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THE FIRST TOLSTOIST

V. T.

It was years ago — so many years ago that it seems part of another life — that I climbed the steep path to the grey and sombre city of Assisi. Night had fallen, a sudden, opaque Italian night, blotting the stars. A high wind, dust-laden and hot, rode down the abrupt hill. Here and there a light shone through narrow windows, coldly and without invitation. I shall never forget this first impression of Assisi, wind-swept, grey, desolate. In other days I saw it bathed in immitigable sunlight. The green hillside was jocund with the laughter of children. The tripartite church which burrows into the hill, and houses such marvellous Cimabues, shone with splendid summer. But the first impression was true. Assisi is old, inexorably old, hopelessly old; a grey and visionary city of the past.

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I have always loved Saint Francis of Assisi — this vagabond saint, tender, mystic, fantastic. He preferred music to philosophy. Et moi, aussi. He conversed with birds. He was a socialist and the first Tolstoist. There in the village square he gave his cloak to a beggar man, who was cold; and a little farther on, in divine self-forgetfulness, he gave his other garments to other cold beggar men, until he stood quite naked to the winter air. He was a gentleman by birth and a loyal aristocrat. Therefore he stripped himself for the sake of the beggar men. A man of the people could not have done this thing. . . . He had no passion for political economy. My admiration for Saint Francis of Assisi is without reserve. He was a perfect saint. And to him the wild birds whistled confidences. When Bartholomew of Pisa passed the wild birds were morose.

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"He defied the world and even his father for love of this woman, against whom, as against death, we do all shut the door; — and despite the spiritual court and his father, he did wed her truly, and then from day to day did love her more; — and she, widowed of her first husband for eleven hundred years and more, forsaken, obscure, had waited unsought of anyone until he came."

And this true bride was Poverty, widowed of Christ eleven hundred years and more. Day by day Saint Francis did love her more, because to her lovers she gives the pleasures which are eternal. . . . He had no passion for political economy.

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He hated sadness, which is an invention of the devil. The gifts his bride brought to him were the pleasures which are eternal because they are real — the sweetness, charm, and tranquil beauty of life. The chief enemies of poverty are property and intelligence. On these Saint Francis waged unceasing war. He recognized that these were the begetters of sadness, which is the Babylonian evil.

To possess nothing, to learn nothing — this is the infallible rule of happiness. The good saint took from the rich and gave to the poor, but he did not ask permission of the rich. He said that money belonged of right to the devil, and it was the duty of every good Christian to let it go to the devil. He had no love for science or intelligence. He who pardoned all, who fed the savage highwaymen and blessed his unkindest enemies, had no pity for Pietro Stacchia, doctor of laws. Said he to the doctor of laws: "Suppose that you have wit enough and memory enough to apprehend everything; that you know all languages, the course of the stars and all the rest; what reason have you for boasting? One little, minor devil knows more than all men put together. There is, however, one thing of which this devil is incapable and which is the glory of man — that is, to be good and obey Jesus. Go away."

And the doctor of laws went away.

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Another time he said: "Man, man, what would you with books, when your heart is within you and about you are stars and flowers and birds!"

When his order was ten years old it possessed but one book, the New Testament. One day there came a beggar woman to him, and since he had nothing else he gave her the book and bade her sell it and get bread. . . . About him were the stars and flowers and birds.

He was a sculptor, a scavenger, a wandering singer. He held that it was man's duty to be gay and that gaiety may be attained only by living for others.

He is dead, long dead.

For six hundred years and more his divine mistress, Poverty, has been a widow, obscure and desolate, and no man finds her beautiful as to be desired.

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Tolstoi has looked at her wistfully, but from afar.

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The science which Saint Francis despised has had in these latter days its revenge. That learned Israelite, in whom there is guile, Lombroso, dubs the holy man a madman, easily, indifferently, as a journalist might refer to a politician. Dr. Bournet, a calmer scientist, refutes the charge.

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He wandered over the white roads of Italy, a strolling saint and singer. He played with the grey wolves. To his friends, the birds, he recited naif legends which he had invented to please them. He had white and subtile intimacies with nature. . . . He preferred music to philosophy.

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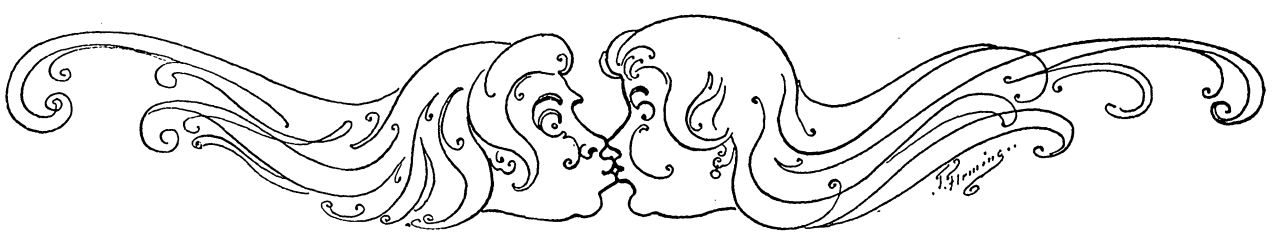
The immitigable sunlight falls on Assisi, all gold, but the splendour passes and opaque night blots the stars. Then you see that this is a grey and naked city, desolate, obscure, empty —

Not a city, but a symbol.



SHE DRUNK FROM THE CHALICE

She drunk from the chalice of Pleasure
And reigned but as Beauty can reign,
And then when exhausted the measure
She drunk from the chalice of Pain.

