waste of time.

Yesterday Lord Abercorn passed by my nest on his way to Paris, and honoured me with a visit. In our best days, he was one of my master's pupils, and learned much from him. Of course we talked about my master, and his lordship declared that I must undoubtedly be in a better position than any one else to write my master's life, and that such work would not be strange to me—alluding to a now almost legendary incident—that, moreover, in these latter days, the lives of heroes were mostly written by their valets, a custom quite in accordance with the times. More welcome to me than his good opinion of my talents as an author, was the present of twenty pounds which his lordship made me when we parted.

As if there were anything important about a life! As if the history of every great life were not the history of an idea! And that cannot be written in anecdotes, as his lordship thinks.

When my master and I had on one occasion arranged with Miss F. to abduct her, so as to bring the affair to a proper conclusion, the arrangement proved abortive, because Miss F. insisted on taking her black poodle with her, which animal's society we would not tolerate in the carriage, while she would not permit him to run beside it, since the night was dark and rainy. The young lady returned with her poodle

to Mamma, and we drove home to Chesterfield Street. That is an action in which the idea is perceptible by the senses. But anecdotes are quite another chapter. They may possibly adorn the biography of a postman, but they have no place in a moral treatise, and that and nothing else is what the biography of my master would be.

The thesis—

September 12, 1888.

Since I have written nothing for twenty-three years except the debt-book and the account-book of our household, who could have foretold th .t I would ever sharpen my pen for any other purpose! I really meant merely to register each day in this diary, and note whether it was fine or not. It is the way of old age, nothing else, and I write just as other people take snuff. Once it was otherwise. Before fate turned my life to a significant object, I thought I was performing wonders by simply following my fancy. I thought that, by simply allowing it despotic sway, it would lead me into the right road. I so far misunderstood life as to compose poems. When I wrote them down, I would do so, not sitting, but kneeling on my chair. That futile occupation seemed to me an extremely solemn op-ration, demanding to be per-

formed with unction, that it might enable me to live a life of complete delusion without blushes or inward misgiving. I frequented the society of well-educated persons, whose days had no such ecstatic moments as mine, but were passed rather in even regularity and light-hearted activity. Nor were they of those who sit dreaming on the edge of the bed, before lying down at night, reviewing the day, and pulling threads out of their night-shirts.

I soon noticed that I was treated in a peculiar manner by this circle. I was set apart, and my opinions on the most important matters—as, for instance, on the proper use of double-edged razors—only met with smiling acknowledgment. My acquaintances neither contradicted me nor agreed with me; it was as if my words in some way deprived things of their quality and beauty, so that they suddenly seemed to others curiously strange and insignificant. This happened more and more frequently. And then I thought of my poems, and stiffening my backbone with the iron bar of this speciality of mine, I held my head high and stalked away. I betook myself to the taverns where poets assembled, with all their peculiar customs and their looks of insolent pride. That was a good school, and I can recommend it to all young men threatened by ruin. I found, under

their bad manners, a very frank pleasure in their own defects: the more broadly this was displayed, the worse was the conscience, or, in other words, the better the poet. They all swore by life, and as none of them knew what life is, they constructed it from the outside, of other people's adventures, and fought about the strength of their respective jaws, and the dainty morsels which they hoped to bite. They were the favourite poets of the time. In society they were almost as much discussed as the dogs which the Duke of York had ordered from Africa.

It became quite clear to me that life in the realm of poetry is compatible with a certain frivolity, if a man but understand how to shut himself off from life, and only watch it through the blurred, distorting panes of his private chamber.

I bought five inflated bladders (I was still very young), fastened my poems to them, and let the whole thing fly away to where it came from—the stars, as the poets say. But the bladders, with their freight, landed in a Berkshire property where Mr. Brummell was a guest. It was not a good house. Mr. Brummell found a caterpillar in his *vase de nuit*, which was the reason why from that time forward he travelled with one of his own. The circumstances about the poems and the

rest, I learned from Mr. Brummell himself eight days later. It was at Davidson and Meyer's in Regent Street, where we both dealt. We met —by chance, as it appeared—but really by divine intervention. Mr. Brummell was trying on a new frock-coat, and during the two hours that the fitting lasted, the meaning of life was revealed to me; I knew what I must do. Four days later, I was in my master's service. That was on the 12th of September of the year 1813—twenty-five years ago to-day—and I was then twenty-five years old.

September 18, 1838.

But the proposed thesis!—When I had to go to London for my master in the winter of 1839, Mr. Romeo Coates was pointed out to me in front of the Café des Milles Colonnes. They called him a dandy, though he was nothing but a fool who wore a pale blue surtout, jack boots with tassels, and a three-cornered hat, and drove about in a carriage made like a gilded mussel-shell. They called this youth a dandy, and yet it was only three years since we had left London —long enough, apparently, for humanity to deteriorate when it no longer had our example before it. This made me thoughtful, and confirmed my opinion that, between the indivi-

dual and the mass, no permanent moral relation exists.

On my return to Calais, where we lived at that time, I told my master that in London he had already been twice reported to be dead. He declared that it was a trick of the Stock Exchange, but I thought that killing him off once would have been near enough to the truth, since Romeo Coates, Esq., was called a dandy.

September 19.

We used to take six hours for the three toilettes of the day, but this time was not spent on producing an eccentric effect, but simply on dressing ourselves in such a way as to excite no remark. To attain this, the only requisite is to dress well within the limits of the reigning fashion. Whoever excites remark in any way, always does so at his own risk, and will never enjoy the pleasure of domination. He will always suffer a feeling of inferiority, if only on account of the consideration bestowed upon others. He who does not realise his secret peculiarities is a worthy person, and will live in peaceful obscurity. He who is conscious of them, and runs about the market-place proclaiming them, is a prey to evil inclination; he is a poet, a fool, or a saint. He who is conscious of them, but is silent, or only

speaks of them with affectation, because discreet evasion is more effectual than publication,—that man is a dandy, so long as he lives among men, and feels it his duty to act up to his own highest point of energy.

Since the 15th of May 1818, when we left London on account of failing credit, we have been a retired dandy, and there is no such thing. Our existence has become a philosophic abstraction, and has lost its essential part, namely, the counter-action of others. The best means of prevailing over others, is not to excite remark amongst them. A hermit is not a work of art. An individual who asserts himself to himself, only effaces himself, whatever he may do, for he becomes important to himself, and writes notes in his diary because it is raining—yes, just because it is raining. That is the only inducement, and there is no purpose in it. I have had, and still have, important experiences, and I omit nothing worthy of record, or, at any rate, that seems to me notable.

August 4, 1839.

This is a quiet neighbourhood; not that Caen is very lively, even in the Rue Royale; but there, a cat does occasionally run across the road as if it had very important business on the other

side. Out here, we preserve quiet as if for its own sake. The neighbours leave early for their business in the town, and return in the evening. On the left lives an army veteran, who takes in a Paris paper which he brings over to me every evening—that is to say, he brings me the paper of the preceding day. We get on excellently. On the right lives a laundry-girl with her mother, whom I visit every third day; and we also get on excellently. A laburnum tree grows in front of my window, and surrounds it with its climbing wealth of green and gold. And I look far out into the country, and see the outlines of leaves and blossoms. I see both this scene and that, the far off and the near simultaneously. I think it is from my master that I get the faculty of seeing both at the same time.

August 5, 1839.

The old woman washes for my master at the Bon Sauveur, the young Mamselle irons the linen. She asked me yesterday if he was handsome, and if he had had much to do with women. I replied to her: No, my child, he was not so good-looking as M. Frédéric, your young wig-maker, but he had features. Moreover, he was as well-made as any man, so that one did not think of his face. As for our dealings with women, I should like

to please you by recounting some of those romantic stories such as you find in M. Sue, but I should have to invent them, and that would hardly be compatible with the position of the personages in question, neither with my master's nor the ladies'. "You are a palace in a labyrinth," one of them said to us. She was impatient, as they all of them were, because we attached no importance to luxuriating in the pathos of common feelings; she was angry because she was obliged to look without seeing, and seek without finding. We always stopped short at the boundary which women set up in order that men may step over it. So they thought we were making fun of romanticism, and desired us in a different way, but all the more ardently. This gave us much power, but we abused it in other ways. We were loved and feared by all, hated by one only, for she understood us. That was Harriette Wilson, a very celebrated *cocotte*.

December 12, 1839.

I have forbidden my neighbours to talk to me about Mr. Brummell, but yesterday a man ran across my way who calls himself a tailor because he cuts long-suffering cloth into bad coats. He began with a ludicrously long face:

"J'avais honte de voir un homme si célèbre et si distingué, et qui s'était créé une place dans l'histoire, dans un état si malheureux," and so on; running along beside me, chattering, till at last I told him that there must be a mistake, for Mr. Brummell died long ago, and the gentleman lying at the hospital, who had holes in his coat-sleeves, was probably a harmless lunatic who imagined himself to be that gentleman. I made use of the moment during which Mr. Robinson stopped, quite taken aback, to get away as far and as quickly as the slight gout in my left leg permitted.

April 1, 1840.

To-day the Duchess of S. passed through this place with a great retinue. She used always to be at our balls at Almack's, and was the most beautiful woman there. She drew up at the Hôtel d'Angleterre to drink some lemonade, and then drove on. She had thrown back her veil for a moment. Women, for the most part, are not so young as they paint themselves, but the Duchess had really exceeded her aim too far in the matter of age and colour. Good taste seems to have vanished altogether from England when such a thing can happen even to that superb woman.

I must not forget to record, that on the same day, April 1, 1840, was buried George Bryan Brummell, whom I served in our great days—the greatest man of his time having died long years before.

NINON DE L'ENCLOS

I WILL tell a moral tale which ought to edify women and incite them by its example to live a virtuous life, so that it may be a source of continual pleasure to themselves and their fellow-creatures. What else could serve this purpose better than the story of the beautiful Ninon?

Her father, Henri de l'Enclos, was a man of good family and her mother a Raconis; Ninon, the only child of their marriage, was born in Paris on the 10th of November 1620. Her mother lived a life of great piety, and very early placed in her daughter's hands the treatise by François de Sales, *De Amore Dei*. Her father followed suit with the writings of Montaigne, whom he greatly admired, and later with Gassendi's, for he was a freethinker. He also gave her the name of Ninon. The child found her father's training more to her taste than her mother's, and while still in her thirteenth year came to the brief and decisive conclusion concerning the latter, "Qu'il n'y avait rien de vrai à tout cela." It is Monsieur Tallement, the

contemporary of Bussy, who has recorded this remark in his terse, malicious *Historiettes*, which, indeed, he dedicated to Ninon herself.

In consequence of his clever pupil's extraordinary talents, it was quite easy for the father-professor to introduce his beautiful daughter very early to the Society of the Marais. Its members, undisturbed by the external and internal troubles of their country, devoted themselves in pleasant security to the serene enjoyment of a period gilded by the evening glow of the late Renaissance, inclining rather to luxurious ease and the pursuit of pleasure than to the activity and creative energy of its earlier days, when its sun was at the zenith. Now the muscles of life were pleasantly relaxed; the senses were quickened; and adventures, only attainable before by searching sword in hand, were brought within easy reach. Ninon instilled taste and proportion into this wantonness of spirit. She imparted bewitching charms to the pleasures of sense. Her beauty was all-sufficient; it was of that harmonious kind that none of its component parts could be singled out for praise. It is not surprising that the descriptions of her charms are so contradictory that Tallement even goes so far as to say, "Qu'elle n'en eut jamais beaucoup"; nor that her portraits which have come down to

us do not represent a beautiful woman. The last may be due to the incapacity of the artists, for no Jean Clouet survived among them. The contradictory estimates of admirers may be caused by the bewildering fame of Ninon's beauty, possibly too by the anger of rejected lovers; but the primary cause of uncertainty is this: such harmonious beauty is only revealed to those who do not lose sight of its whole among its parts, but, like true connoisseurs, concentrate their attention upon it and keep its entirety constantly in view.

The memoir-writers speak of Ninon's high stature, of her slender legs, her still slenderer arms, and her very beautiful, soft hands. They cite her white skin and well-nourished flesh as the sign of her constant good health. Her hair was chestnut, and her eyebrows black, well separated, and beautifully arched. In her eyes, blacker than the blackest velvet, *patte de velours*, resistance and desire held equal sway. Her teeth were unrivalled, her lips were *un peu raillantes et relevées vers le coin*, so that men pined for kisses from them. Her smile expressed kind promises. And yet the beauties of her body must remain a legend to be told by each admirer with all the finest ornaments of ardent invention, or the truths learnt from his latest

mistress. "Such were the eyes of Ninon," I thought the other day, as I caught a woman's glance which gleamed like liquid amber. "Those were Ninon's feet," I said to myself yesterday, as a woman walking before me raised her train. And were not Ninon's hands like yours, beloved, splendid white cups from which I sip the wine that you offer me? Each one of us knows Ninon, and knows how beautiful she was, and each knows her differently—and yet she is Ninon still.

If the contemporary accounts are full of contradictions and deficiencies in describing her physical perfections, they are one in their praise of her intellectual gifts. No fiction that I could tell you, dear ladies, could give a truer or clearer example of the saying, that a well-directed appeal to the senses is the very *fons et origo* of all beautiful human things. Ninon possessed all the talents which distinguish the society of her time, and she practised them with so much charm, that the forces often dissipated in empty forms developed in her to vigorous life. She played on the lute and the theorbo; was acknowledged the best dancer of the saraband; and delighted her hearers with her *petite voix de ruelle*, for, as she said, "La sensibilité est l'âme du chant," and it was more than a mere saying in regard to her own singing.

But these were gifts for little occasions of pleasant intercourse. More than her gifts, more than her beauty, it was the kindness of her heart, the consistency of her actions, and the liveliness of her wit which created her fame. To her friends she was the most trustworthy of friends, and they extolled this excellence in her, as her lovers extolled those of her person.

