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four

Quarters

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The University Is Down the Street

● Claude F. Koch

Beneath the shattering El all simples jar
To counterpoint of trolley, and the far
Scarcely recollected voice of Herbert
Here is folly. A dust and paper sherbet
Is a sign that flanks me as I walk
To school; all recollected talk
Cuts dust and paper in the metal breeze:
I see the ghosts of sometimes trees
That argue autumn.

Through this wistful
Erudition, mordant sky and Elway kiss,
And down a ramp, suggesting boy and girl,
Strides my desire. Lover, my Narcissus, hurl
Me, uncontesting, through your fire

Which cuts both ways:
As Life the tragedy, as Life
That from old turrets to the whistling of a fife
Summons to this most lamentable comedy plaid
By his Maiesties seruants, his Maiesties graue
And jesting seruants.

Stooky smoke
Ejects a parking lot where pigeons choke
Upon their pride, a rammed sedan
Yawns with a carious ennui on its side,
And "Go For Broke" on Georgian facades
Peels and rots. A solemn boy—
A blurt of sudden light, a flame,
Caught in the willow brightness of his unknown
Name—is lambent in the lightness of his bone.

And I think on toys
Of metal, and toys of will,
Shakespeare, jesting men and boys,
And think we've moulded metal to our pleasure
Who have yet to take our shadow's measure,
Who are lost to shape this collage for this boy.

The Larger Screen

• John F. McGlynn

THE struggle between television and motion pictures for control of popular entertainment in America seems at last to have descended to the inglorious policy of the Civil War general who said, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." For there are recent indications that over fifty per cent of the film footage now cranked out in Hollywood is intended for television distribution. Meanwhile, scores of motion picture theaters throughout the country are transformed almost overnight into merchandise marts and storage depots.

However, it must be realized that television is an entirely new medium for art. The shift in movie consumption from the theater to the home means much more than merely a change in transmission facilities. The intimacy of the fireside as against the impersonality of the large movie house, the greater segmentation of audience, the much diminished area of television screen surface are factors which affect the television writer and actor quite as much as the man on the technical end of production. For example, the tremendous reduction in screen size makes advisable a greater use of close-up shots, thereby emphasizing the same mobility of facial expression that was characteristic of the silent film. And, despite the revitalization which television has worked in tired old movie range-riders, spectacle and the great outdoors are obviously ill-suited for projection on a sixteen or twenty inch screen. Small stage groupings, simple settings, a minimum of violently shifting action, and a great deal of dialogue: these are some of the things that the technical limitations of the new medium make it expedient to exploit.

But this is not intended to be an article about television. The above remarks were introduced to set up this question: If television is indeed a distinct entertainment medium, must we assume that the old large-screen motion picture, once our most influential mode of entertainment, is going out of existence? The legitimate theater survived the pre-emption of the film; it would be curious if the latter were not able to ride out the storm of television competition. Of course, it is possible that the movies are in only temporary decline or retreating to less commanding but firmer terrain. The fact that fewer but better films are currently being made seems to support this second possibility. However, there has been a fundamental weakness in picture-making going all the way back to the beginnings of sound projection, and I wonder if this infirmity will not finally work more damage than the current intrusion of the cathode ray tube. What I refer to is the almost complete inability of movie-makers to realize the artistic possibilities of their offspring, their peculiar lack of awareness of the film as a separate and distinct mode of aesthetic communication.

The legitimate theater has on occasion been weak in artistic talent, but it has never lost its sense of individuality as a medium of art, the sense of special conditions and limitations which make possible dramatic genius. For art resides as much in the skill with which the artist uses and transcends the limitations of his medium as in the nobility of his conception or depth of his experience. The best of each new generation of playwrights have always been singularly aware of the physical and psychological limitations of the stage. The expressionism of *The Emperor Jones*, the stark simplicity of *Our Town*, the poetic fluidity of *The Glass Menagerie* and *Death of a Salesman* have this in common, that they depend on the greater suggestivity of the stage as compared with other visual forms of expression. A dependence, one might add, extravagantly shared by Shakespeare, who had confidence that the "thoughts" of his audience could deck his kings and even on occasion cram within the cockpit of the stage the vast fields of France. The dramatist can wake the imagination of his audience to a degree impossible to the movie-maker. The audience at a film is, in a sense, after the fact. But the audience of a play is often like an extended chorus, palpably shaping by their sighs and laughs and silence the performances beyond the footlights.