She drunk from the chalice of Joyance
And dressed her white neck very low,
Till even her joy was annoyance;
She drunk from the chalice of Woe.

She drunk from the chalice of Laughter
And joined in the plaudit of cheers.
She flirted, coquetted; but after
She drunk from the chalice of Tears.

She drunk from the chalice of Sorrow,
For Love had been kindled too late;
Blanched, lorn, and alone, on the morrow
She drunk from the chalice of Fate.

LEON MEAD

THE INNOCENT YELLOW DEVIL

DICK WOOD

It was the third night Leone had been delirious. The first night her vagaries had reverted to childhood's days. Days when clover grew only to be made into wreaths and bracelets for little girls to wear. A great deal of the first night was spent in plaiting. And while the delirious woman's fingers sped in and out, now over, now under, she hummed a childish air—keeping time with erratic twitchings of her small foot, which made it difficult for Brod to keep the cover in its proper place. And Brod watched and hoped. Poor old Brod. Faithful Brod. Faithful to the woman who had already caused him no end of trouble and some happiness.

Faster and faster flew the convulsive fingers. Longer and longer grew the imaginary chain of clover-blossoms until it was ready to deck the brow of the imaginary little girl, who was none other than Leone's childish self.

And when it was finished and Brod—poor, slow Brod—really imagined he could smell the fragrant blossoms, she made him let her get up and stand in the middle of the room. Then she placed the wreath upon her brow and burst into a childish treble of song:

"'Twas whispered one morning in Heaven
How the little white angel May
Sat ever beside the portal,
Sorrowing all the———"

A convulsive tremor passed over her frame. Rushing over to where Brod sat in awful despair, she knelt down and pillowed her head in his lap, sobbing, "Mamma, I can't sing. They're laughing at me."

The second night it was worse. Worse for Leone and worse for Brod. All the second night Leone juggled imaginary balls and passed through hoops with a glass of water balanced on her forehead. And when the act was finished and the audience applauded, she would kiss her hands and pause for breath.

Then the juggling would commence again and the hoops be gone through. And Brod, gazing with aching eyes, murmured, "She never told me that."

On the third day the doctor told Brod to humour her. Humour her! What else had he been doing? Certainly not sleeping, as his glassy eyes bore pitiable testimony. The strain was telling. And now it was the third night and Leone was up and dressed. Brod thought she must be improved. She called him by name. Humouring a woman may be easy. Humouring a delirious woman may also be easy, but Brod thought not.

It was Leone who spoke: "Brod, I want to tell you something. Promise me, sweetheart, you won't do anything rash and don't blame me. I couldn't help it. It is not my fault, but there is a conspiracy, a conspiracy, Brod, to kill you. The Chinamen are at the bottom of it all. They wanted to flirt with me and I wouldn't let them. So they told me they would kill you and get me and keep me. Let us fly. Fly, Brod! Fly! If they catch you they'll kill you and cut you up and smoke you in their opium-pipes. Coo-Ee said so. Coo-Ee can cook."

So Brod humoured her as the doctor told him and went to a European hotel and took a room. The Chinamen followed them there. So they went to another—and another—and another—and took rooms. Every place they went the Chinamen followed until Brod's eyes looked like those of one who has smoked the dope. Then something within him snapped and he realized the time had come to quit humouring, so he argued: "Listen, Leone! It's me, Brod. Don't you know me? Think, girl! Try to think. It's Brod talking to you and he says you have been sick. S-i-c-k, sick. Understand? You are better now. You will be all right to-morrow. There are no Chinamen. It is all a dream."

"O Brod, they are coming! They are coming!" "Nonsense!" "Brod!"

"Now, listen. There are no Chinamen." "Are you sure?" "I am."

"Brod, you are lying. Don't lie to me, no, not to me. Don't do it. Look out of that window and you'll see a yellow devil standing just across the street."

Dragging her to the window, he made her look also. The street was deserted.

"Come," said Brod, "let us go home."

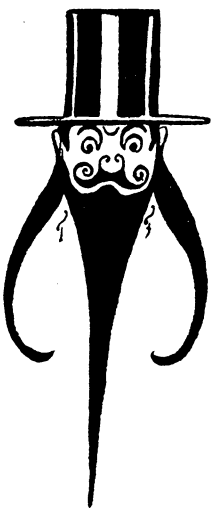
"Let us go home," echoed Leone.

As they left the hotel Brod said aloud, "Thank God, it is all over now. Sleep!"

As they turned the corner they ran plump into a Chinaman.

It would be funny if it wasn't so damned sad.

THE CURIOUS IMPERTINENT'S NOTES



"M'lle New York" and some of her admirers dined together the other night. There were some good things said at table, original, borrowed, or stolen and (like the children gypsies steal) disfigured to prevent recognition. The Curious Impertinent made these heterogeneous notes; they are published in a spirit of humility. Doctor William J. O'Sullivan, who was detected while appropriating a witticism of Longinus, excused himself very neatly: "You living writers collaborate with each other," said he, "why may not I collaborate with the dead?" This was the mood, though the Curious Impertinent knew it not, which dominated "M'lle New York's" dinner-table. Mr. James Gibbons Huneker s' autopsiant avec du Chopin was but a shameless plagiarist of dead men's emotions, and Doctor Hamilton Williams' reminiscences of Homeric drinking-bouts in the British army were unconscious echoes of Rabelais. Here are the Curious Impertinent's notes.

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"What we like in writers is their resemblance to ourselves."
"God help those who like Richard Harding Davis!"

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"Even Richard Harding Davis would gain by not being a fool."