La Rochefoucauld said, "Le moindre défaut des filles galantes est la galanterie," and Ninon was *galante*, but not a *galante fille*, as such women were called in those days. She was an *amoureuse*, and had her caprices, as she called them. From them she gained her invaluable wise maxims concerning love, and her gracious thoughts on pleasure. I would recommend them as a tract to any of my kind readers whose temperament might serve as a fine point of departure, but is wasted in producing corrupt literature, and often ends in utter demoralisation. I would entreat such women not to listen to Orpheus, who sings to soften stones, but to follow Eros, who does not sing at all; to trust the flattery of their mirrors, and not poets; and to remember the words of a woman who said that woman's virtue is one of the finest inventions of men.

Some one called pure love a cerebral debauch.

Ninon did not care for erotic metaphysics; she declared, "Aimer, c'est satisfaire un besoin," and she loved that little cynical saying, because it so exactly controverts what seemed to her to be the danger of love; namely, the idea of love with a train of wrong feelings, false words, and base tears. That idea of love causes a woman to reproach her lover: "You have loved me only for an hour"—as if life were so long that this hour did not count, as if one hour of love could not be longer than years.

"Satisfaire un besoin": this saying is the naïve truth when spoken by women, who are so often astounding us bewildered men by their strange choice of lovers. *Un besoin à satisfaire*—we must not take this necessity in its narrowest sense and be frightened at it. Certainly, Ninon understood full well the value of doubt, of anticipation, and of the first spoken word; these also were of her necessity. Only, she did not allow herself to be led astray into the illusion of a deeper sense in all these things, nor into any feeling that she had thereby spoilt, or lost, or belied herself at all. An example of this wider conception from which Ninon spoke of the "besoin" may soothe the votaries of subtlety. "Is there any feeling more exquisite than the feeling of the beloved who knows that he is loved? Is

there anything in love more enchanting than a woman's resistance, which seems to pray that it may not be misused? Is there anything more bewitching than a voice breathless with emotion, or the refusal wherein the beloved reproaches herself?"

Our Ninon considered love a taste originating in the senses, a blind feeling which does not presuppose any merit in the object that awakens it, nor bind it to any acknowledgment—in a word, a humour independent of ourselves, "et qui est sujet au dégoût ou au repentir." She used to say to those who were impatient for their happiness: "Await my caprice." Ninon never broke with her lovers; when she ceased to love, she dismissed them so charmingly that they could not but remain her friends. This woman was so great, so sure of her resources in love, that she was never seized with cowardly panic at the prospect of saying, "I no longer love you," nor did she ever play that comedy laid in a dreary atmosphere of lies, where the heroine thinks that she is bound to end by hating the man whom she has loved. In accordance with her nature, Ninon expressed these views in the following saying: "If a woman has no taste for a man who seeks to please her, she should not take advantage of his credulity, nor arouse his hopes, but give him his

congé clearly and firmly. But if she loves him in return, she must not wait to be entreated longer than is pleasant to her, and than the sweetness of anticipation demands."

Some people dispute the fact that Coligny was Ninon's first lover, and name instead M. de St. Etienne. But St. Evremont, Ninon's best friend, claims belief on that account, and he states that Coligny was the fortunate man. It was well known that Coligny, Duc de Châtillon, was a Protestant; but so great was Ninon's charm, that she could venture to argue with him concerning his religion, and the advantages of her own Catholic faith, without frightening him away. How this first love came to an end, there are no witnesses to tell. A malicious little story, not without wit at Coligny's expense, was told about it, but is rejected by Tallement as an invention; yet even he, who knew so much, can tell us nothing of how Ninon's first love ended. At any rate, it matured to early fruit in her wise knowledge of herself.

In these days Ninon became acquainted with the celebrated Marion de l'Orme. Marion was then no longer young, but still beautiful, although she was obliged to take cold foot-baths to counteract a certain redness of her nose. The two *amoureuses* had many things in common besides,

as it happened, lovers; but one thing distinguished them clearly: Marion did not show the same fine disinterestedness in her choice as Ninon. Yet they were good and worthy friends, a trait quite in accordance with Ninon's nature, for the certainty of her own value made her fearless of other women. St. Evremont called them "Les deux Laïs." They were proud of one another, and full of pretty mutual attentions. They often slept together—and once Marion gave Ninon some little Spanish dogs in a silken basket. The Duc de St. Simon, though by no means gallant, was obliged to confess, "Elles acquirent une réputation et considération tout à fait singulières."

The best society frequented their salons. I will not mention forgotten names, but only Gramont, celebrated by Count Hamilton; St. Evremont, the genial philosopher of the time; the handsome M. d'Elbène, subsisting on his debts as others do on their income; Desyvetaux, the poet; and Scarron, still young and well shaped.

Even if these gentlemen had beheld the loves of Ninon and Coligny without envy, it was nevertheless not without pleasure that they witnessed their parting. Possession gives a much more accurate idea of an object than the wish for it;

so every one armed himself in readiness, and Ninon declared that she reserved constancy and fidelity for a far nobler sentiment—friendship. Coligny and others were followed by De Palluan, and he by De Miossens . . .

> "... aux maris si terrible,
> Le Miossens à l'amour si sensible. . . ."

Fidelity in friendship: as has been described in a charming saying, Ninon gave her lovers their most dangerous rivals in the persons of her friends. Poor Scarron was forced to leave the cheerful Marais, to seek in the Boulevard St. Germain the health which he was never to recover; for he returned again to the Marais, completely lamed, and there found in Ninon a most faithful friend, willing to stay with him for whole days together when he could not move from his chair. Count Gramont had learnt no lessons from Ninon, for he forsook his friends as soon as they fell ill. Scarron was not the only one now missing from Ninon's salon: the splendid old Desyvetaux had suddenly disappeared, and as his circumstances were never of the best, his good friend Ninon feared that the genial old man might have sunk rapidly into deep despondency, so she went in search of him. She found him happier than ever. When Desyvetaux had re-

turned home one evening, a young girl was lying unconscious before his door, with a harp beside her. He had her carried into his house and cared for. When she had come to her senses, Desyvetaux soon realised that his heart had not remained untouched.

Mlle. Dupuis now played on her harp in gratitude to her preserver, who was a great lover of music, and when she began to sing too, he knew that he would never again be able to part from her. He persuaded her to remain with him, and she did remain, for she saw how happy she made the old gentleman.

This was the prelude for Desyvetaux of a most charming idyll. He dressed her as a shepherdess, himself as the shepherd, Corydon—the good man was then aged seventy—and stretched on the green carpet of his elegant apartment, he would listen to the sounds that his shepherdess drew from her harp. He would often accompany her on the flute, while birds, sensitive as he, would desert their cages, attracted by the sweet sounds, and caress the harp with their wings until they expired, intoxicated with delight, on the breast of the shepherdess. These birds, carefully trained to such gallantries, were the delight of the ancient Corydon, who now only spoke in eclogues. Ninon, who found Desyvetaux thus

engaged with his shepherd's crook, his flute, and a shepherd's hat lined with rose-pink, made no attempt to lead him back to his former habits, since his new way of life brought him such complete happiness. But she remained his friend, and often visited him in his tender masquerade, which he never afterwards relinquished. When he was dying, he begged Mlle. Dupuis to play his favourite saraband, and died smiling happily, holding in his hand a yellow ribbon, "for love of the *gentille* Ninon who gave it me."

But however much Ninon busied herself for her friends, she did not waste on them a moment demanded by her loves. She would often declare her sentiments to those who pleased her, or write to them, as she did to M. de Noailles, and thus greatly excited the *Précieuses* of the Hôtel Rambouillet. She wrote to the Maréchal d'Estrées: "I think I shall love you for three months—an eternity for me." It was by him that she subsequently found herself in a condition *dont on rougit lorsqu'elle n'est pas le fruit d'un lien respectable*. Since the Abbé d'Effiat maintained that he had rights over the child, and Ninon was either unable or unwilling to decide the question, it was settled by casting dice. The throws were favourable to the Maréchal and the child. He was brought up as the Chevalier de Boissière,

became a naval captain, and died very old in Toulon, a great amateur of music and musicians. The happiness which Ninon had throughout her whole life in this son, never allowed her to regret the weakness to which he owed his existence. She became a mother once again, but less happily.

Louis XIII was dead, and with the Regency which directed affairs during the minority of Louis XIV, that period of French *galanterie* began, the imitation of which created European culture.

> "Changes in taste held no debate with duty,
> Sweet error's self was not accounted crime,
> Delicate subtle vice was then called pleasure."

That was the happiest time of Ninon's life, the time of her fullest and richest beauty and her greatest fame. She had become the Famous Ninon, but she would never owe her reputation to success in love. She preferred lovers who had sufficient taste to love her for her own sake, and found nothing in those gallants who were led to seek her favours by vain ambition. The true, high opinion which she held of love, that it is a *caprice passionnelle* from first to last, protected her from all false aspirants, and gave her the certainty that her fancy never favoured a man

unworthy of her. Thus she knew no regret, for she experienced no disillusion, unless we must make an exception of her intrigue with the Duc d'Enghien, for in spite of his robust beauty he was better adapted for "Bellona's bridegroom" than the service of Venus. *Pilosus aut fortis aut libidinosus*: these words must sometimes have occurred to Ninon, for on one occasion she said with a sigh: "Oh, Monsieur! you must be a valiant soldier." . . . And yet she retained his friendship, and liked to show his portrait, beneath which Claudien had inscribed the lines—

> "Pour avoir la valeur d'Hercule,
> Il n'est pas obligé d'en avoir la vigueur."

Constancy in love, Ninon held a very middling virtue; indeed, she called it the fear of not finding another heart when you have discarded one. So it was always she who arranged the partings, with a wise instinct choosing the right moment before her lovers had grown weary of her. No one must have had enough of her, for all must remain her friends.

It was inevitable that women whom Nature did not allow to follow Ninon's example should be scandalised by her way of life. The Queen Regent sent an armed escort to convey her to the Convent of Repentant Maidens. But, as Bautrin

remarked, since she was neither repentant nor still a maiden, they were obliged to leave the choice of a convent to her, whereupon she chose the Grands Cordeliers. The good Queen Anne of Austria was very angry, but the Duc d'Enghien not only succeeded in allaying her wrath, but told her so many charming tales about Ninon, that the great lady much regretted having been the cause of vexation to a person generally esteemed and admired.

But since the condition of Paris was becoming unsettled, Ninon decided to leave. Even in the salons there was too much conversation concerning taxes and politics; opinions were divided, parties were formed, debates occurred. Ninon found all this unbearable, and departed. At that time her lover was the Marquis de Villarceaux, and she had reached an age more prone to passion than caprice. The Marquis was so jealous that he used to conceal boys under her bed to spy upon her. Then this wonderful woman cut off her hair, and sent it to her jealous lover as a proof of her fidelity. Villarceaux flew to her, and they remained alone together for a week. Ninon lived retired with the Marquis on one of his estates for three faithful years, from which it is evident that she was not inconstant from shallowness of character. But perhaps her fidelity only lasted so long

because Paris was so far off, for when the pair returned, the Marquis was still enamoured, but Ninon chose another lover, and after him another. Paris was happy again, and Ninon with it. Those were days of sunshine, when the young Louis XIV was king, and Molière wrote his plays, and used to read them to Ninon. She wrote to St. Evremont, who lived in exile in London, that she thanked God almost every evening for her understanding, and prayed to Him every morning to preserve the folly of her heart.

I will not relate all the *sottises* about Ninon's heart, which are to be found recorded in those antique eighteenth-century volumes printed in Swabach type and bound in morocco, from which I have the best part of this story. I will say nothing of Gourville; nor of Saucourt, who pleased all women except his wife; nor of Chapelle, cursed with large hands and a fat stomach, two things detestable to Ninon, nor how this horrible creature swore to get drunk and compose a scandalous poem about Ninon every day until he should win her favour. Drink he did, to the end of his life, but he only wrote thirty poems, and on the thirty-first day Ninon still refused, and ever afterwards, to honour him. The story about La Châtre has become proverbial, and the fate of Mme. de Sévigné's son, the handsome youth rendered happy

by Ninon scarcely longer than his father, who, in the midst of the first short period of his love, laid down his life in a different battle—enough of all this is told in books. Mme. de Sévigné, who had lost both husband and son through Ninon, was nevertheless on terms of admiring friendship with her.

Then there was the dancer Pécour, who danced and conquered—the fortunate rival of the virtuous and enamoured Choiseul, who could do nothing but declare his wearisome love, till Ninon told him "Qu'il faut cent fois plus d'esprit pour faire l'amour que pour commander les armées." But the dancer had luck with his daring. Once when Choiseul met him at Ninon's house dressed in a kind of uniform, and made some sarcasm about it, Pécour replied: "Monseigneur, do not be surprised that I wear a sort of uniform. *Je commande un corps où vous servez depuis longtemps.*"

It would not have been possible for Ninon always to quench the flames she had kindled. She was no longer young, she was then aged sixty. But time had no effect upon her beauty. She often told her friend La Rochefoucauld that his maxim, "Old age is woman's hell," should have a note appended to say that it did not count with Ninon. In the paradise of her autumn, the leaves did not turn yellow and the night-

ingales still sang. The loves still lurked laughing in the little wrinkles round her eyes. The youngest youths never saw that she was old, while their oldest elders grew young at the sight of her.

About this time Ninon experienced the only tragedy in her life, the leading *motif* of which is the triumph of her beauty. A son of hers by a certain De Gersay, brought up as the Chevalier de Villiers, used to frequent her salon, with many other young men whose parents sent them there to be educated. But he did not know that she was his mother, and he loved her with all the ardour of his twenty years. Ninon was kind, distant, and evasive, but the moment came when she was forced to tell him the truth. He stabbed himself, and died with Ninon bending over him, love still in his eyes.