It is no revelation to assert that American motion pictures are dominated by businessmen, not artists. Very little of imaginative reach or depth has been expended on them. The few names that come to mind of men who have had not only talent but a vital consciousness of the nature of their craft—Griffith, Chaplin, perhaps John Huston today—are lost in the lists of energies mediocre or at best misguided. And even the few legitimate talents have often been held in subjugation by men whose true genius is money-making, who appear to have been rather accidentally diverted to the movie industry from the garment trade and who, when they think in terms of "art" (or think they think in terms of "art"), confuse that Pierian spring with trick waterfalls done with lights or even with an effective system of copper plumbing. For the most enlightened of them, art signifies technical skill; among the lesser ones it gets all confused with phrases like "Cast of thousands" or "See fifty-three lions (count 'em) devour the Christians!"

Far more than the shapers of any other art, the movie-makers have missed out on their potentialities. Griffith's is the classic case. Let us grant that the objections raised during his lifetime to his remarkable discoveries and experiments were more or less normal, occasioned by the characteristic lag in popular appreciation of genius. But why, after his death, did his discoveries continue unappreciated? His dramatic exploitation of the close-up shot, his dynamic conception of film-cutting: why do American movie directors today still largely ignore these pioneer insights into the nature of films? Certainly, one of the gauges of health in an art form is the degree of honest experimentation it encourages. Movie-makers seldom experiment. To experiment is to gamble with money. Movie-makers

seldom gamble, especially when the tried and true—even if it isn't so true—satisfies a million customers. Hollywood continues to be happily busy with the thought that a sequel or a cycle makes it possible to stuff two pockets with money instead of one. Unfortunately, for too long now she has been stuffing her throat with feathers.

I can recall only one American film of the last two or three years, the award-winning *A Place in the Sun*, in which the montage consistently lent formal assistance to the story. In its ironic juxtaposition of romantic and sordid love scenes, its integration by "dissolve" cutting (ordinarily used just for optical trickery), and its climactic use of "cross-cutting" it recalled an earlier, lost era of picture-making, an era of experiment and sharp awareness of the tremendous possibilities inherent in this new form of entertainment. Perhaps it would be helpful here to refer briefly to a few of the fine touches in this film which distinguish it as a work of art, but as a work of art *peculiarly cinematic*.

It is an adaptation of Dreiser's novel *An American Tragedy*. The protagonist is a young man raised in cheap, sordid surroundings who has a burning ambition for wealth and social acceptance. He goes to an Eastern city to work for his wealthy uncle and has an unfortunate affair with a factory girl. Meantime, his uncle's interest has gained him the friendship of several socially prominent young people, with one of whom he falls irretrievably in love and she with him. The factory girl, now with child, demands that he marry her, and in eventual desperation he plans to drown her in a mountain lake near his uncle's lodge. When they are together in a boat on the lake, he finds he cannot carry through his plan; but the girl accidentally tips over the boat. She drowns; he swims to safety, is soon suspected, tried, and convicted of murder.