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"'M'lle New York' is planting cuttings of futurity."
"If one in ten takes root it is well."

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"There is no man so superstitious as the scientist. He looks upon ptomaines as a street-walker does upon black cats."

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"Fleming, who expresses reverie with line, has gone back to Kranach. Perspective is a cheap trick of the draughtsman who can not draw."

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"Cultivation of the Ego is monotonous."
"Not if the Ego be worth cultivating."

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"Jewish children are more intelligent than ours. At the age of puberty, however, they are less intelligent — they lose as they grow. They are at once nearer to nature and the ape."

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"Only the ignorant man is happy."
"It is the old problem in Voltaire's 'Good Brahmin.' He was unhappy, the good Brahmin, because he did not have a simple spirit. There was an old beggar woman, bigoted, foolish, poor; and she was happy. They asked the good Brahmin, 'Would you like to be this old woman?' and the Brahmin said, 'No.' And yet the good Brahmin was wrong. After all, what is all this pother about? To be happy. Then it makes no difference whether one is a wit or a fool. The contented beggar knows he is content. The man who reasons can never be sure that he reasons well. Probably Richard Harding Davis is happier than the wisest man living."

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"All loving women have large mouths and long hands."
"The narrow-hipped woman is the chief danger to American civilization."
"The American Jewess is the highest type of modern female beauty — especially if she has a strain of white blood."
"Is it not true that after the third cross generation ceases?"
"Unquestionably. This is the last word of science as it was the first word of God. For He in His wisdom decreed that the wonderful Jewish blood should be kept pure and set a bound beyond which the process of miscegenation could not go. Thus negro blood and white will not mix beyond the third cross. For instance, keeping on the female side, the mulatto will breed, the quadroon will breed, but the octoroon is sterile. It is the same with the Jewish race. This seems to me the strongest proof that God has set apart this marvellous people for a high destiny. Shut between

these narrow walls of generation the race has been kept pure and has gathered force for its ultimate purpose — that of ruling the world."

"All the great artists are Jews."

"What fine creatures their women are!"

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"To sleep at night is an act essentially bourgeois and ridiculous. I sleep by day because it is useless to show myself to the philistines."

"The man who lives in America and pretends to be anything but a philistine is also ridiculous. We are all philistines. We may be incoherent philistines — that is the best we can do."

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"The law should permit marriages only between persons of wealth and social position; journalists and actresses should have to content themselves with love — it's good enough for them."

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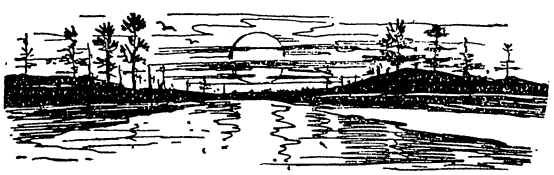
I do not know that I think a great deal of the Curious Impertinent's notes after all. I print them, however, because he is a pleasurable person and plays a good game of billiards.



THE END OF THE WORLD

HELEN LEAVENWORTH HERRICK

Once upon a time a beautiful Soul dwelt within a commonplace Body. The Soul was often sad and lonely, for it felt the need of love, and the Body was too busy with material affairs to spend any time in love-making.

So it chanced that one night, while the Body slept, the Soul wandered away and when it returned in the morning it heard the Body say:

"Never have I had such a peaceful night! My rest has always been disturbed before by dreams so vivid they seemed a part of my waking life. But last night there were no dreams. My sleep was like a living death. It is better that it should be so. After such a night of absolute repose I awake refreshed and vigourous. I can work harder and make more money than when the visions of the night led me to think of other things than money-getting."

When the Soul heard the Body rejoice it grieved sorely and felt sadder and lonelier than ever. Night after night it left the Body to sleep undisturbed, and at last it stayed away weeks at a time. But the Body never missed it.

And yet, in the rare intervals of the Soul's returning, the Body felt the throbbing of new life and would murmur questioningly: "What troubles me so strangely to-day? Ah, I know, there was a poem I began, a picture I intended to paint, a song that echoed through my heart, seeking its way to the world, long, long ago, in the early times when dreams came to me. These are the memories of unborn things that haunt me now. And — there were prayers too, in those days. I have not prayed of late. To-morrow I must begin anew. I must finish my poem and my picture, I must give my song the breath of life. And to God I will give the little He asks, faith and love and prayer."

But when the morrow came the Body had so much to do, so many sordid, earthly claims to fulfil, eating, drinking, breadwinning and the hoarding of gold, the noble resolves of yesterday would be forgotten or put off until another morrow. And the Soul, once again discouraged, would once again take flight.

The years rolled on and the poem remained unwritten; the canvas — blank, the song — unsung.

One night many Souls met and talked together. Each had the same story of neglect and indifference to tell of the Bodies to which they belonged. They wept and sighed as they spoke, but in their lamentation there was no note of censure, only the vastness of immortal pity.

Suddenly a discord rang through the melancholy minor of their plaint. A Soul, stronger, yet less divine than his fellows, cried aloud: "Why mourn? Why waste ourselves on clods? They ignore our presence, they do not feel our absence. Their eyes are blinded by the glitter of earth's dross; they do not see the gifts we offer. When we leave them for a time they do not know that we have gone. When we return they have no welcome for us. Then why return?" The listeners shivered at the icy blast of a truth. They answered with words of infinite compassion for their indifferent charges.

But in the murmur of sorrowful voices there sounded chords of dissent, and these grew louder, more powerful, until at last, in a vibrating harmony of agreement, the Souls passed from pity to despair and from despair — to resolve.