Ninon was now called Mlle. de l'Enclos: she had become so quiet. "Elle se contenta de l'aise et du repos après avoir senti ce qu'il y a de plus vif," as St. Evremont says so gently. Not that she renounced love. She would not be renounced by love, but she tried to make her heart beat more quietly. She was seventy-nine when the Abbé Gédoyn fell in love with her. She kept aloof from him, and when she at last received him in her celebrated yellow boudoir, and the Abbé

complained of her cruelty in having kept him waiting so long for that moment, Ninon said, "Believe me, my ardour was no less than yours, but from a little remnant of vanity, and because, after all, it is a rare event, I desired to wait till I was eighty—and I was eighty this morning." This last of Ninon's loves continued for a year, then Gédoyn went on a journey and showed little inclination to return. So Ninon wrote to him: "Les plus courtes folies sont les meilleures." . . .

On October 17, 1705, Ninon died.

In 1751 it was the fashion among the ladies of the court to perform their devotions on All Souls' Day before a death's head decked with ribbons and roses. The Queen had Ninon's head for her *memento mori*, and called it "ma belle mignonne."

And so, dear ladies, while the hours are still bright, shall we not speak kind words of the great Ninon, words which shall adorn her memory like ribbons and roses?

THE BORED MADAME DU DEFFAND

The saying: "Bored people are boring," is only true in quarters where such sayings are esteemed truths, but seems trite where such phrases do not pass for ideas. This is shown in the case of Madame du Deffand. Madame du Deffand was not only the most notable woman of a century almost included in her eighty years, but also the most significant expression of the Human produced by the *ancien régime*. The thought of that period lies in the writings of the Philosophers; the poetry nowhere, for there was none; but the Human in the letters of these four people, the Prince de Ligne, the Abbé Galiani, Horace Walpole, and Madame du Deffand, and most strikingly in the letters of this bored *grande dame*. The letters of other women of the period, like Mme. de Lespinasse, or d'Epinay, or the Duchesse de Choiseul, are the literature of their time: though they do not extend to its limits,

yet they help to fill in its details. With all their genuineness, still they are romantic; with all their feeling, still very sensitive; with all their wit, still full of the *bel air*, the grand manner, which relaxes talent, thought, and soul. Madame du Deffand could not endure that manner; she hated it, but she had nothing to oppose to it, nothing that could take its place; for she could not have borne solitude; she needed conversation, and letters, the chronicles of conversation.

Concerning the husband, whom this very beautiful woman had married in due course without any personal inclination, she was quite clear at once: he disgusted her, and a separation soon followed. For a time she was the mistress of the Regent, and several others besides. In her youth she occupied her boredom with lovers, as she did her old age with friends, for the vain President Hénault, with whom she lived, and whom she outlived twenty years, was scarcely more to her than a respectful friend. At sixty-eight she lost her sight, but *la clairvoyante aveugle* continued to see everything with even sharper eyes than before. Passionately seeking truth and undisguised reality, she saw to the very depth of the world in which she lived. And it was her penetration of its depth, which caused her intense boredom. "Is it not unbearable, never to hear

the truth?" she asks, and yet she always discovered the truth, the depressing truth of a generation completely cramped and stunted by human considerations, which looked upon its exclusion of the Divine as its most famous title, and was soon to publicly declare Reason its goddess.

Boredom, it seems, is a disease, if not a very old one, of happy people, or of those considered happy, but it has the peculiarity of reversing happiness by making the happy miserable. The Marquise surveyed the men and things of this godless world from a most enviable position, and esteemed them trite, mean, stupid, commonplace; nor did she spare herself, for she had no belief in herself either, denying all her own feelings and belying her own passion. She writes to a friend: "May you be spared one experience: *la privation du sentiment, avec la douleur de ne s'en pouvoir passer.*" She is impervious to feeling, or thinks herself so, yet is full of longing for it, and again, not quite certain whether it is worth while to crave for it. Indeed, she is never quite certain if anything is worth while. She is indifferent, yet that is no relief to her, but a burden. She does not like life, but finds the cure for it still more unpleasant than the disease, and so fears death. She consciously

seeks distraction and self-oblivion, but she is ever herself and never forgets. Her great spirit has not the strength of talent, only sufficient to touch its confines. She wastes herself on the activity of a life of "herculean weakness," as her friend Walpole said. It was he who contributed the late romance of her life, but could do no more to help her to escape from boredom.

The Marquise was seventy years old when she met Horace Walpole; he was not yet fifty. At first he calls her "débauchée d'esprit," and a blind old woman; a few months later, "charmante." And finally she becomes a friend whom he attacks violently for writing him love-letters. He knew that the King liked to have the post intercepted and read out to him at breakfast, and he did not want to be made ridiculous by a *liaison* with an old woman.

Walpole was an amateur and a dilettante. He assigned no object to his great vivacity of mind, because he believed in none. However, his boredom has this advantage over the tragic boredom of Madame du Deffand, that he understands how to forget. He believes in nothing, but he takes everything cheerfully for what it is. He builds, plants, collects, writes, publishes, affects the *grand seigneur*, and all the time despises what he writes, and his doing so. He has wit,

a lively fancy, and knowledge of men. His cares are for his goldfish, his engravings, his cats, his pictures, and his dogs. He contradicts himself, is precious, capricious, paradoxical. He would like to be taken for a very decided, determined man, but he is only obstinate. He conceals his nervousness beneath contempt. His cowardice makes him very frightened of appearing ridiculous. Like Ligne, Galiani, and the Marquise, he proved that he was so entirely of his own time as to be conspicuous in it. Like the three others whom I have mentioned, his ideas range up to the very limits of a generation in love with reason, so entirely head, that later it cut off people's heads, in the belief, no doubt, that they could exist by themselves, and the rest was useless. These four were sensitives in a world which gave decorum the highest value. The *ancien régime* left no room for their sensitiveness in its narrow cage, so it entirely reverted to intellect, and was lost in sterility. None of them attained talent, only insight into their times. Galiani became melancholy, the Prince de Ligne took refuge in irony, Walpole suffered from the spleen, the Marquise from boredom.

It is unspeakably sad to see the blind old woman, who carries her burden of insight so lightly and gracefully, falling in love with

Walpole, roughly repelled by him, and assuring him that she will suppress her feelings. He calls her "crazy"; a breach seems inevitable; but the Marquise bears all these insults patiently; and after all they are not very surprising. He will not hear of friendship either, and she replies: "Very well, let us be friends without friendship. It is a new idea, but not really any more incomprehensible than the Trinity."

When she was eighty, and her secretary was reading her the last letter to Walpole that she had dictated, his voice failed, and the Marquise asked him with eager astonishment: "Vous m'aimez donc?" The rational and purely intellectual society, the only kind she knew, since there was no other, had so misled her concerning herself, that she could not believe in her own feelings and emotions, nor that she could arouse emotions in others. "Yes," she said to her friend the Duchesse de Choiseul, "you know that you love me, but you cannot feel it."

Can love exist in a woman of seventy? In one of her letters, the Marquise deplores that Walpole is not her son. But maternal love is not expressed sentimentally. For seventy years this woman succeeded in opposing her own nature. Her wit shone out all the more brightly through her tragic boredom, as diamonds flash a livelier

fire from black crape; and then, whatever faith and passion was in her heart broke out for a man who, if he did not love her in return, yet did not disappoint her as the rest of the world had done. The world had lain at her feet, but when she was dying, she addressed it with this last word of contempt: "Raca!"

WAITING: AN ENGLISH ENGRAVING

In front of a cottage in Gateshead, a suburb of Newcastle, stands Mrs. Cook, her smooth forehead shaded by a white cap. She is looking across the trim little front garden, down the street, away into the deep sunlight. She adds yet another day, as she counts the weeks, months, and seasons since the 30th of July in the year before, when her husband went on board the *Endeavour* at Deptford, and sailed down the Thames to the sea.

Three years had passed before James Cook's return; he looked thin and brown, he was like a different man; his eyes were so full of strange things that Mrs. Cook could not see herself in them. But he still knew exactly in which corner his pipe stood, and where his astrolabe was kept. He was delighted with the pansies in the garden, though he had seen palm-trees. His words came sparingly: "Elizabeth, do you remember Hicks, my first lieutenant?—Well, he is dead." "Three

years," said the woman; "three years is a long, long time!" His old father, Jack Cook, came over to keep Christmas, and there was telling of stories in the evening, in the lamplight; stories of countries and islands with wonderful names, of rare beasts and strange women, and the things which he had eaten—bread-fruit, and bananas, and New Zealand pepper—"better than that whisky there." Old Jack Cook grew merry, but James Cook sat dreaming, and in Mrs. Cook arose a fear that made her tremble.

At length, one day, James Cook said (alas! she knew what was coming when she saw how solemn he was, and she began to cry before he had said a word): "The King commands; and a man only grows old and useless doing nothing. . . ."

It was in May that he gave the order to weigh anchor on the *Resolution*. Cannon were fired into the air, and Sir Hugh Palliser held Mrs. Cook tight by the arm so that she should not fall.

Now Mrs. Cook sits at the window, in the little house at Gateshead, and crochets endlessly, counting the days and weeks and months as they go by. The little room seems quite full of the strange animals, the wild flowers, the women who jump into the sea and swim to meet the great ship. . . . It is so long since he said

"Elizabeth" for the first time—and then, immediately, he went off to the war; and then to foreign lands; and then, again . . .

The garden gates creaks. It is he, it is he! She cannot go to meet him, but holds on to her chair. He comes up the narrow gravel-path, and behind him are people carrying parrots and monkeys. His face has grown still darker and still stranger, and she smells the sea as she falls on his breast: "I have waited so long. . . ."

The King sent the Captain a decoration; and by the evening, old Jack Cook had arrived from Redcar, and the sisters were there, and the brothers, and all Cook's children. He is proud and pleased: he tells stories, and answers all his questioners, young and old. Mrs. Cook is helpless for joy. He tells them of the Friendly Isles, of the New Hebrides, and of Tierra del Fuego; he relates regular tales of adventure, stories about people who eat bees as well as honey, about palm-trees which give milk like "cousin's goats," and how they had found sheep at Juan Fernandez branded with Robinson's mark. . . . Mrs. Cook thinks of the poor little front garden.

As the days pass by, James Cook grows more and more silent. On Sunday, he takes his children to church; he visits friends in London; he sits with Elizabeth, now happy, under the cherry-

tree; no one noticed how much the smiling woman had wept. One day she shows him some pink blossoms in the biggest garden-bed. "Look, I planted some tobacco for you. . . ." "What grows here is of no use. Out there . . .!" He said this quite simply, but his eyes beamed. Elizabeth has grown old; tears flowed from her heart into her eyes.

Three months later, the ships *Resolution* and *Découverte*, under the command of Captain Cook and Captain Clerke, sailed from Spithead for the south. . . .

Mrs. Cook sits in an arm-chair at the window where the south wind blows. "On a day like this he came home, once." Out in the garden, the Irish servant is saying: "The Captain will soon be back now, to try our cherries." Mrs. Cook's tired hands lie in her lap; they still hold her crochet-work, but they seldom move now. Suddenly the maid runs to the garden gate. "So he came home, three years ago," thinks Mrs. Cook. She begins to stand up and go to meet him, but she cannot; it is as if something were holding her fast in her chair, so that she may not fall. She has suddenly turned quite pale, for she sees Lieutenant King standing before her in the room, holding his three-cornered hat to his breast. Before he had spoken a

word, she knew everything, but she asked: "Where is he?"

"It was on the coast of Owhyhee, in the Pacific Ocean . . ." said the lieutenant, and could say no more.

MADAME DE HANSKA

A WOMAN who had once been curious about the man who loved her, and then, from behind her contempt for his manners and her calm amusement at the comedy of the situation, made game of him, had inflicted the last cruelty upon him. One day he was invited to dine with her, and she sent him an anonymous note, inviting him to a rendezvous. Balzac took his leave directly after dinner, in order to be on the spot at the appointed time. There he met the lady's old English governess, who confessed, between tears and foolish laughter, that her mistress had forced her to play this trick.

It was about the same time that he was busy over Swedenborg. He was writing *Séraphita*; and thinking out the plan of a book which was to be a new *Imitation of Christ*.

Then came the first letter from the unknown woman, from the Ukraine. It was the letter of a blue-stocking, to judge by the language; in other respects, the sort of letter which Balzac

was always receiving from women who were candidates for divorce, and felt gratified by the art with which he portrayed their kind in his books. He replied, flattered, but indifferent. A second letter, he allowed his mistress to answer. The Unknown introduced herself as a Countess Eveline Hanska. Balzac's chest swelled with naïve pride, and he recovered from the indignity put upon him by Madame de Castries. Then the 'Unknown sent a beautifully bound *Imitation of Christ*, and Balzac was convinced that fate was guiding him. He was thirty-three years of age when this imaginary love took possession of him, and for eighteen years, to the end of his life, it was to make him happy—or unhappy.

Until the first meeting, in September 1833, at Neufchâtel, the correspondence on both sides has become literature. Balzac lies horribly; he talks of his horses, when he often had not enough to eat; of the women who ogle him, when he lived like a Benedictine; of the books full of pious thoughts which he writes, while he was working at the *Contes Drolatiques*. Except the two first, the letters of the Countess Hanska were burned by Balzac—which we need not regret. She does not believe it, but she has been told that M. de Balzac is a celebrated

man, and so she writes, to pass the time in her lonely castle, and console herself a little for a husband twenty-five years her senior; also with the idea that she is of some importance to the celebrated man in Paris; all the more so, that Balzac constantly assures her that this is the case.