The scene on the lake is especially memorable. At one point the camera begins shifting back and forth between the faces of the two principals in what is known as "cross-cutting." This gives a formal rhythm to the scene—somewhat like the effect of meter in poetry—and heightens the suspense. In another shot the camera has been withdrawn to a position far beyond the trees which tower all around the lake. The boat is thus pin-pointed at the bottom of a gigantic pit, emphasizing the terrible loneliness of the tragic figures. (This same effect was more recently achieved in the film *High Noon*. The marshal-protagonist, his life threatened by a quartet of gunmen, stands in the dust of the main street of town, and the camera gradually moves up and away from him, disclosing inch by inch the deserted street, accenting much more strikingly than dialogue could that he must fight his fight alone and that a single man's courage is a puny shield against extinction.) To return to the sequence in *A Place in the Sun*, it ends as a distant, level shot of the capsized boat, its bottom phosphorescent in the dark water, dissolves into a close-up of the young man struggling ashore. The first of the two shots dims very slowly until only the boat

itself is left, fixed like a portent of doom in the brain of the man. Seldom has film cutting so served to integrate story.

About the same time that Dreiser's novel was being adapted for the movies, Sidney Kingsley's highly successful play *Detective Story* was transferred to film. I hesitate to use the term "adapted" here; it seemed to me the cinematic record of a play, not a movie self-contained. Kingsley is a dramatist with a very real sensitivity for the "theatrical." He is able to fill a stage without crowding it. All his major plays exhibit sets of crowded, realistic, merging and diverging actions. The spectator at *Detective Story* easily accepts for a few hours the illusion that this is actually a police station squad room set squarely in the middle of a busy city block. But to fix the same set before a movie camera and grind out a more or less faithful pictorial record of the play, ignoring almost completely the spatial and temporal mobility of the camera, is not to create automatically the same illusion. It strikes me that those responsible for the filmed *Detective Story* failed to observe a number of things in the very nature of the movie medium, with the result that a serious, realistic drama was transformed into arrant melodrama. In the first place, the camera is a far more searching, mobile instrument than any single pair of playgoer's eyes. Moving up close, discovering details missed by the latter, it reveals more of the mechanical supports of a story. Able in this film to highlight foreground action yet still contain in its adequate focus the background figures, it tended to accentuate their uncomfortable quiet, and Kingsley's wonderful management of separated but simultaneously-present stage groupings lost its air of reality. In the second place, a movie audience is a less plastic body than a play audience. The play actor can kindle sympathy and induce credibility by sheer physical rapport. Not so in the movies, for here the audience sits more passively, hears more easily, focuses its eyes more rigidly, hence is disposed to judge more dispassionately. Melodramatic effects must be muted, for the film is a subtler mode of art than the play. The final, violent sequence in *Detective Story*, in which the camera ludicrously distorted the grimaces of the principals, is eloquent witness to this truth. What could have been a compelling scene lacked sincerity. Consider another example. The character of Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, as interpreted by Vivien Leigh on the screen, inspires, of Aristotle's aesthetic emotions, pity but hardly awe in the onlooker. The "insight" of the camera magnifies her gesturing and posturing and facial contortions to such an extent that you must either accept her as a fluttery, insubstantial, Zazu Pitts kind of character, not worth all the bother, or else as a mental case, in which event the climax of insanity is no climax at all. The same weakness is in Frederic March's movie rendering of Willie Loman of *Death of a Salesman*. The movie actor, working in two dimensions and before an audience that is always in an ideal position to observe him, must concentrate on the finer touches of life; the stage actor, moving in three dimensions before an audience literally rooted to the spot, must

traffic with the larger movements. It has been aptly observed that the film has the same relationship to the other visual arts that flying has to other modes of transportation. In the ideal, as Pudovkin, the great Russian film pioneer, writes,

The power of filmic representation lies in the fact that, by means of the camera, it continually strives to penetrate as deeply as possible to the mid-point of every image. The camera, as it were, forces itself, ever striving, into the profoundest deeps of life; it strives thither to penetrate, whither the average spectator never reaches as he glances casually around him. The camera goes deeper; anything it can see it approaches, and thereafter eternalises upon the celluloid.

I think it is impossible to escape the impression, watching films like *Detective Story* or *Streetcar*, where fidelity to the play original has been elevated to a kind of unassailable virtuousness, that one is being unduly cabined. The result, in these two cases, is that the sordid elements of the former work and the morbidity of the latter, evident but not overpowering in the play versions, are emphasized out of proper balance.