Then shadows crept across the moon, the Cloud King marshalled his armies, and their dusky shields hid the light from the world. The winds gathered and shook the trees, sparing neither blossom nor fruit, and the rain came, darting its silver lances into the sodden earth. The Bodies trembled and said: "This is a storm of storms. The harvest is ruined. How shall we live?" But they knew not that the elements raged in sympathy with the revolt of the Souls.

A new day dawned, bright but cold, and the Bodies forgot the storm of the night and went their way as of old, eating, drinking, breadwinning, and hoarding gold. But no poems were written, no pictures were painted, no statues were fashioned, and no songs were sung.

There were relics of the days when beautiful dreams came to mortals, masterpieces of Art, in literature, in painting, music, and sculpture. But as time went on the dust of neglect buried these legacies of the Souls and soon they, like their givers, were forgotten.

Once a child said: "Mother, I have found an old book in the garden, where I was digging for gold, and it speaks of Art. What was Art, mother?" But his mother could not answer and the book was lost; so perished the shadow of a hope.

Then, since their eyes ever looked earthward, the sense of vision became obscured to the Bodies; their hands, ever seeking the treasures of the earth, grew calloused and claw-like. Their forms, bent by much stooping towards things earthly, grew distorted and unwieldy.

As Art had been forgotten, so was God forgotten. It was but another step on the road to the inevitable end. With no hope, no faith, no belief in a higher life, the virtues deserted the Bodies, and what had been men and women became mere brutes.

Yet another century — another hundred years of increasing degeneration! What eyeless, earless, insentient things were these that crawled over the earth?

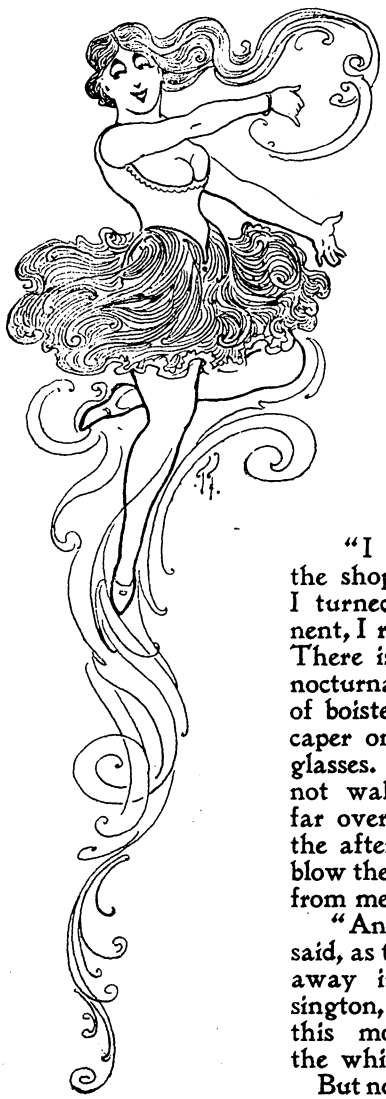
Another cycle and another phase. The power of motion was lost; at last, even the Spirit of Life fled in dismay, and shapeless stones crumbled into nothingness in an unpeopled world.

The Earth thrilled with the delight of unrestrained power, the mountains trembled with unholy laughter. Then the Sea arose in fury from its infinite depths, gazed hungrily upon the Earth, and burst its bounds. The hills and fields clustered about the mountains, the lakes and streams joined forces with the Sea. There began a battle, wilder, more pitiless, more awful than any the world had yet known. Earth and Sea fought for supremacy, but, equal in power, neither conquered, so that at the end of their warring nothing had been accomplished save the destruction of all things that had been.

And thus the world that was born in chaos in chaos ended.

A WHITE DAWN AND TURNER'S SUNSET

VANCE THOMPSON



Man, deprived of the society of good women, becomes egoistic and brutal: in their presence he contents himself with being wicked.

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One morning I saw the dawn come over London town; a dawn of white desolation fell upon the streets. It was long before the autumn sun came with splendid hints of yellow and the day broke and London was awake. In this white interval I wandered inquietly. I was tired of the culture of the Ego — this flippant mock-culture of the man who rounds God up in an epigram. I was weary of the brutality of roaring nights when women capered on the table amid wine-glasses and voiceless men trolled music-hall catches.

I said: "I will bathe myself clean in the tepid society of women as in a warm bath. They shall tell me of Sir Frederick Leighton's latest picture and of the Oratorio Society. Perhaps they will sing a Tosti ballad; and their gentle voices, the sweet reticence of their quiet gowns, the modest serenity of their eyes shall shame the evil spirits out of me."

These things I said in the white prelude of day, wandering the London streets. How far away this heaven seemed! Aeons and aeons separated me from five-o'clock tea. It seemed to me a tragedy then; I can hardly laugh at it now. I look back through the years and see that stained, shamed soul, abroad at dawn, striking repentant attitudes and knowing that there was no hope, no salvation until afternoon tea. I thought of all those serene and saving women, stretched slimly in their beds, sleeping with smiling faces and folded hands and feet. I yearned for the benediction of their eyes, the chrism of their pardoning hands.

Unclean! Unclean!

An unclean soul, walking the white dawn, praying.

* * * *

"I will wear a white rose to-day," I said, and the shop-girl pinned one in my buttonhole. Then I turned into Piccadilly. I took a cab. Incontinent, I regretted what I had done. There is something unholy and nocturnal about a cab. It hints of boisterous kisses and girls who caper on tables among the wine-glasses. I regretted that I had not walked. I leaned far over the apron that the afternoon air might blow the pestilence from me.