At their first meeting, Balzac beheld a stately woman, with large black eyes, and a very round red mouth, in a face not otherwise well-favoured. But she wore a purple velvet dress, which inflamed his mind. A miniature by the Viennese Daffinger thus presents her. Probably she would rather have avoided the stout, red, violent, and somewhat slovenly admirer, but then her husband was always present, and besides, Balzac knew how to attach her with the power of his love. After this first meeting—which indeed was more than that, for Madame wanted to go to Geneva to confess, and Balzac prevented her—Balzac's letters become livelier and more sentimental, even though he is still convinced that he has kindled the flame in an almost virgin heart, and she considers herself his Muse. It is a pity, after all, that her letters were burnt; as the documents of a goose, they might have been of value, even if records of that type are hardly necessary. They might have been of value also as regards Balzac, by proving clearly

the entirely imaginary character of this love of his. She is jealous. He replies with a reference to his seventeen hours of work daily, which hardly left him any time to give her cause for jealousy. And she might have been jealous of that little Maria to whom *Eugénie Grandet* is so touchingly dedicated, who said to Balzac: "Love me a year, and I will love you all my life." In the year 1833 Balzac wrote *Le Père Goriot*, *Le Lys dans la Vallée*, *Les jeunes Mariées*, *César Birotteau*, and essays of all kinds, but Madame de Hanska asks him: "Que faites-vous?" He tells her about his work, his wants, his struggles, his debts, his plans—a whole breviary of human activities—all of which seems to have thoroughly bored Madame de Hanska, for in Balzac's letters he often breaks out into such words as these: "Rich people do not understand. . . ." He writes every week, stealing from himself the necessary time, and that to him is money. If he misses a week, she is vexed—her tone is not always of the nicest—and he is obliged to answer: "For two days I have eaten nothing, and have not had the money for the postage." On one occasion, he quotes some remarks of his own, made at a reception: "All women, the greatest and the least, the duchess and the *grisette*, want men to be en-

tirely absorbed by them. They will rebel, before ten days are over, if a man gives his attention even to the most important matter. For this reason, all women like fools, who surrender all their time to them, proving their love by their complete devotion. If a genius give his heart and fortune to a woman, but not his time, even the greatest will not consider herself beloved."

Meetings took place at long intervals. During 1833, they spent six weeks in Geneva; during 1835, in Vienna. Then in 1841 the husband died. Balzac desired now to fulfil their intention during eight years, and marry. But she was full of resistance to his persuasions, and for nine years remained a widow. Probably she regretted her husband's death, since it enabled the man who was scarcely yet a lover to become so importunate. Balzac wanted corroboration of his own idea, which had always included marriage. Further meetings took place elsewhere. At last Balzac could bear it no longer, and started for Russia in a fever. For five years he had produced nothing, only re-editing his former books. He had given up those five years to the effort of realising his image. Their marriage took place at Berditcheff. Then the fever subsided. In Paris, Balzac had furnished a small house,

on fresh debts; it was brilliantly illuminated fór their arrival, but they were unable to gain admission, for the concierge had suddenly gone off his head, and refused to let them in. Four months later, Balzac was dead. When he was dying, Hugo and Gautier found no one with him except his mother; Madame was away on a journey. A few weeks later, she sold Balzac's manuscripts to the local tradesmen for paper bags.

Never has a woman been so entirely invented as Madame de Hanska. No invention of the kind has ever been so lifelike in its influence over the inventor. Not the slightest trace of Balzac's shadow falls on the real life of this stupid woman, for what she represented for him was nothing but a picture by his own hand, and at times an intrigue as if with some stranger.

DANCING

At La Gonterie, a village of Périgord, I once heard the priest condemn, or rather denounce, from his pulpit, the mania of his congregation for dancing. He concluded as follows: "What I say to you is not that you must not dance, since the Holy Virgin danced too, but you should dance decorously, for the Holy Virgin danced so." Then seizing his surplice by its two corners, he raised it lightly like a dancing-girl, and turned round about in the pulpit—"Vey qui comme ella dansâro—

> "La Bézi Bezon,
> La Bezon dondaine,
> La Bézi Bezon,
> La Bézi dondon."

Miss Duncan is like the priest at La Gonterie. She denounces all dancing, except her own so-called Greek variety, as unseemly, tights as indecent, and the ballet as inartistic. She has found many admirers of her Reform-dancing among Reform-women and schoolmasters, the

former because they are in favour of all reforms, the latter because in this case enthusiasm for a thing not usually tolerated, like dancing, is compatible with an enthusiasm for Greek particles, and does not interfere with professional dignity.

When all allowances have been made, however, there is still no reason to acclaim such dancing as the fulfilment of a long-felt want, and to consider henceforth all other dancing horrible. Miss Duncan's movements may prove a good exercise for young figures, they may include many dancing steps and postures, but they are not dancing. Bare legs are a bad costume, and nothing more. If the object be to show the play of muscle, well-fitting tights would not interfere with that; and dragging modesty into the question is a governess's idea which makes one yawn. The question is neither one of promoting modesty nor of displaying muscle.

Solo-dancing is spontaneous inspiration, intoxication, and sensuousness combined with rhythmic motion. From the possible movements, those most in harmony with the circumstances are selected instinctively. That is what country-dances are; the dances of society are similar, so is the ballet. No doubt the movements have become stark convention, and are losing

the remnant of their emotional meaning, in a democratic age. But the disappearance of forms of dancing, their dwindling into few, characterises democracy like the loss of forms and ceremonies in social intercourse. We are ill-mannered, as we were *not* taught to be. We call it being natural. Open-air pursuits give us a sort of right to such behaviour. But the desire for the rhythmical restraints of the great period is still awake, and invents art-dancing like Miss Duncan's.

Our dancing would never have become conventional, if it had been determined by something non-elementary—that is, by well-regulated emotions. Thus Miss Duncan's dancing will never become a convention, because it is a more or less happy, well-considered, well-contrived mimicry of pictorial subjects, a muscular exercise, not animated by any inherent harmony, merely a clever performance that bores the spectator. She mimics sorrow to the sound of a funeral march, and something else to the music of Beethoven or Chopin, or she represents a picture by Botticelli. There is no doubt about it, artistic dancing is foreign to our times. A few ladies mimic the archaistic before spectators, that is all.

The dance of the day is the social dance,

which is limited to a few traditional forms, though, in accordance with the freer tendencies of the period, there is an inclination to take a little license and break through their restrictions. The same applies to the country-dance.

The dance of Our Lady, performed by the priest, was not at all approved of by the young men and maidens of Périgord. That Sunday evening, they danced the most unrestrained *moulinets* and *corbeilles* to the beat of the love and passion in their blood. And so be it.

All art was in the beginning a religious cult, for primitive religions are emotional, and do not philosophise. Dancing was to the glory of God. The Indian Bacchus enjoyed it orgiastically, Jehovah perhaps with more dignity, but all forms were mimetic orders of ritual. Besides this, war-dances and sex-dances also have a sacred connection.

The theatre first secularised dancing, as early as the Greek period. There arose the dramatic dance, the mimetic steps of the chorus, which accompanied the action; the lyric dance, performed by the two sexes to the sound of the lyre; and soon afterwards the special (so to speak) lay dances, such as the Epilinios described by Longus, an acrobatic dance referred to by Athenæus, and a mourning dance at funerals.

Plato commends dancing for exerting a calming influence over four dangerous passions: Joy, Anger, Fear, and Melancholy.

The Romans, a serious and utilitarian people, left dancing to professionals, who copied Greek dancing. Their only original form was the masquerade, introduced by Nero. No dramatic dance developed. The mimic performances of the gladiators took its place.

Dancing was not again used in ritual until Christian times, and then only for a while, as it relapsed too soon into its natural state, and therefore into sin, and was prohibited. In the Renaissance it again became part of the cult, to be finally forbidden in the year 1667 by Act of Parliament; and now only survives in the Carnival, the authorised Saturnalia of the Catholic Church.

The ballet before 1581 was a chivalric pageant, never dramatic, and hardly a dance. The first ballet, in the present acceptation of the term, was the one invented in 1581 by Balthazarini for his beloved Catherine de Medicis: it comprised action, music, and dancing, and was performed, according to the rules of etiquette, only by men, or by women dressed as men. It was not until the time of Louis XIV, who danced himself, and founded the Academy of Dancing, that female

dancers first appeared on the stage. About the middle of the eighteenth century, the stage was extended into the midst of the spectators, who then began to join in the dancing instead of only watching it. In the Revolution, court dances such as the minuet and the *contre-danse* were adopted by those of the bourgeois who wished to be superior, and they then gave up country-dances.

Music left dramatic dancing in the lurch and went its own way; the ballet followed, scarcely a dance any longer, but rather a choregraphic display, as it is called, consisting of leg-acrobatics, fascinating when performed by a crowd, but painful, and devoid of emotional meaning, in the *pas seul* of the *première danseuse*.

The marvellous, tragic Gavasi, danced by the Egyptian Almées, is only a stomach-dance. The Javanese dance with their arms and hands, more fitted for dancing, so it seems to me, than the legs and feet, which must be always seeking to maintain equilibrium. The Javanese are able to express far more, for they have greater freedom in their choice of movements and an inexhaustible wealth of sensuality. A recent dancer has brought back many ideas suggested by them, but without success, it seems: we still like to be danced to by legs.

FASHIONS

Some people think that they are annihilating fashions by describing them as nothing but the invention of greedy tailors. Now, tailors are not an entirely contemptible race of men, nor is greed their peculiar characteristic; and tailors do not invent fashions at all. I understand the reasons why a woman may refuse to follow a fashion, and rely on the products of her own inventive genius. They are reasons of finance as well as of physique. She will not willingly own to either of them; she prefers to say that she does not follow a new fashion because she despises the dictation of tailors, or because the new fashion is absurd. But experience has long since proved that there are only two moments when a fashion is absurd—before it yet exists, and after it has ceased to exist. The fashion is never absurd. It is a variety, and a universally requisite variety, of the means of attraction and self-assertion in a great crowd. A woman wears "the latest thing" only so long (and short enough

at that) as it is worn by few of her kind; directly she is threatened with submergence in the many, she invents something new. For the tailor does not invent; he copies what the woman of known or reputed rank, name, beauty, and taste has already invented in order to exalt herself conspicuously above her rivals, in correspondence with those qualities. The tailor is at best an adviser, a technical assistant—never an inventor.

It is well known that a woman dresses directly for other women, indirectly only for men. Further, she is aware that, though she can create a good impression on men by the *ensemble* of a new fashion, she can by a detail enrage and eclipse the woman whose hat is a week behindhand. It is a struggle of women among themselves, often carried on simply for its own sake—one in which every device used in the savage warfare of barbarous times (and so used still among the lower classes) has been sublimated to the uses of fashion. It is a fight for power over man, and therefore primarily a fight between woman and woman.

Some time ago there arose in the breasts of certain enthusiastic old and young maids, devoid of any special feminine distinction, a desire to emerge from the mass of their fellow-women. The then prevailing fashions were for many

reasons denied to them, so these devotees of Botticelli, earnest workers, faint pursuers of man, invented a wondrous garb, half sack, half frock, all artfully and craftfully embroidered. Stout women who would conceal that they were stout; comfortable women, not knowing that the source of beauty must suffer its restraints, and acclaiming the "individual"; with many women more, —went their ways clad in sacks of art materials. This "Reform Dress," as they call it in accordance with a tendency of the times, is not a fashion; it is nothing but the foolish label of an inefficient school.

The fashion is not a thing invented by tailors, nor yet by schools, but by a woman out of the beauty of her own body, or certain of its traits. The success of her beauty excites to imitation of her *apparat*—for after all, no one is quite certain that it is not clothes that make the person. What one woman invents to enhance her peculiar charms soon passes to others whose similar charms it also enhances, then, in succession, to those whom it just becomes, to those whom it does not misbecome, and to those whom it does; finally it sinks into caricature, and so ceases to be "The Fashion" at all.

TRAVELLING

The custom of travelling has increased in our time in proportion as the talent for it, or rather the need for it, has decreased. For, in reality, our course through the world, with the greatest rush of transport, merely means constantly staying at home in unusual discomfort; though this will be gradually remedied by the gigantic development of hotel accommodation. The only distinction between some travellers and the stay-at-homes is that the former sleep in rolling bedrooms and the latter in stable ones. Travelling has become a mania for the fastest and most continuous motion, and has entirely lost its sentimental meaning. We travel no more for the fascination of the unknown. We are no longer transported to the "beautiful blue distance," but scour towns and countries whereof we already have precise information, and which we know before we start are not mysteriously blue, but certainly tinged with yellow. We also travel for this reason: to ascertain that in sundry places we can eat and

sleep better than at home. We travel with a trunk full of opinions, that we put in our heads, for confirmation by foreign parts. So we only travel just to find ourselves over again wherever we go. Therefore we no longer travel, but are always at home, always *chez nous*. People nowadays seem to me to possess so little, that they cannot afford to lose any of it; they must always be on their guard against such losses. Something or other, either restlessness, or a bad liver, or a feeling of oppression, drives them round the world, but they no longer know how to travel.

READING

ONCE, in a drawing-room, I heard a lady asking a young man, whom I suspected of being a modern poet: "As a matter of fact, what ought we women to read?" And before turning all my attention again to my charming partner, I heard the first names of the familiar list which begins with the Bible and ends with some one like John Davidson. The young man had not understood the question, which was quite justified by his profession.

I would not dream of saying that ladies should not read the Bible, and all other beautiful writings since, for which they may have time and inclination. But what every woman must read is: a very well-polished mirror of confessions; a quite bad woman's novel, perhaps one of George Sand's; and all the books of Stendhal. The two first recommend themselves; their use is obvious; but a word about Stendhal. He said: "L'amour a toujours été pour moi la plus grande des affaires, ou plutôt la seule"; and: "Si j'eusse été habile, je serais dégoûté de l'amour jusqu'à la nausée, et dans

tout ce qui touche aux femmes j'ai le bonheur d'être dupe comme à vingt-cinq ans."

As a boy he made merry with girls, who deserted him when the real boys, their favourites, appeared. He read Nerciat and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Later on, the girls would leave him in the lurch in critical situations; he was neglected, "échaudé,"—"scottato," as the Italians say. Supported by his temperament, he gained quite a hyper-sensitively sensitive idea of passion, and he had in his mind a work of the subtlest analysis, studied from the best French writers, such as Helvétius and Valmont. From this, the wealth of his experience in women may be inferred. For instance, he had scruples like Valmont's about making love to a certain Mélanie, a bad actress, greedy for a protector, who only awaited his word to yield. He relates in his diary all his hopes and doubts over this affair. He even became a grocer's clerk on account of Mélanie, just to be able to live near her in Marseilles. He was in love on principle, and he could retire when he wished; and he did retire. All this was quite artificial, entirely psychological, entirely a matter of study and practice, but it appeared necessary to him. The immediate result of these exercises is his pedantic book, *De l'Amour*; but Stendhal's nature is in his other books.