The play and the film have certain likenesses, but they have also basic differences. They are alike, for example, in that their form is dramatic. Eugene O'Neill's play *The Iceman Cometh* and John Huston's film *The Red Badge of Courage* are both to some extent false to this dramatic character, one because it explores human behavior in lengthy orations rather than by developing action, the other because it imposes the expository comment of an unseen narrator onto a young soldier's actions in order to elucidate his emotional development. This is essentially the same flaw contained in Prospero's speech to Miranda in the first act of *The Tempest*, the imposition of narrative method on dramatic material.

The play and the film differ in that the former is primarily a speech medium (dialogue, not narration), and the latter is primarily a sight medium. Sight is secondary to the drama, this being due in part to the physical nature of the stage which greatly restricts the eye's activity. But sight is the very essence of the movie, because the spectator sees through the sensitive eye of the camera which can place him successively in the ideal positions to see the action. A play can be read with complete understanding and often with much pleasure; but this is hardly true of a movie script. How much of the power of Laurence Olivier's filmed *Henry V* derived from his realization of this essential difference! Here was a remarkable transfer from auditory to visual appeal. On the other hand, while we can appreciate the adult wit and flavor of the dialogue in *All About Eve* and *People Will Talk*, we must deplore their unimaginative camera work. Good talk is more basic to a play than a movie. Light is the latter's muse, Herbert Read tells us.

In most films today the camera grinds out its story from a succession of static angles, with no more rime or reason in the shifts than the negative desire to escape monotony. The effect would be paralleled for a play if a person watching it were to be continually changing his seat for such rea-

sons as cigarette holes in the cushion, chewing gum on the floor, or a formidably fat neck in the seat ahead. There are indications, it is true, that some film-makers are starting to realize after, lo, these many years the central position (I hesitate to say "focal") of the crank and lens in their medium. The dynamic shooting of the dance sequences in *An American in Paris* and *Singing in the Rain* are illustrations. On a larger scale, there was Huston's *The Red Badge of Courage*, demonstrating throughout a remarkable purity and flexibility of camera work, never false to the illusion of out-of-doors or of continuity of terrain. Close-ups, employed much more extensively than in the average film, had an amazing mobility; they were actually *moving* picture close-ups, with always a sense of place and of activity in the background. Compare them to those of Ford's *The Fugitive*—stiff, static, stylized, posed in artificial light—and you will begin to realize some of the unique possibilities of the film medium once it ceases to confuse photography and cinematography.

Corollary to the movie-maker's reluctance to approach his medium as a *distinct* and *artistic* medium is his confusion of art and engineering, his confusion of aesthetic illusion and optical illusion. Of course, this confusion is widespread in every art form today; it is only more obvious in the movies where artistic expression and technical skill work in a more delicate balance than in other forms.

The artist's problem today is that he lives in a technocracy, where the forms of art are often crushed beneath the massive forms of material progress. It is one of those strange ironies that "the bridge" which Hart Crane used as the integrating symbol for his fragmentary masterpiece should be also a literal, riveted-steel representative of the forces that destroyed him. Crane's failure to relate the Juggernaut of modern technological science to the spiritual life of man, his failure to subsume its material forms under the forms of his poetry was personal as well as aesthetic. Fortunately, most of our artists manage to keep a firm grip on their minds and souls; only their art is confused.

Happily, the Paul Muni era of films is behind us, an era in which sheer weight of makeup was felt to be the measure of artistic integrity. Happily, the era of documentation-without-creation is behind us, which measured artistic integrity solely by the intensity of historical fact—so that we applauded *Joan of Arc* because Ingrid Bergman's armor was hammered out by an expert in medieval "iron clothing" and because lumbering draft horses were used instead of prancing thoroughbreds since that's the way it was in olden days. Happily, one finds indications that the era of the news-reel technique, in which sometimes even clarity of picture image has been compromised—out of homage to *Open City*—is running its course. One shudders to contemplate how many pictures with meaningless masses of running, yelling street urchins (contributing none of the poignant immediacy to the story that their prototypes in *Open City* did) have been produced since 1945. Incidentally, it is wrong to assume that the use of such

dynamic masses was the invention of post-war Italian film-makers. The Russians were using the device in silent films, apparently for propaganda purposes, to create the illusion of a mass proletarian will while submerging the notion of individual will and responsibility.