"And here," I said, as the cab cut away into Kensington, "I walked this morning in the white dawn."

But now a great hope was within me—the hope of that one who looked across the bounds of Purgatory and saw white wings glint, so near to him was Heaven, and that one knew that he should enter, and no sin enters there.

As I got out of the cab I whispered to myself a line from an old book, "And the leprosy fell from him, and he was clean."

* * * * * *

There were four women there when I entered. The three greeted me very coldly, the fourth lifted her eyebrows and smiled. I remembered how they had lain slimly in their beds at dawn with smiling faces and folded hands and feet. I sat near the one who had lifted her eyebrows and smiled, for I did not know her very well and was uncomfortable. The first dip into salvation is precious cold. Slowly, but definitely, I felt the influence steal

over me. I wanted to sit at the piano and play "The Lost Chord." I began to perceive that Tennyson was a truly great poet. "Alma Tadema" suggested visions of supreme beauty. To have one's portrait painted by Millais I felt would be life's crowning joy. Little Tosti ballads sang themselves to me. As in a premonitory dream I saw myself passing in the church-parade, with umbrella and prayer-book, a neat thing in green leather.

"I have done the things I should not have done," I said unconsciously, and the woman, with lifted eyebrows, smiled at me.

"Is that the reason you have not been near me for ages?" she said.

"I was very near you this morning."

"This morning?"

I told her of the white dawn and the shamed, stained soul of a man, ardent in penitence, at her door. I told her of the prayers the soul of the man sent up to the white figures sleeping slimly in the shut house.

"I thought you had forgotten me," she said.

"No, but I have forgotten what I said to you."

"It was foolish," she said.

"But I meant every word of it—then, as I mean it now and forever."

"Don't you think it is a trifle absurd?"

"Perhaps perplexing would be the better word," I suggested.

She wrinkled her brows and stared at her foot—a pretty foot, in favour of which her gown had relaxed a little of its reticence. Then she looked up and our eyes met.

"Did you mean it?" she asked.

"I meant it then, I mean it now, I shall mean it forever."

"Will you have another cup of tea?"

"No, thank you."

"They say that all Turner's pictures are fading," she said after a while.

"Yes, the 'Sunset' in the National Academy is bleaching," I replied.

"I shall go and see it some day," she said.

"It is fading very rapidly."

"Perhaps I had better go to-morrow."

"An early afternoon light is best," I suggested.

"At two o'clock."

* * * * * *

"Cabby, drive like the devil!" I said. Ah, there is nothing quite so joyous as a cab, cutting along, as the night-lamps begin to wink in the evening streets! What a scent of merry humanity lurks in the cushions! How each jar of the hood shakes down the riant ghosts of kisses!

I tossed a white rose into the road as the cab whirled toward the Circus.

"I will wear an orchid to-night, my dear," and the shop-girl pinned a great, arachnean, gleaming flower in my buttonhole.

Then I turned into Piccadilly.

THE SHOFAR BLEW AT SUNSET

JAMES GIBBONS HUNEKER

This is Herr Greitner, who loves chess, has a stack of high C's in his chest, and serves Teutonic amber liquid to the soul-thirsty and sorrow-laden of the upper East Side.

The Shofar blew at sunset. It was creamy September time and the day was Yom Kippur. We walked up Lexington avenue to the synagogue at Seventy-second street. It was then the ram's-horn sounded, and I said to Esther, "Let us go within." She refused, urging that Greitner's was a better place to worship. "So be it," said I, and we slowly crossed to Third avenue. Early as it was, the big cafe was crowded. Not a Gentile was to be seen. At a table near us sat a group that mocked its race, its religion. Beer was drunk with Yiddish wit on the side, and ham sandwiches were munched to the sound of irreverent laughter. I looked at Esther. Her eyes blustered, but she did not forget to taste her stein of Wurzburger. "O Jerusalem, how hast thou fallen upon evil days!" I murmured, and ordered more beer. Later a rabbi entered and ate and drank as a man should who has worked hard and faithfully. Esther stirred uneasily. "If," I said ironically, "you prefer to go to Shool we will leave this Ghetto, go forth and cleanse our souls of sin." The girl fell to studying me. "Tell me why you have followed me so persistently when you should be with your own people. Why do you love the Hebrews—love them and yet mock them?" she questioned. I would have answered her, but the bill of fare stared at me reproachfully. I handed it to Esther and she forgot her query. Pig's knuckles and sauerkraut were commanded of the waiter with the red side-whiskers. Then I made eyes at my companion. "O Esther, daughter of Judea, singer of sweet cantillations, despiser of Christians, lover of diamonds, do you not know that I am fascinated by your face because in it there lurks the sorrowful story of the Semite? You turn your long, full throat and your profile evokes hot, sultry nights and the few large stars of Palestine. We are loafing at ease on a craning roof, and the gabble of the streets below reaches us muted as the music of the Shawmn. O Esther, your brow is ablaze with strange jewels and the cunning stuffs of your attire blind me with colour and perfume. I hold your Oriental hand, browned by the sun and dirt. You are a true Eastern, and you say, 'Goi, thou lovest me wherefor?'" Esther interrupted me, "What sort of diamonds did you say I wore on my head, dearest?" "Never mind," I replied in anger. "You were a splendid mass of fire, and I adored you, adored your crisp, ebon curls, worshipped your slender hips, and maddened for your cruel, carmelion-lipped mouth." "Harry, do order more beer," said Esther, dreamily regarding a monstrous hat near by. I did so and resumed: "You loved me not, Esther. You loved another. He was a cantor in the synagogue, a man of sonorous voice, whose black beard seemed saturated with bass tones and whose stride was that of a pawnbroker. You loved him, Esther—pray do not contradict my phantasy—and I was madly jealous. I knew that a poor soldier, one of the hated legionaries, a Teuton, blond-haired and guttural of speech, could have but little hope of winning such a fair, fierce flower of Jerusalem, but I hoped on. Presently you stirred restlessly and said, 'Attila, art thou of consequence in thy native land? Hast thy father granaries and breweries in profusion?' 'Aye, Esther, that he hath, and some day, may it long be deferred, all will be mine, thine if thou will it so.' 'Then take me, Attila, for wife,' you answered. 'But the cantor, what of him?' I suspiciously asked. 'Pooh! Attila, he is not as rich as you.' Suddenly a deep voice broke the air with the opening measures of the 'Kol Nidrei' and you started from my arms and rushed to the edge of the parapet, crying, 'It is Baruch! It is his voice! Hi, Baruch! Up, up, Baruch, to your Esther!' and—" "Harry, will you please stop your nonsensical talk? You have been shouting so that everybody in Greitner's is staring at you. I do so hate your stupid Jewish stories. You are worse than Zangwill and his old-clothes men. Oh, there goes Mrs. Jacoby! Isn't she pretty? And what a sweet body she has on!" I looked at Esther, her shell-like complexion, her exquisitely carved nose, her soft, large, Oriental eyes and their sweeping regard—O Adonai, is this the woman of Judea? Is this feminine capricious-nerved creature to be the mother of a race of law-givers, wise men, artists, and poets? O Jael and Rebekah! O Hagar! O Miriam and Deborah! O all ye mighty-thewed, great daughters and she whose cry of filial joy signed the death-warrant! O Jeptha's daughter and brave Judith, how have thy shadows waned