He loved Méthilde Dembrowsky, the wife of the general, even to rudeness towards other women. She granted him nothing. In reference to this he said later, in Paris: "L'amour me donna en 1821 une vertu bien comique, la chasteté." His love in this case, however, was still deliberate, but with Mme. de Curial, whose acquaintance he had made during the Empire, he fell passionately in love afterwards, at the time of the Restoration.

When Stendhal is seized by a passion, it does not occur to him to attain his certain end as quick as he can. His erotic energy is too strong for that. He desires the woman whom he loves to confide in him entirely, to reveal herself to him completely. When all has come to the surface, when all self-made difficulties have been removed and nothing is left but passionate emotion, then only does he possess the woman, now enflamed for him alone, and so makes a quick conclusion. He does not hesitate from fearfulness, but from boldness. He quenches his thirst slowly, and puts off the intoxication as late as possible.

Weakly men, like a certain dreary novelist, declare that the *comble* of their enjoyment is "sentir le plus possible, en s'analysant le plus possible." That is the prudent limitation of an

egoist afraid of losing his ego if he gets too far away from it, and forced to be always making sure of its presence by analysing his mind—*cogito ergo sum*. Stendhal, the napoleonic epicure, the dragooner of the intellect, was of a somewhat robuster constitution and not by any means a contemplative, enjoying the state of his soul and thinking that he was thus enjoying the world. He says often enough that analysis increases pain and decreases pleasure. For him it is only a means, not an end. He analyses circumstances, "les circonstances des faits," but it is "le fait" which is the point to him. The generation in which he lived made an enthusiastic spirit a passion with this besieger.

The books of this man, who wrote "as one smokes a cigarette," should be read by ladies, for they will certainly never get through the list prescribed by the young man.

ORNAMENT

WHEN certain intelligent people disapprove of what their own observation has led them to assume are original causes, they set themselves the utopian yet unimaginative task of abolishing the ultimate effects of those supposed causes. They assume development where there is variety, and look for intelligence where there is nothing but sensation. They advocate the rational life, because they have never in their lives known the delights of irresponsibility, and can never succeed in consequence of their personal defects. Such people cut off women's hair, assuring them meanwhile that long hair is a sign of servitude, and so on, and so on. They make shoes with low heels a matter of principle, because they give a surer and firmer tread—as if there were anything in that. They pronounce ear-rings barbaric survivals, and, brushing aside all excuses, triumphantly ask their neighbours why they do not wear rings in their noses. These people, who are so well versed in history and ethnography, are always requiring us

to belie our own history. Because the custom of nose-rings is not usual among us, they object to our ear-rings "on principle." Somali is spoken somewhere in Africa; why do not those who are always projecting us into their imaginary future object on that account to our French and German? They have a mania for progress, because they suppose that material improvements must have their essential parallels in spiritual life. For them, knowing more, which is our natural acquisition from the past, implies also signifying more.

The need of ornament, then, may have the meanest origin — but let us cherish these old barbarous instincts, and be thankful that we have not quite lost them. All ornament has a sensuous appeal; it is meant to draw attention to the part of the body which it adorns. For this reason the patch was used in places where other forms of ornamentation cannot be fixed.

The ear-ring, which is to draw attention to a small ear, should not weigh it down too heavily, or the pleasure which it gives us is spoiled by a fear lest the ring should tear the lobe. Big ears are better without those ornaments. Bracelets should not be worn on thick wrists, nor shoe-ribbons on thick ankles. Long Marquise rings on short, plump fingers will make the fingers look shorter still. Pale stones may be worn on pale

hands, but stones for red hands must be carefully chosen. One of those long chains depending at right angles from the edge of an ill-cut corset over a stout figure, and the too conspicuous *breloque* dangling from it, make the wearer's bust appear more grotesque than it is. A woman seldom wears a strange ornament successfully. There is something imitative and artificial about the Quattrocento forehead-gem; it produces impressions out of harmony with the woman's presence. Except at theatres or balls, anything of a fantastic kind interferes with her spontaneous effect. Conversation with her drags along in inanities about Botticelli or Gainsborough, because the first impression is produced by something foreign to herself, and the conversation takes its turn from that impression.

Bad ornament disfigures; when misused, it has a distracting effect; worn for its own sake, it looks unnatural, and makes a woman appear stupider than she is. That only is true adornment which points unobtrusively to the beauties of the wearer, for ornament does not beautify, it guides the eye to beauty.

VEILS

WHEN Queen Margot went on her adventures by night through the streets of Paris, she used to wear a mask, not in order to remain unrecognised—that did not affect her, and every one knew her—but to protect her complexion. Veils originated in the same way, as objects of use. Modern hygiene calls them harmful because they keep off the air necessary to the skin. It is a futile discussion, for veils are established, whether with hygienic approval or without, for use or harm. They serve the imagination, by obscuring the face and giving it an indistinctness full of suggestions, anticipations, and dreams. They conceal, in order to enliven our curiosity. They give no ready reply, as the unveiled face so often does; they answer our questions with queries.

FLIRTING

There is no harm in the flirting of quite a young girl. It is charming, instinctive play: it should not be discouraged, for it animates her movements, increases her knowledge of the mental and physical faculties, enlivens her conversation, and braces her imagination. In a woman it is all this, and something more. A woman knows the fallacy which a man commits when he concludes her knowledge of all secrets from such outward and visible evidences, thinking: "What must that woman be in a moment of passion—capable of much, knowing much, and loving seldom!"

All human beings wish to create the best impression; at least, very few people are concerned to make a bad one, least of all, men on women and women on men. To-day, the highest praise which can be given a woman is to say that she has temperament. Hence arise the efforts on the part of all women, not to have temperament, for that is not so easily acquired,

but to simulate it. Temperament means here, the greatest capacity for ardent love. Flirting is its simulation, and for a woman of thirty no easy matter, for if she practise it unskilfully, what she has, and still more what she lacks, all becomes terribly apparent. Unskilful flirting can even lose a woman, in a man's eyes, the little that she really possesses; just as a woman of forty, who dyes her hair red, becomes thereby an old lady of fifty. Those who dare not venture on such dangerous territory prefer to resort to the last degree of coquetry—its distinct avoidance. This can only give pleasure; but it can never be ridiculous, and it often produces the most unexpected results.

If the Sphinx had chattered and made much ado about her riddles, guessers would soon have failed her!

The question of temperament causes much trouble. Not long ago, a little theatrical lady exclaimed, "They say I have no temperament, but, after all, I can't put my legs on the table!"—persistently challenging an answer; and no one was kind enough to reply to the poor thing, "Madame, you can!"

THE CORSET

THE corset is supposed to have been invented by the Christian asceticism of the Middle Ages. Medieval asceticism is a myth, and the corset is an invention of the sixteenth century. The thirteenth century knew the *fascia*, very narrow strips of material wound round the body below the breast. In the fifteenth century, these strips, then somewhat broader, were wound *over* the breast. The sixteenth century came to the help of stout women with the corset; for since the Middle Ages, the ideal of beauty had been the slim, even thin woman. The woman who was not thin endeavoured to approach this ideal by art, not for the sake of asceticism. The Renaissance introduced the fashion of small waists and *décolletage*. People ate more and better, and grew stouter. The Italian and Flemish burghers became important, and their wives desired to become the standard themselves; and they were powerful, full-bosomed ladies; but there was still a desire to retain as much as possible of gentle refinement;

so waists were made small, and the figure was modified according to taste. Then came the corset, which enabled the waist to be lengthened or shortened to suit the requirements of different figures. Then, as now, a small bust was considered beautiful, as indeed it was among the Greeks. Receipts may be found in Dioscorides for preventing young girls from growing too large in the bust, and for reducing the over-developed to a normal size.

Medieval asceticism only affected the plastic arts, for they were always devoted to religion. Conclusions about life cannot be drawn from them. Arts which were not exercised in the service of the Church, such as the *fabliaux*, the *chansons de geste*, minstrelsy, and the songs of troubadours, show no trace of asceticism.

Fashion has deeper foundations and motives than are to be found in sermons and treatises.

A LAW OF FASHION

This law seems to me to be as follows: The sum of material employed in all fashions always remains the same, only the distribution of this material about the body varies. The fulness added to the skirt is taken away from the bodice; an increase in the size of the hat is accompanied by a decrease somewhere else, and so on. The Sum remains a constant quantity. These changes in distribution originate with some woman, generally speaking, in a position to "launch" a new fashion, to whose figure the new arrangement is becoming. For this reason, when worn by the ideal wearer, all fashions are beautiful; they can only become hideous when the new arrangement is imitated, as for certain definite reasons it must be imitated, by women of quite a different build from the originator. So that for a good half of womankind a new fashion means a misfortune. The invention of a tall, slim woman will not suit a short, plump one: the distribution of material alone tallies, but the corresponding

parts of the body are not similarly proportioned. The invention of a slight woman, to make her figure more ample, will be a cross to the stout woman who suffers from amplitude already. Hence, on the non-ideal wearer, all fashions are ugly.

I believe that the same claim to validity may be made for this law of the Constant Sum in fashions, as for the law of the Golden Mean. The nearer a fashion approximates to the Sum, the longer it will last; the farther it departs from it, the more transient it will be.

St. Jerome, writing to a Gallic lady, says: "It is not sufficient to forego those garments which expose the body under the pretence of clothing it. Vicious ingenuity knows how to take advantage even of the plainest garment; it can be worn without folds, or trailed to increase the wearer's stature; an open tunic shows what you wish to show, polished shoes attract the attention of gentlemen on the promenade. The bosom is bound with ribands; and the cloak, sliding by chance off white shoulders, leaves them bare, and is quickly caught up again, as if in anxiety to hide what is purposely displayed."

So wrote the Saint who, before the days of his solitude, was familiar with Roman society of the fifth century; and it might have been written yesterday. The brevity of time is often a pleasant consolation when thoughts range too widely. So, it is well to turn over the leaves of old writings.

In the eleventh century St. Anselm declaims:

"People paint their eyes to make their glances more seductive; they fast to acquire a pale complexion, because it produces an impression that love is the pale lady's chief object; they colour their lips; they trim their eyebrows to make the arch finer and more regular; they dye their black hair brown; they give their breasts a rounder form by means of stays."—How old the world is, and how young mankind!

The ancients, and particularly the Greeks, sought purity of form more than expression of feature. It was during the Middle Ages, especially in Flanders, that interest in expression was first roused. This may be seen in the miniature-painters; for them, purity of form is subordinate to physiognomy. So also with the early poets of the first *Chansons de Geste.* For a long time the epithet remains "fair" without any differentiation; indeed, it is often used of wealth, or worth, or virtue. The portrait of Blanchefleur in the lengthy *épopée, Garin-le-Loberain,* of the twelfth century is more definite: "She bore her head uncovered, and no cloak; a red silk robe daintily outlined her limbs; the palfrey that bore her was lily-white, the caparison was very sumptuous, and the bridle alone might well be worth a hundred marks; but the woman was fair of body and of counte-

nance; her lips were full (*bouche espessète*); her teeth small, regular, and whiter than polished ivory; her hips were slim (*hanches bassettes*); her complexion was white and red; her eyes were laughing and of a changing colour; and her eyebrows finely traced. She was the fairest woman ever born; her yellow hair fell over her shoulders, and the circlet of gold and precious stones which crowned her brow added still more to her beauty."

The Emperor Pepin makes her sit beside him, and examines her in detail, following, as the poem expresses it with delicate sensuality, the rise and fall of her breast, as it lifts the smooth ermine skin:

"Les mamelettes il vit amont sallir,
Qui li soslievent le pélicon hermin."

These poets always describe like lovers: they name one beauty after another and praise it, but why they love they cannot say, so they exhaust themselves in enumeration. We learn that this period admired slenderness in woman, small feet, fair hair, well-modelled knees, long legs, firm breasts, and sloping hips. The rarity of all these qualities raised them to beauties.

In the thirteenth century, the troubadours are obliged to use rhetorical artifices in order to vary the theme of women's beauty. In the same century the Abbot Adam de Perseigne writes to

the Comtesse Mahaut that "long trains stir up the dust and hinder the progress of people in haste. The ladies of our time do not blush to resemble the fox; proud of his long brush, like him they parade with the long tails of their skirts." We see that wit has not changed since.

The fourteenth century continued to hold the same ideal of beauty as the earlier period, repeated in more and more conventional and pallid forms by the poets. The beautiful Lucretia, in the love-story of Æneas Silvius Piccolomini, is as beautiful as her generation can imagine her, and Villon's Belle Heaulmière is her colourless sister. But the poets now discover the soul, and so approach nearer to the ugly, and gain afresh that outward beauty which is informed from within. And with this, individual distinctions become more firmly marked and the ideal type of beauty disappears from literature, to live on among painters, who now begin to create profane works, even when they paint religious pictures. The *Eve* of Van Eyck is the portrait of a model chosen according to the ideal of the time, whom the master moreover, in his great, honest manner, has not been able or has not desired to exalt to a type. In spite of this, the followers of Van Eyck made little alteration in his style. The

lean type continues in Memling, Dirck, and Rogier. It is even so with the later painters. The round, open brow, the eyebrows pencilled and distinctly separated, the slightly open mouth and the very prominent chin; such faces are rare in Flanders to-day; they must have been so also in those days. This explains the elevation of the type to an ideal of beauty, under the still effective influence of mediæval taste.

The new ideal of the Renaissance finds its first expression in literature. The earliest example is perhaps in the book, *De Præcellentia feminei sexus*, by the doctor and knight, Cornelius Agrippa, dedicated to the chaste Marguerite d'Autriche. Agrippa's portrait of ideal beauty is richer in details of physique than the earlier ones. Beauty has become fuller, rounder, more vivid, more vivacious, and more animated; a full-blown rose compared with the close bud of the former period. The contemporary French poet, Jehan Lemaire, makes Paris say of the three goddesses that "he could distinguish nothing, for the divine exuberance of the goddesses was completely covered and veiled."