in these days of grey! Not even Delilah is left nor Jezebel, but a tuning down of heroic, tender womanhood to low-pitched, flat, stale, frivolous dolls that study fashion-plates, amble, jig, and feel not the glories of their race and even deride it openly in public places. "Harry, do you know that I'm hungry again? And do get the waiter to fetch more beer." I spoke then to Esther of our approaching marriage. Her eye kindled and her bosom heaved as I enumerated the number of presents we were likely to receive. "Do you know, dear," she said, her lovely eyes swimming with pleasure, "do you know I think it is great fun to marry a Gentile? It will be so talked and gossipped about, and then only think of the newspapers—" Herr Greitner, he of chess and chest high C's fame, came up just then and I introduced him to Miss Dinkelspiel. The long room of the cafe was by this time crowded with a chatting, chaffering crowd of people, soon to be "my people." I eagerly watched the writhing picture with its vibratile hues, its ugly flat faces and beaked noses, its vulgar good nature, its grossness, its absence of spirituality, and its air of Yankee so falsely grafted upon it. Esther was eating again and I lighted a cigar. The door hardly remained closed a minute. Family parties came in saluting friends and I heard Stein, Berg, Baum, and Cohn mentioned many times—those names symbolic of German tyranny and Hebraic submission. And how the Jews were mocked by the Jews! How the Day of Atonement with its sacrificial ceremonies was sneered at! It was tremendous, this decaying nation flouting itself on its own tomb. Jerusalem filling its belly with the good things of earth. Judea material, rich, cursed by prosperity, untouched by persecution, doomed. Judea rotting to the very core. Judea without a country. Judea without its Jehovah. Esther bade me pay the reckoning. She yawned and her beautiful eyes were red and sleepy. We went out into the creamy September night and slowly walked up Third avenue. Reaching Eighty-second street we turned moonward. As we passed the little "Shool" on the north side just west of Lexington avenue I ran up the steps and peeped in the window. Ah, there were a few faithful left, then, to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Esther called to me in irritable accents, and as I went down the steps the Shofar blew.

THE SPIDER

'Twixt painted ceil and space below
I swing and sway;
And what her lover knows I know,
'Tween night and day.
What passes when the day is done,
What happens when the night's begun.

When the pale dawn creeps in I hide
Far up above;
In cobweb shelter I abide,
Ashamed of love;
Of love and of its passioning,
And of my own sad fashioning.

But in the amorous, clinging dark
I sway and swing:
I note the night-lamp's tiny spark,
I see the sting
Of kisses, red upon her breast—
There, where she lies at rest.

MARIE PETRAVSKY

AT THE CASCADE

V. T.

The little Paris which one finds here and there in odd corners of New York is refreshing as an absinthe gommee to one who has the nostalgia of the Boulevards. Verily you shall take a man and bray him in a mortar, but if he has seen the rain glimmering on the asphalt pavements and the slim girls silhouetting in the electric lights he will dream of Paris as you drive the pestle home.

And here we are—Toto and Titi, Fouse et Fifine! Elevated railroads go over our heads. The mud of unsavoury streets is splashed upon our pointed leather boots. Coffee is served to us in cups instead of glasses. We are sick for the Moulin Rouge. It is the nostalgia for ankles, for high-keyed laughter, for dance and song.

Pschult! Lolo!

Encore, Titi! Let us all go merry mad together. Garcon de biere! Houp-la-la-la! Saperlotte! Little one, kiss your grandpapa, zum, zum, zum, zoom!

There's a little Paris in New York—Dieu merci!

There are French restaurants and cafes without end. One may dine at table d'hote for twenty-five cents or for $1.50. A French dinner of the same excellence is cheaper in New York than in Paris. But after one has dined? Then comes in the crape-covered end of the evening for the man who loves neither billiards nor the heated propriety of the theatres nor the boom-de-ayish hilarity of the music-hall. Sunday is the dismalest day of all. There is not even the American substitute for Parisian gayety.

You idle through a long dinner with Elise. Elise was a French governess once upon a time. Now she is simply Elise, a small-footed, quick-eyed Elise, with a touch of rice powder and rouge.

"We go to the Cascade," says Elise, dropping lumps of sugar into her flaming cup of cafe cognac.

"What the mischief is that?" you ask.

Elise taps out a waltz with one small foot and hums, "Houp-la-la, zuni, zim, zoom!" which is encouraging.

You turn out of Sixth avenue. There is an old brown-stone house with high steps and broad windows. There is a dingy saloon in the basement. Everywhere is an air of dejection. The house is dark as the inside of a black cat—not a glimmer of light anywhere.

"Come," says Elise, giving a disrespectful flip to your ear and running up the steps. The outer door is ajar. You push on into the vestibule and ring. A small panel in the second door shoots back and a matronly young Frenchwoman takes a pot shot at you.

"Tiens, c'est toi," she says, smiling at Elise, "and monsieur?"

"He is mine," says Elise, with a sense of proprietorship. And that is only the beginning of the troubles of the man who finds Paris in New York. The plump doorwoman smiles you a welcome. You follow Elise into a hall, and through the hall to what was once the drawing-room of the old mansion. The rear wall has been knocked out; a roof has been spread over the garden; at the farther end is a stage; in the middle space are tables, and men smoking cigarettes and lightfoot girls drinking grenadine—"Dame! Little one, this is worth a kiss. Kiss me!"

Yes, grandpa! Houp-la-la-la-la-zim-zum-zoom!

The drawing-room—with the rear wall knocked out—hangs like a balcony over the garden. It has its little round tables; its papas, mammas, babies, sweethearts; its bottles of red wine, glasses of coffee, eau eucre, thimbles of brandy. Down below, in the garden under the glass roof, are more papas, mammas, sweethearts, babies. The stage is a little affair, five or six feet deep, ten or twelve feet wide. It is framed in wonderful papier-mache rocks. To the left a red curtain cuts off a dressing-room. To the right is a piano at which sits a stern young man with a red-flannel rag round his throat.

Ta-ta-tim-ta-ta-to-bim-bom!—he is the orchestra.

Elise leads you to the little round table next to the dressing-room. The red curtain bulges and sways with delightful proximity. A little, smart, fiery man, with a black moustache and a large stomach, bounces up behind the piano and shouts, "Mesdames and messieurs, M'lle Comme-Ca of the Parisian theatres!" All this in the French of Marseilles. The red curtain of the dressing-room collapses and hangs limp. A moment later M'lle Comme-Ca whirls down to the footlights with a little shriek—a tall, thin woman, all paint and powder and eyes and violet tights and yellow hair. Sometimes a straight white gown hangs to her knees; not often; as a usual thing it is circling about her elbows. M'lle Comme-Ca dances.

"Pste!" says Elise. Do you remember that whistling call? The waiter comes and Elise decides to drink soda water and you humour her. What sirope? Grenadine? And he brings you two glasses of the pink and sticky stuff. You light a foul-smelling French cigarette. You watch M'lle Comme-Ca capering on the stage—Sunday night in New York? Tush, tush! It is Paris, and you are young, and Elise is beautiful and—

"B'soir, m'sieu!"

It is your barber, the accomplished Henri. He smiles at you under the waxiest of moustaches. The plump young woman is his wife; the plump young baby is theirs; they deposit the baby—it is asleep—on a bench that runs along the wall and turn to watch M'lle Comme-Ca. It is all as it should be.

There is a new eruption on the part of the young man at the piano; he plucks out a tune that goes ti-ting-ti-ti-ting-ting-ti, and M'lle Comme-Ca makes a naughty grimace and sings:

C'est sa famille
Qui tout entiere entre en criant,
"Vous avez detourne c'tt' enfant,
"Va falloir epouser not' fille."
Un mois apres j'etais marie
Et c'est comm' ca que j' suis entre,
Dans sa famille.

In addition to your barber there are many people of his class, from wig-makers to dancing-masters. It is an audience of trades-people. The furriers of Clinton place, the varnish-makers of Fourth street, the artificial-flower makers of Sullivan and Bleecker streets, the die-cutters who live as far west as Eleventh avenue. Probably one-half are Parisians—you can tell a Parisian as far as the range of your eyeglass. The others are men from the provinces, but they are quite at home in the cafe chantant. The men in the provinces are merry in their own way, and that, like the way of the Boulevards, is the way of a glass and a girl. The young swells run to flaming scarfs and unduly pointed boots. They have the newest jokes—not always the nicest ones—for the girls with rolling eyes. Good, honest girls are these, in spite of the fact that their eyes roll and they cross their trim ankles conspicuously. They work hard enough six days out of the week; he would be a terrible "reformer" who objected to these harmless Sunday coquetries, albeit they are Parisian. There are dozens of children—youngsters in arms, youngsters sleeping on benches, youngsters precociously sipping wine and criticising M'lle Comme-Ca. The placid bourgeois women laugh at M'lle Comme-Ca's wickedest words and naughtiest oeillades. For we who go to the Cascade of a Sunday night are not unco guid and hardly pretend to be.

"Mesdames et messieurs, M. Bufignac of all the Parisian theatres."