Painters soon followed poets into the newly reopened Olympus. A worship of sensuous beauty began, such as no former age had ever known. Rubens's fat women dethroned the thin

ones of Van Eyck, yet without being able to rob them of their secret glory.

To-day, it seems to me, an ideal of beauty is no longer established for the body, but for its clothes. This perversion began early in the eighteenth century. Could the enchanting Mme. de H. pose as a Venus Anadyomene? And who can still see the divine form beneath the clothes of a peasant-girl?

AN INSPECTION OF FASHION-PLATES

The growing eclecticism in fashions towards the end of the Second Empire seems to have deprived their presentation of all its charm for artists, who disappear from fashion-papers about this time, leaving the production of the plates to technical steel engravers. When the invention of those mechanics was exhausted, they carelessly mixed up the fashions of all times as they came to hand: Valois hats, Mme. Tallien skirts, Antoinette waistcoats, and so on. On the other hand, it is a great pleasure to look through old fashion-papers —the Paris *Journal des Dames*, for instance, or the London *Gallery of Fashion*, the Weimar *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, or the Parisian *Bonne Grâce*; and later, *La Mode* and the *Wiener Zeitschrift*.

Democracy has levelled the class-distinctions formerly expressed in dress, which is now the same for citizens, mechanics, and scholars. The masculine coat is a symbol of this levelling; one

can hardly talk any longer about fashions for men; their costume has now been stationary for about a hundred years, and its modifications by fancy are so slight as to be scarcely worth mentioning. Since 1870, what is called fashion among ladies is also more remarkable for rapid variation, than any special attempt at definite alteration; even ladies' fashions have become essentially stationary and universal, equally attainable and wearable by all ladies, and every servant-girl on Sundays.

The history of leggings is the history of society up to 1800; from that time onwards they have no significance. The leggings of the Middle Ages consisted of one piece, which covered alike the foot, the leg, and the thigh. The great Louis, a reformer of fashions, divided this garment; the position of the knee, indeed, had been already indicated earlier by a ribbon and rosette. The leggings were then cut through below the knee, and thus gave rise to *haut-de-chausses* (knee-breeches), and *bas-de-chausses* (short bas, or stockings). At the same time, the wearing of shoes with ribbons and buckles became *de rigueur*, and boots were confined to horsemen and travellers. Matters remained thus until the Revolution, which could change Constitutions, but not fashions. Heads might fall, but the powder still clung to

their hair. The painter David did indeed invent neo-Frankish leggings, but Pétion called them tomfoolery. Even before the Revolution the former limits of knee-breeches had much altered; they not only moved upwards or downwards between the knees and the hips, but they rose almost under the shoulder-blades, or extended down the calf as far as the ankle, and in the year 1796 the *pantalon*, the forerunner of the modern trouser, first appeared. For a long time the *pantalon* was mistaken for an invention of the *sans-culottes*, until Frederick William III. wore it as morning dress at Pyrmont in January 1797. Officials who appeared wearing the *pantalon* on formal occasions were regarded with disapproval, and referred to the laws of etiquette. But the elegant morning dress of the fashionable became the ordinary clothing of those who only dress once a day, and finally of those who generally possess only one suit. Then it was adopted for the army, and having started originally from above, it re-conquered the upper classes from below, and became the general wear. Levelling!

One thing seems to be constantly repeating itself in fashions: the masses generally adopt what the elegant have worn on some special occasion, and subsequently its general use is forced on the elegant in their turn, who, in a period which has

abolished class-distinctions, must no longer differ from the crowd.

All this is to be seen in fashion-plates, and this besides: that after the Revolution, ladies' fashions became fantastic: there was no longer a court to set the tone, and Madame Tallien could become an authority.

In the years 1793 and 1794, the women of Germany were very much excited, for the notices and consignments of fashions from Paris ceased with the breaking off of diplomatic relations. It was a catastrophe. Patriots who had hitherto lived on French imports proclaimed that now or never was the time for people to show that they were Germans, and emancipate themselves for ever from France. So German clothes were made; and Chodowiecki designed several monstrosities, which were worn, just as imitation-coffee was drunk at the time of the Continental blockade. The Patriots were still declaiming when the fashions arrived from England; the scanty, shirt-like garment, fitting close on the breast and arms; falling straight down to the ankles from a waist raised as high as it could be; having a slit from the knee downwards, to show the leg. The whole of Europe succumbed to this fashion. By the Restoration, undressing had reached such an extreme that it was no longer compatible with

the climate. Then the modest little puffed sleeve of the Greek shift swelled into the *gigot*, and then to great balloon sleeves. Then waists lengthened again—the law of the Constant Sum—and the balloons descended on to the hips. The pre-revolutionary type was practically re-established. But the mass of material round the hips became greater still—and once more, according to the law of the Constant Sum, waists shortened—and the crinoline re-introduced the rococo. The whole of Europe succumbed to this beautiful mysterious bell. When it reached its greatest size, it was forced to change its shape; it was pushed backwards, and the silhouette became an S. The reign of plush was also peculiar to this period.

Then begins chaos in fashions, tastes, fortunes, company-promoting, failures, hand-to-mouth existence, the great hysterics of a time when there is no time for anything, which finds repose in annihilating space, and ecstasy in the dirigible air-ship.

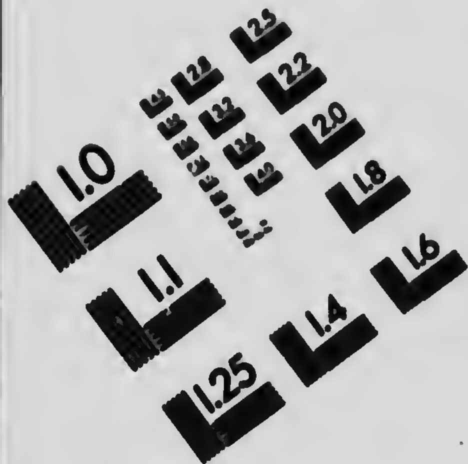
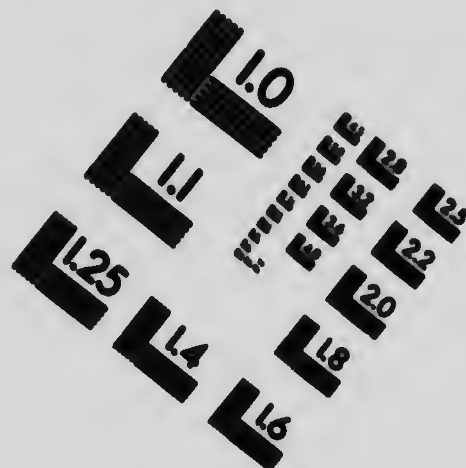
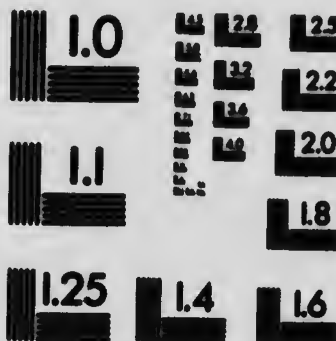
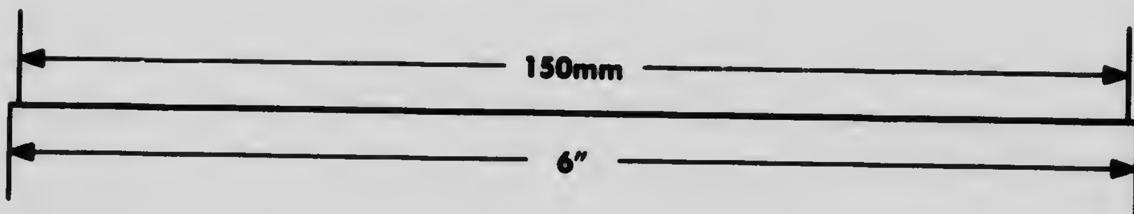
The "sweetly pretty" fashion-plates of the present time no longer represent ladies, but only the spiritless and senseless type of the day, smirking vacantly. These plates will tell a later age nothing about modern women. People will have to fall back on novelists, who give more informa-

tion than the sentimentalists, Georges Sand, Lamartine, and Feuillet, give concerning bourgeois sentimentality in the middle of the last century. Indiana loves, and pines, and suffers, but it is all *façade*. The husband is a brute with every fault, the lover an angel in every respect. We see tears, laughter, gestures, but the soul remains hidden. This romantic vacuity also appears in the fashion-plates of that day; the rapturous youth in nankeen trousers, and the maiden looking at the moon. These couples seem to spend their lives sighing; and if they were asked what they are thinking about, their reply would be a foolish giggle:

"Nous étions seuls, pensifs, et nous avions quinze ans."

Those middle-class sentimental women thought of nothing; they were merely angels. The novels of their time tell us no more about them than do the fashion-plates. The novels of our time will attain significance later, for the very qualities which, from the artistic point of view, make them so dreary to us.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)

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HELIOGABALUS

It was exactly three days since the Prætorians had strangled the Emperor in the gardens of the Esquiline Palace, and, after dragging the body through the town, had thrown the gashed and battered trunk into the Tiber.

Augaros, the man of leisure, was driving with his Marsilian guest, the young Silius Messala, along the country road towards Tibur, whither they were invited to an evening banquet at the country-house of the mime Comazon, who had been Consul five times under the late Emperor, and every time had had the good luck to escape with his life. They had started about sunset, and now the clear July evening lay over the landscape. The vehicle, drawn by a team of mules, had proceeded very slowly through the noisy crowd that filled the streets and open spaces; they were often obliged to stop—sometimes to let soldiers pass, sometimes to greet friends of Augaros, inquiring the object of his journey; then, again, there would be a chance

meeting with a comrade of the youth Messala, for he had not been in the town for six years. But, once past the Porta Tiburtina, where the public gardens begin, the mules broke into a light trot. The Thracian driver swung himself forward to the broad part of the carriage-pole, and guided the rumbling carriage off the paved causeway on to the earthy road; the comparative quiet was noticeable at once, as if the thousand heads of a roaring monster had been cut off at a single blow. Now it became possible to talk without tearing the words from the throat, and hurling them upon deafened ears. So Messala, who, having come from the provinces, was eager for news, began: "Since I have arrived too late for the feast, when the tables have been cleared away, and the lights extinguished, tell me at least what it was like. I have heard that you tasted with your own tongue, and that you are a connoisseur who understands such things; to hear all about it from you is almost like being present myself: so tell me." At that moment, a band of youths went by, somewhat unsteadily, on their way to the city, and one of them threw a wreath of roses into the carriage, shouting, in the speech of the people: "*Donec virenti canities abest . . . !*" And more roses flew after the carriage, as it drove on.

"There it is again," said Augaros, "the shout

which fills the whole town, and slaps you so encouragingly on the back. And yet I am to tell you of things past, of tables cleared, and of flutes laid aside in a corner. Yes: the pleasure of the moment would have us save it up for later enjoyment. The scent of this summer night would not be forgotten, but be kept for a remembrance when the nights are cold. In winter, when braziers are brought in, our cold feet feel colder still. All memories are a disturbance, and beautiful memories give pain. Recollections should not be stored for future moments, like a library, and all such temptations to weakness and fear of that which is approaching should be resisted. We are content with the blossom, if the fruit be poisonous or uneatable. If you wait for the fruition of the moment, you will thereby miss its bloom. For it demands everything from us, if we wish to enjoy it, and we must raise all that is within us to its greatest height, in order to comprehend the pleasure of the moment completely. If it find us thinking of what was or what will be, then we have lost it utterly and for ever."

But Messala was afraid that in this way they would miss what he wished to know, so, instead of answering, he said: "Tell me about the Emperor."

"It was of him that I was speaking, and of nothing else. Every one in Rome is speaking of

him to-day, and of nothing but him. Did you not hear? *Donec virenti . . .*"

"You must be clearer," said Messala, who was excited by his journey and the town, and had little wish to indulge in considerations of such a general kind, with the old cynic; although his return to Rome, after such a long absence abroad, had an object which might have made him welcome them. For the young man had no less an end in view than to devote himself to philosophy in Rome, and learn from the doctrine and example of thoughtful men something of the meaning and aim of life, whereby to direct his own. First some lonely years, and then some rather wild ones, spent in the port, had thrown Messala, an Etrurian by race, inclined to gentle melancholy, somewhat off his balance. To this contributed not a little the discovery that his nearest relatives were devoted to the new Christian doctrine, and could not be impressed by reasons or proofs. This oppressed him; thus he desired to hear news, first to raise his spirits, and then because it perhaps might help him to understand the new ideas, if he heard some of their modes of expression. Therefore he was concerned with the course of events, and not with the conclusions to be drawn from them, and he said: "You must be clearer."

Then Augaros said: "You mean to go and study with the philosophers, so I will tell you how this boy-Emperor lived a greater and wiser life than has been dreamt of by all the philosophers put together; for—if we except the divine Plato, who was a poet—they only seek for knowledge in order to fight over it, and they let their beards grow long meanwhile, so that they look like barbarians from beyond the mountains. And they load the lightest things with the weight of their senseless thoughts, and thus drag them down into a deep hole. As if deep questions did not crave answers that will float on the surface, like a cork on water. A well is dug for the sake of the spring which leaps to the light, not for the sake of the muddy hole in its depth. Do not be impatient. I will tell you of fact too, but we must understand each other concerning this, or you will think that I am telling you the tales and gossip of the circus.