This time the stern young pianist makes the announcement. The black little Marseillais has disappeared behind the red curtain. He swears terrible Southern oaths back there. At last he comes out dressed as a countryman—blouse, red nose, wooden sabots, and all. He is timid, he informs the audience, so timid—j'avais tellemente peur—and he tells the story of his adventure with one of the bravest of the Norfolk Howards. Then, with much dancing, he sings another topical song, but that was not a nice one.

"Pouf!" says Elise. "You shall buy a bottle of the Widow Clicquot."

That thing you do and find it pleasanter than grenadine. But you reflect sadly that even the best of French folk like sweet wines. You like them dry and with a tang.

"And you shall give me a cigarette," says Elise. "Mon dieu, my dear friend, but I am happy! I wonder what is the next thing on the programme? The waits are too long. Do you like this wine? Ah, grandpapa, I have drunk in Chaumont. You know Chaumont, where the green hills are and the chestnut trees and the vines? La, la, but I was a good young girl! He was in the post-office. You know they have built a new railway station at the foot of the hill. Mamma says the smoke comes up to the windows of our house. Oh, this poor Chaumont! Some day I shall go home. Yes—oh, ce drole!"

The drole was a pasty young man who had been whispering confidentially to the pianist. He was, like the rest of us, one of the audience, but he was volunteering to sing a song. He came down to the footlights fumbling his low-crowned hat and smiling fatuously. Then in a fine tenor voice he sang certain songs—wild horses couldn't drag the titles of them from you. But you laughed; of course you laughed and pounded the table, and Elise shouted unwise approbation:

La, la, la, la, la, la,
Tourne et tourne et tourne en vain
Therese mord a la grappe
Dans la vigne a son voisin.

Come, it's a nice song, a pastoral song, all about the vineyards. They keep the young man singing until there is a noise and stir up in the balcony and everyone sees a red wig bobbing and begins to applaud. Hole! Hola! Houp-la! The jolly little woman under the red wig! Men have died and worms have eaten them—for love of her. Eyes hath she, and they are black; teeth, and they are white; red tights, and they are plump; a red-and-yellow skirt, and it is fluttering. As she comes down from the balcony and goes joking through the tables the fiery impresario calls out in an agony of enthusiasm, "Mesdames et messieurs, M'lle Lili-patte-en-l'air from all the European theatres!"

Screw your glass in your eye, get your cigarette well alight, lean back—

Tim-tom-bim-bom-zim-zoom!

As the pianist banged out these chords Lili turned an airy somersault and was on the stage. One—an'—a—two—an'—a—three! Peste, the little one can dance! It is a fluttering, languid phantasy of eyes and ankles and lingerie. One—an'—a—two—an'—a—three! Do you want the head of John the Baptist on a charger? The music goes slowly. One—a—two—a—three! It is like the circling of a bird with a broken wing.

Zoum!

The small woman is feet up in the air and then a riot breaks out in the piano and she, with snapping eyes and black hair flying, dances the maddest dance of the mad South. You and Elise and the whole pack of us are cheering; the glasses rattle on the tables—bravo!

M'lle Lili, permit me to inquire with undisguised concern, do you want the head of Elise on a charger?

A woman with musical glasses, a juggler, other women who sing and dance, men who tell comical stories—but all these things are written in the chronicles of the music-halls.

"P'tit gran'pere—"

"Well, Elise."

"Do you think cold fowls and olives and another small bottle would do?"

"Yes, Elise."

"Pste, garcon!"

The air is blue-grey with the smoke from cigars and cigarettes, the gaslights show against it like smears of yellow paint. It has gone twelve o'clock.

"The fowl is excellent, Elise, but why do they leave the blue pin-feathers in it?"

"It is our fashion. Ah, you have eaten the fowls of Chaumont, beautiful, white, tender. They

feed on the chestnut meal. Oh, when I think I shall never see Chaumont again I could tear my hair out! But I was happy there. He was in the post-office."

"Shall we go, Elise?"

"Saperlipopette! We shall dance," said Elise, "la-la-la-zim-zoum!"

The waiters whisk the chairs and tables away; the stern young at the piano takes a long drink of brandy, adjusts the red-flannel rag round his throat. There is a waltz. Every one dances, save a few of the oldsters, who beam approval. Oh, a decorous dance, of course. The dust rises in clouds under the rhythmic feet. Smoke and dust and gaslight, flying skirts and rougey kisses caught on the sly. It has gone one o'clock, saperlotte! It has gone two, gone three o'clock. The little glasses of brandy are high in the head. Elise has thrown her hat aside. One strand of her soft hair has fallen down and circles her throat like a brown snake. The colour in her cheeks shines through the powder. The trill of her laughter runs an octave high. Zipp! Her slim foot shoots up and your hat goes whirling among the rafters.

Ah, Elise, were you really good — in Chaumont?

To be sure there is a little Paris in New York. But, after all, it only serves to sharpen the nostalgia for the Boulevards, the homesickness for the grey asphalt and the slight girls silhouetting in the electric lights.

SYMBOLS

My palace is of smoke and rain,
And from the window I look forth
And see a blurred, tumultuous train
Glide through a tunnel to the north,
Beaconed by lantern-lights of blood.

My palace is of storm and flood,
And through the window-panes I see
The white stars miming oracles
To the dead sand and sleeping sea —
Stars sign and cry aloud like bells.

My palace is of black basalt.
The stars which mimed in the blue vault
Have passed with dark, averted cowls.
I see the city's fitful light
(Lamps winking like the eyes of owls).
Men, mad with dreams, shout to the night.

VANCE THOMPSON