"Very well, this is what I mean: If deep things do not serve life with visible clothing and adornment, they come to nothing, and are but a game of people who, being themselves shut out of life, cannot attain to it. We take new soundings of life with no other secret object than to gain new surfaces for it. The excellent courtesan Benedicta, whom I hope that we shall meet at Comazon's

house, serves the Syrian god, because the blood-baths which he requires suit her well. Is not that the reason why we have brought the god to Rome? We concoct drinks of a peculiar kind for our deliriums, and invent new words for them: why should we not also invent new gods for them, to be visible signs of our satisfaction? And that was the greatest thing that the Emperor did: he brought the creations of our highest moments as near to us as possible, so that we can walk with folded hands, and feel our divinity. Let me tell you, this youth never suffered the tyranny of accepted ideas to gain power over him. He never concerned himself with the commonplaces of life, and so spent unprofitable hours. He paid no attention to the normal mean in life, nor to self-evidences, such as fair and foul weather, and the comfortable, satisfying corroboration of any opinion. He did not seek pleasure, because he was annoyed by opposing conditions; he did not want to stand on tiptoe and give himself cramp, in order to see. He always found the fulness of life without searching for it, and was equipped with everything necessary for appreciating its fulness. He gave no value to what he did, beyond the time spent in the doing of it, and therefore he never repeated his actions, but always did something fresh, for the association

and connection of actions through their deeper meaning did not concern him at all. For observe: it is not what I do, but what I am, my power of concealment, that pleases the gods. The Emperor never descended to the mean things of life, about which these philosophers and these Christians are troubled, because they seek the grounds of their troubles; he neither roasted the Christians on account of their opinions, nor questioned the philosophers about their learning, for he gave no opinions or learning a wider utility than they had for the lives of those who held them. And he himself could afford to forego this service of opinions, even when they were his own. He used to call all his senators *slaves in the toga*, and made those gentlemen perfume themselves when he was obliged to appear amongst them, so that at least their pleasant odour, if nothing else, might make their existence tolerable to him. When he had drunken guests, he shut them up with Ethiopian hags, or jackals and hyenas. His was the exuberance of a young god, who makes his jest of man's sense of his own dignity, and has enough judgment not to make the jest too subtle.

"On one occasion he had four lions harnessed to his carriage, on another four elephants, then four does; once he was drawn naked in a one-wheeled carriage by four naked women. You will see

that his way was so ordered as to be unburdened by any kind of object beyond the moment itself. Life to him was always the end of life, and nothing that ends is long enough, or lasting enough, for thought. Aims, which are not instantaneously fulfilled, hamper or harry progress, and the Emperor went through life playing like a dancer, rejoicing in the niceness of his steps, and gave no further thought to the way. What we think about the way, what we contemplate beyond the passing moment, outstrips life, and those superfluous thoughts represent life wider, conceive it grander, dream it eternal—and all those thoughts we block, and press back into this short life, and thereby make it hard, sad, and barren. For then we are always being confronted with *Either—Or*, with the greater or the less, with virtue or vice; yet there is only one thing. So there is nothing; neither great nor small, good nor evil; the widest contraries can be defended by similar reasons, for they are a unity within us. Our most beautiful thought becomes hideous when we do it; our most beautiful deed, when we think it.

"Was not this Emperor a marvellous example of the pride and flower of life? I will tell you more of him and of that playful, extravagant behaviour, which our old Roman gentlemen,

who are always quoting the days of the Republic, deemed unlicensed, as indeed it was, only that they took that merit ill. In the spring, the Emperor had his table covered, one day with leek-green, the next with bottle-green, and so on, through all the greens of the spring. For the summer he chose shades of blue, for the autumn yellow, and for the winter red. He would walk one day on roses, the next on narcissus, the third on violets. So entirely was his being given up to the moment, so antagonistic was it to anything that occurs a second time and has the thought of the first time like a grey shadow by its side, that he never possessed the same person more than once. He used up every minute to the full, leaving no shred over for the next. He altered the physical forms of his body to ever new shapes, as he did his dress. He was a woman, a man, a boy, according to the changing pleasure of the moment. The gods were good to him in this, that they did not confine him in the prison of his own senses. Desire never came upon him in a paroxysm. Think of the red eyes with which the fat Glaucos devoured Livia this afternoon; of his hands, that only seize and cannot feel; and of the spectacle of greedy satiety which he presented afterwards, as if some one had forcibly stuffed his paunch with food,—

think of our friend Glaucos, and you will understand me when I say that the Emperor was beloved of the gods, for, besides all the rest, they granted him this: a lust that was never greedy to satiety, but, weaker than himself, was always his servant and never his master. He was an Emperor, because he was so far above all, that he could give himself up to all without losing himself. He was an *hetaira*, and used to invite the courtesans from the circus, the stadium, or the theatre to visit him, and talk with them about vice. He would stand, clad in woman's clothes, with gilded lips, behind the curtain of an apartment that looked upon the street, to attract the passers-by. He was a hawker of vegetables, a cook, a perfumer, an inn-keeper, a slave-dealer, and many things besides, according to the fancy of the moment, and he was all this in conformity with the maxim which says that what we *are* pleases the gods, and that our actions are indifferent to them. Thus action is not burdened with meaning, and thus the Emperor mingled the meaning and relation of action and of all things, and set the example of regarding meaning and relation as nothing more than the mere design of a carpet. In the lotteries which he gave at his banquets, one man would win ten camels, another ten flies, ten

ostriches, ten duck's eggs, or a mad dog. At the theatre, he used to have the spectators sprinkled with perfumes, and snakes let loose among them. He rained flowers on his guests, which fell in such masses from the silken awnings, that those who could not escape were stifled in them. He had pearls mixed with the rice which was served at his table, grains of gold in the peas, and ambergris in the beans. . . ."

Augaros paused, as if he expected some remark at last from his companion. But the young man was silent, and looked out into the stillness of the moonlit night, twisting the wreath of roses in his hands. The way led uphill, and the carriage was moving at a walking pace. Only after a little while Messala said:

"Now I understand the beginning of your discourse, when you were already speaking of the Emperor, and I did not realise it. You did quite right, and yet quite according to the manner of those writers and philosophers whom you despise, when you first stated your theme, and then spoke later of the ambergris in the beans. Otherwise I should have continually been thinking only of the dish of beans. And yet you have misled me with your theory of the Emperor."

"My theory?"

"Yes, with the theory that you deduced from him."

"That is the after-thought," said Augaros; "forget it."

"Yes, that is the difficulty," Messala admitted. "What if I have not the proper expedient? What should the pleasure of the moment be then to me, but an after-thought for all time, one more of the thoughts that trouble men? and what if I have need of another meaning in life than this exclusion of all meaning, when I let things react on one another for no other object than pleasure in the richness of the surface?"

Then Augaros said: "There are certain things enclosed in our lives, which sometimes express themselves by us, without our understanding them. This tempts us to give them a meaning, whereby we may find the meaning of visible life. These things enclosed in our lives force us to do this or that, and we do it, but wherefore we cannot say, and we should not speak of it aloud lest we should do violence to language. For, whatever answers we may find, they still lead us by no other way than the beating of our hearts and the seeing of our eyes; only they so lead us in the shadow of restless thoughts. But do you prefer a dark way, when your heart's delight beats strong and the sight of your eyes is clear?"

But Messala said: "You always place yourself thus in the midst of the world, and endow yourself with it, according to your good will and pleasure. But is not all choice self-limitation? You do not look thither, whence the shadows may fall, but you are looked upon, and how can you bear that?"

"If I am looked upon, then I must be ready to bear it. You separate the like, and place them in opposition. You say, *Pleasure and Pain*, and think that there is a difference, because the *grimace* is different, and the costume. But what more do you want than this, that I should have a thousand expedients for each of my emotions, of which there are more than can be conceived by our imagination or by life itself, not to speak of those which you would yet seek out for your instruction. But I weigh none against the rest, for we can have no measure outside ourselves: even ideas only exist in so far as there are men to conceive them. There is no measure, and one thing is as light or as heavy as another. If you must look at the world through a little black glass, and take yourself for a mangy dog, so be it, for this is your pleasure; if you do otherwise, so be it, for that is your pleasure. Whatever constitutes the fulness of your moment is good. But the sum of my expedients is my power.

And now, do you think that I limit myself by choosing, that I diminish the sum of my expedients and restrict my power? . . .

"Look yonder, at the moving lights upon the road. That is the house of Corinna. They say she became a Christian because the old Roman fashion of wearing a long white robe becomes her, for she is rather stout. But surely something else must have led her on that way which has become her way."

The carriage passed by a large house, which was the house of Corinna. The garden was full of elder people and children, who came and went in silence, or knelt before graves. Only, every now and then, a cry from the children flew into the night: "Christe eleison! Christe eleison!" while their little white arms waved in the air, like the flames of the torches, carried by many of the old men.

"Christe eleison!" resounded behind the carriage, as it mounted the incline on which Comazon's house stood. Messala had been looking back. When he turned round again, he said: "They must be very unhappy, to make a crucified man their god. . . . Can you convert that into a joy of the moment, Augaros?"

"You might also say, they must be very happy, to cling so to the dead, and love death, for death

is justified only by a happy life. But these are the new-comers; they have no house and no garment, no poets and no maidens. They have struggled upwards out of the brown earth, and stood on tiptoe to look into our windows, and gazed until their eyes and heart were sore. They desired an outstretched hand to help them. They cannot become as we, and we should become as they, if we gave them our hand. For a delicate hand does not make an unclean hand white by touching it, nor a wrinkled hand soft."

"But Corinna, and all the others of our kind?"

"Yes, for them it spoiled the daylight, and they gave themselves up, and deserted to the new-comers. They renounced all, having been weakened by long possession, and they went to those who had never been obliged to renounce anything, and taught them that happiness is renunciation. Now it is pride that looks in at our windows. For they think themselves so rich, that they bestow their pity on us. Do you not see how all pain rises into joy, all misfortune into happiness? Even sorrow wears visible garments; the solitary writes to a friend, grief smiles, and pain has the delight of tears. There is nothing in us that will not rise to the surface in the form of pleasure, determined to fill one moment entirely."

Messala said: "There is one thing more: does it not trouble you to be forced to acknowledge this, for at least one memory of that acknowledgment must remain alive within you, in a thought, or a word, which will throw a shadow, confusing the play of your light?"

"The recollection, the thought, or the word," said Augaros, "may accompany, but will not lead me. What I do, I do regardless of any value in my action. There is not in me even the slightest inclination to give it any value. You must surely know the poet Valerius Suburrus, who is so bent on ridiculing and alarming honest citizens in the sanctuaries of their virtue. He thinks himself extraordinarily free, yet he himself is nothing but an honest citizen, sweating in the cause of his unprincipled principles. Only those recollections and thoughts which have power over our moments will give value to what we do, because they hunger after an abstract unity, and without it are dust. Every negative craves a system."

"What unities are those that you speak of?"

"What we call Duty, Conscience, Freedom, Humanity, and much besides, which is like an air-cushion, to be blown up, and put away, according to our requirements. But the wine that we drank yesterday—if we do not like it to-day,

then we drink a different one, and not yesterday's, just because it suited us then."

"But if we drink it to-day with as much pleasure as yesterday?"

"Then the wine and the hour are repeated, and we could only observe sadly that a day had passed over our heads, and found us wanting, found us too weak for it."

"Whatever may have happened, you will always perceive the thought of it," said Messala. "Surely the only happy life is one that we cannot conceive."

"Or one that we can only conceive. And if one has not the happiness of that nice distinction, yet the thought of it shall be no heavier baggage on my journey than this wreath, which the youth threw into the carriage, and you handle so busily. Turn it in your fingers or throw it away, as you will. Do likewise with the thought. Look! we are at our goal. We have talked of the Emperor—put our talk from you; it was just this and that, to shorten the way, for the pleasure of the moment. And if a word of it remains with you, give it wings and do not hoard it; or give it with a laugh to some collector. There is Comazon, already stepping over his threshold, swinging his cup."

The carriage stopped before a house, bril-

liantly illuminated, from which came loud voices, laughter, and music. Torch-bearers lighted the way, servants helped the guests to alight from their carriage, and the worthy host, mime, and five times Consul poured wine on the ground before them, as they stepped over his threshold.

THE SYMBOL OF ORPHEUS

ORPHEUS and the three ladies are wandering in a beautiful garden. They wear thin garments, for it is a warm morning after a sultry night. They talk of dreams, and one lady says: "What were your words?—'The fire of red love burns and glows, and parches me'?—Was it thus?" Orpheus gently avoids her question, but the lady perseveres: "No, it was thus: 'Lord over all creatures,' you said, 'I wield a glowing sceptre of red gold.' Well, all night, even awake, I dreamed that the sceptre lay by my side. First it kissed me and then struck, then again kissed me, and did me hurt, and then good. So I dreamed all night until the morning."

Orpheus: "The riddles of the day which thou didst solve in thy dreams, and hast now forgotten. . . ."

The Second Lady: "My waking dream was this: You played upon the lyre, and the lyre was myself, in this wise: you loosed my hair so that it fell down to my feet, then you bound it

fast to my ankles and played, played on its yellow strings. I felt your hands as they glided up and down, now soft and quite gentle, then again, so that I cried out in pain. And when you ceased to play, you laid your hand upon me here, and here, and said: 'This lute is well fashioned, and gives a good sound.'"

Orpheus: "It was the summer night that gave you such unrestful dreams, and so assailed your blood. And thou? What didst thou dream, lady?"

The Third Lady: "Nothing; I neither slept nor dreamed. When I tried to sleep, a sigh from one awoke me, and the other roused me from the bewitching prelude of a dream, crying your name aloud. So I found neither sleep nor dreams, and yet no night was ever more beautiful to me than that. It was as if all the stars were rising in my heart."

Orpheus: "The bound is loosed, and the sleeper awakes in a new world. I say to you: death itself arises and becomes alive in the presence of the Word, the One who knocks, to Whom the door must be opened."

The Other Lady: "I do not comprehend the meaning of your words, yet to follow their course and listen to the sound of your lips is better than understanding. I could not say what it is, but I

feel that my blood is stirred by you and your dark sayings."

. . . . . .

The three ladies stand entwined on a terrace, listening with closed eyes to masked musicians, who are playing music apart, and this is what it says: "Action sinks into rest, the word which moves to action makes the senses dance. Life has not yet taught you that dreams are its fullest delight, that desire is strongest when it is never fulfilled, when it knows not its object, when its desire is for desire. It flies from you, and comes back to you, decked with the stars of another world. It speaks strange tongues to you, and unknown words, and yet you always know your desire again. Never let life beguile you! Life hates desire, and one of them must die. You ask from life the boundlessness of desire, and from desire the narrow bounds of life, and your repose turns to strife and fear. Then you slay your desire in hatred, and you become the lifeless prey of life."

. . . . . .

One other day, the ladies would have bound a wreath for Orpheus. He would not take it, and said: "It is for him who will come after me."

"Who is he who will come after thee?" asked one.

Orpheus: "He is the Hero. He draws nigh among many: see that you crown none but him."

When the ladies asked how they should know him, whether he should be as Orpheus, he replied:

"I know nothing. I only know that he is not as I. You know it, and will recognise him when the time is ripe. Ask then of none, 'Art thou he? Art thou not he?' And ask not of yourselves. He, whom you must call thus, is the Hero."

"When will he come?"

Orpheus: "When you forget to play. When you no longer call the day despoiler of your nights, which are spent in calling to him. When your voices are no more attuned to song, and are become nothing but an inarticulate cry. Then will he come."

"Hast thou seen him?" asked one.

Orpheus: "Mine eyes seek him afar off. But far behind me, I hear the heavy tread of many coming. They all walk with heads uplifted, and the wind waves in their hair. Some have a look of boldness and a smile upon their lips, because strength is in their sinews; the eyes of many are like star-beams. Some run like racers in the arena, and their tongues hang from their parched throats; others plod slowly on their way. And again, there are some that scream

like beasts when their time has come. Yet if I look behind me, all is still and empty."

. . . . . .

Afterwards, another day, Orpheus and the ladies are resting among rose-bushes, and Orpheus says: "Does your heart beat, does it beat stronger, when evening bends to you out of the roses and kisses your pale lips?"

Then one of them folds her hands upon her breast, and says:

"Orpheus, what art thou? A man like others? More—a god?"

Orpheus: "I am that thou wishest that I should be. I am thy wish. Knowest thou thy wish? Thou still seest all things in one, and to wish is to choose. Thou knowest not pain and thou knowest not pleasure, so am I thy desire after pain and pleasure. I am the weak voice of thy strong desire. Thou givest the meaning, I the words, yet not even the words, I only fit them together. See, I am the echo of thine heart-beats, the sweet breath that flows from thy lips. I am a master who learns the deepest wisdom from his pupils. You are the pupils, plenty of the deepest wisdom lies in you, the treasure and the treasury in one. And what I learn from you is this: The strength and poison of the blood, the beauty and corruption of pleasure is in you. You are the

earth, you are the sea; you are fire and cold metal, and all things that men call by incomprehensible names. . . . How hot thine hand is, fair one! To my lips. . . ."

The Lady: "Speak! let your lips speak, their kiss is dumb."

Orpheus: "The torch still burns, wait for the night. Hearest thou the slow and solemn sound?"

The Lady: "The light is fading."

The Other: "The shadows fall."

And Orpheus begins to sing softly:

"The Night draws near; over all earthly things
Pale Passion hovers on vibrating wings;
The painted fabric of clear-seeing Day
Melts in their arms, grows faint and vanishes away.

Figures before the eyes to distant shade
Retreat, the distance hurries to invade
Our eyes, that seek for transient goals of sight,
And find in fruitless search the flower of their delight.

Pleasure is spurred by Passion after Pain;
We speed our steps, we stretch our arms in vain,
Nor yet are sad. Each word, a wingèd dart,
Steeped in the balm of Night, pierces and heals the heart.

Words unattuned to intellectual sense
Make rhythm in the soul's incompetence
Of impulse, till, inflamed with living fire,
We act, nor comprehend our act, nor the desire

That is its impulse. So unsatisfied,
Fearful, yet fearing lest we be denied;
We pray, and deprecate; will not, and will;
Would we might lose ourselves, while we ourselves fulfil."

The night was quite dark when Orpheus spoke thus: "We pray thee, nameless one, born of Libitina, eternal, goddess of sweet poisons. All things pass. We adorn and deck ourselves, and die—thou standest fast through every change. Naked art thou, and great. Our life walks in twilight, and our fruit is dust. We stand at the last with empty hands—with thee are all things. We bring thee our offerings; we crown thee with our woes, and spread our joys for a carpet under thy feet. Humble are crown and carpet, and our prayers have no words, for we weep when we pray, and our lips tremble. Give us of thy works, which thou dost devise for the dreams of those whom thou lovest. We wait through dark hours, and days, and lives. We pray to thee in despair, and we dread the fulfilment of that we pray for. We ask, if thou hast given us all indeed, if thou hast revealed to us all thy secrets, thine inmost nakedness? We pray because of thy cruelty that is dumb as fire and blind as the night. Give ear to us, for our sorrow is wearied for sorrow, and desires new sorrows, new wounds for our wounds. Pale blood is on our lips, our eyes

know not what they see, and our hands are clenched in impotency. Give us pain, that we may laugh for joy. Give us joy, that we may groan for sorrow. With thee are all things."

Then Orpheus vanished, and after a while one of the ladies said: "A star has fallen into my lap.

And the other said: "Two hands clasped my breast."

And the third said: "Something came and kissed my heart."

. . . . . .

Days passed, and the three ladies stood at the garden-gate, looked out upon the street, and said: "None have come this way whom we did not summon with our will, and there was none that came not when we beckoned with our arms. Some stayed with us from sunrise to sunset, some stayed longer, and others only for a very short time. But however long they stayed, the time was as an eternity and a nothing. And all received, and none has given us anything. Each one came like a god, and all went like beggars satisfied. They ate our bread, and we hunger; they drank our wine, and our pitchers are empty: we could fill them with our tears. The day has no light, and the night has no darkness for our eyes, any more. We are weary, and cannot rest. How often have we asked each other: What should we do? We sought

comfort one from another, and found it not. We sought comfort each by herself, and found it not. Perhaps our garden lies upon no good street. Only swineherds pass this way, some with a fat flock, some with a single, skinny beast. But they are all swineherds, and their breath has an evil smell, and their hands are damp with sweat. We will stay here no longer. Evil alone lies in the dust of the street. We will go down to the sea, and to cities, and into the woods, and up on to the hills; we will go everywhere. A man was here once, who brought tidings of the Hero, whose breast shines like the sun, who bears fire in his hands, and has the golden key to all the secret doors of our bodies. We must go and seek the Hero. We will go and seek him."

. . . . . .

But Orpheus climbed the heights and sang. And his voice beat with its hands upon the moonbeams, as on silver strings, and was a mighty sound in the air. The bear in his den heard it; it enticed him out, and he followed Orpheus, bounding like a brown rock. And the song reached onward to the lion, who left his solitude to fawn upon the singer's knee. And the tigress left her cubs. Out of the earth came our kind, the mole, the snake, and the lizard. Out of the woods came very timid creatures, deers, and

gazelles of the mountains, and followed the singer. The dove and the falcon were lured from the air, and followed Orpheus in lingering flight. In the mountain streams the fishes retraced their way to the source, and followed the singer as he mounted the heights. The sea rolled its waves upon the shore more violently, and the clouds sank lower, and the winds slackened their speed, and rested. Germs grew faster into the light, that they might hear the sorcerer. In the distance a town burnt, and the flames flew over towards the singer. The palm trees in the oases rustled, and the glaciers at the poles cracked. The moon set not, and the stars stood still. The sun measured his course faster and lay red on the horizon, to hear Orpheus. And now also, that which is at the end of all things stirred under the dark, purple mantle. For Orpheus sang the delight of death as he strode up toward the summits, overspread with a mantle like the night.

When Orpheus was under the crest of the hill, he met the Adventurer descending, who laughed from afar, seeing his brother, and stopped beside him as he passed onward, and said: "Dost thou still snare creatures with thy words, Orpheus? Still cast thy golden net for thy take, and hold thy struggling prey in the air, gasping with its jaws, and catching nothing but thy breath?

Dost thou still do so? Stand in my shadow, that thou mayest scent life. Wherever my shadow falls, the earth steams and smokes. Thou hast sung of that, I know. Of what hast thou not sung? . . . But wherefore dost thou answer not?"

Then Orpheus said: "Thou art strong. Thy muscles quiver with their strength, and thy breath is hot. Thou hast unwearying strength; no sweat stands on thy brow, and thy face grows not red with labour. But where thou art not, thy strength is not, and where it was, it is already a brief tale. Thou art strong, but thou art mortal."

Then Herakles laughed aloud and said: "What care I for my mortality? Hast thou ever yet seen me harkening to mine own life? Hast thou ever seen me, when I was idle, moving my jaws to chew the cud of recollection, gloating over my past deeds? I know no words wherein I can declare the joy of my life. And I cannot listen to thy words, they weary me with their sadness. For thou goest singing of things, and every song is a funeral song which thou dost celebrate over thyself. Something dies in thee whenever thou speakest. If this is thine immortality, then I can well suffer my body to decay, and its blood to be shed."

Orpheus said quietly: "Then I will go and give my blood, and yet shall I be infinite."

To which Herakles answered: "Thou wilt go, and they will desire thy blood, for they have seen all of thee, but only not thy blood. They have received of thee all hunger and thirst, so will they now desire to be satisfied of thee. They will tear thine heart from thy body."

Orpheus began to speak: "And the lips of my heart . . ." when the voice of the Chained One in the clouds thus hindered him: "You are alike, therefore you strive for ever. I only am the unlike, therefore chains and ravenous birds are my lot. I questioned, and was troubled, and had pity. My will was as strong with other men, as was their trust in my strength. I did nothing about me, but mine eyes were ever seeing. I was soundless, and restless, and mine heart trembled always. I sought for meaning and relation, and was wearied to the death in pursuit of the Cause. I was a servant of the Whole with a good heart, and a tyrant in spirit who would dispose and move the Whole, according to his mind. But life cast me on naked rocks and in derision appointed me this fate, that I should serve my body for nourishment to carrion birds."

After a while, Orpheus said: "Wilt thou not

deliver him from the rocks and the vultures, Adventurer?"

But Herakles said: "To what end? He cannot divest himself of his strange nature, and they would only nail him again to something. He is wicked." And therewith Herakles strode down into the valley, and Orpheus climbed farther up the heights.

On the heights were the three women. Their voices were hoarse with shouting, and they gnawed the flesh from their own bones. As soon as they knew Orpheus, they rushed upon him, and tore his body open to seek his heart. But there was no heart in him, or it was not there, where they sought it. They threw his lyre into the sea, and as it floated away upon the waves, it sounded, and its sound was like a voice, whereof the song is without end. For the heart was in the lyre.

CHURCH

She would not go to church, if I were to speak of it as seriously as I am minded to do. So I must lure her thither with pipe and song, like the Lord's Juggler, and he pipes and sings nothing but what he has heard and learnt in church. I purse my lips.

A woman believes in life and happiness, for she has very little imagination. Nowhere can she dream this dream, if she desires it to last, except in church. In life, if she is given the flesh, she will certainly desire the soul; if she is given the soul, then she desires the flesh. She dreams of what she has not got, and does not know what she wants. But what she dreams in church, she possesses, and always has there what she has not. So, for woman, church is the fulfilment of life and happiness; and church is gay and beautiful.

When the Jesuits wanted to win over the women, a happy chance presented them with the *baroque*. Are not churches in that style real

boudoirs, with confessionals for console-tables? The angels have turned into *putti*, and the saints of the later pathetic school of painters seem to be suffering all kinds of martyrdom for the sake of women whom they love. Only the Madonna smiles over the Holy Child, and to give the atmosphere a spice of horror, Death stretches out his skeleton hand from a niche, holding in his fingers the split pomegranate of temptation.

In her prayers a woman proves herself, talks to herself, asks herself questions, and answers them. She is in peace to make her conclusions, for none but the Invisible is a witness to this examination, which she therefore has no occasion to disguise or feel ashamed of. And is not confession a sweet after-taste of sin?

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

We need an ultimate aim, so that the smaller aims of each day may not always turn out to be disappointments, for that is what they always are. To stand by night, alone, on a wide plain, with the heaven of stars above us; to be prostrate with grief over the cradle of a dying child, who does not know anything; to see our mother again after years of separation, and find only tears in our inmost being, instead of words on our lips; to stand suddenly speechless before the heroic life of a great poet—he who has ever been moved thus, so that he entirely forgot his life and its worries, will perceive an aim beyond all aims and activities of our perishable life. Yes, he will create for himself a great illusion of such an aim, he will credulously accept such an aim from others. It is this aim which is the Kingdom of Heaven. No doubt we have stripped the wood of its leaves, for the gods have been driven out of it, the simpler gods of the old world, and the more complex of the new. For now, belief no longer exists even

among believers, because they know that there are unbelievers. And to unbelievers their unbelief is no comfort, since they know God exists so long as a single man believes in him. For God is a limit set by man for himself, to introduce order into his life; He is the one aim which demands no wearied feet such as the many aims demand. Is not God a wider limit, is not our realm with Him for limit, greater than what our thought and counter-thought—ah! that thought! has given us for limit? All explanation has always been transient; the common life may gain by it, but not the great life in which our individual existence is only an atom. Can the formula which a man—even a professor—invents, be mightier than the conception of God? Has my superscience of the origin of the world, beyond the story told in the Bible, any power over my deepest sorrows? Does it increase my greatest joys? Does not all this reasoning fail, not only before the difficulties that life, with death, presents to us, but even before the simplest things, the shining of a meadow, the wind in high trees, the play of kittens? The riddles are in visible things. Mystery lies in the familiar. The thought of the interpreter has no power to touch it. The gold from our deepest vein will take its impression from no image nor formula but a holy one—"Blessed are the poor in

spirit"—from none but One who is as incomprehensible as the gold itself: God.

God shall be imposed as the limit for no man who has not himself so appointed it out of the widest width of his heart. Narrow hearts will be satisfied with narrower limits, a book of sermons, a popular lecture—may such as these be spared all experience, that they may not fall into raging despair and dash their brains out in the narrow cage of their superiority over trees, animals, stones, dust and mist, in the padded room of their mania—that of esteeming their humanity a *peculium*, and thus giving ground whereon to build vain imaginings.

THE END

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