I am certainly not opposed to documentary techniques or research in film-making when they are properly subordinated to more basic elements, but too often they furnish a means by which the director or producer may evade his primary responsibility of making good stories into good movies. The current red herring is geographical rectitude. All Hollywood seems to be on a "location" jag. Darkest Africa is rapidly assuming the character of a sort of long-distance suburb of Los Angeles, and we are treated to such choice news items as that of Frankie Sinatra, a latter-day Stanley, pursuing Ava over the veldt and through the woods to Zambesi. The upshot is a film like *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, amazing for its wide scattering of effects, supported by acting that is undeniably earnest but surely not Hemingway.

In *Art and Scholasticism* Jacques Maritain wrote,

It is by the way in which he changes the shape of the universe passing through his mind, in order to make a form apprehended in things shine upon a matter, that the artist impresses his signature upon his work. He recomposes for each, according as the poetry in him changes him, a world more real than the reality offered to the sense.

The artist—film director as well as poet or painter—who, we must hope, is a more sensitive witness than the rest of us to a world transforming, opening out like a gigantic morning flower before the researches of the physical and engineering sciences, must remember that his approach to nature is, in a way, more akin to that of the alchemist or astrologist than to that of the true scientist. It is thus that he "recomposes," that he "changes the shape" of things; the scientist merely synthesizes, merely *measures* the shape of things. The scientist is committed to the proposition that there is order in the universe, so that we may learn by deductions and inductions; the artist affirms that there is *disorder* in the universe, so that he may impose order on it, create an imaginative vision of order, a vision of that world, more real than the sensible one, which partakes of the splendor of form.

Maritain goes on to say that the artist "is as it were an associate of God in the making of works of beauty." He

does not copy God's creation, but continues it. And even as the trace and image of God appear in His creatures, so the human character is impressed upon the work of art, the full, sensitive and spiritual character not of the hands only but of the whole soul.

To God, the form of the world is intrinsic to its matter. The artist creates a world, creates form with it, intrinsically. True, it is doomed to be an imperfect world, in the sense that it cannot include or imply all the possible relations of things, but it is none the less his creation.

The movie director or producer who is merely a wielder of technical and organizational skills is missing the great opportunity: to manifest and affirm through works of art the mind's mastery of matter; and this is a serious deficiency in a time when so many forces are battering at the ramparts of man's dignity and declaring the mind to be a myth.

And the movie-goer who is content to take his movies as they come, as easily-swallowed antidotes for ennui, who fails ever to view them in terms of "creation" and hence in terms of form, is not only missing out on the dignifying pleasures of the mind but is passively aiding the forces of betrayal.

And in that event the medium is well lost to television.

After Sibelius

● **Stephen Morris**

We panned the evening's program and agreed
 The themes were fair but lacked development,
 Too far from intellection for our bent:
 Oh, quite uninteresting, naive indeed.
 So after cakes and coffee from the Swede
 We took a walk, our little malice spent,
 Chilled to the marrow of our discontent
 By winging overtones we scorned to heed.

But then we gained the crest of night and saw
 A freezing moon set in a freezing sky
 Sheeted in misty cirrus without flaw.
 A giant sledge came falling from the sphere
 To smash white iron in chords of triple ply
 And still an anvil rings within the ear.

Locusts

● Leslie Seagrave

KONO LUEY did not want to live in the estate he would one day inherit. He wished to live unnoticed and alone for many reasons. Foremost of these were the heavy belted men who sat at the counting tables of his father, Hagon Ko Luey, the royal magistrate.

The collectors of Huang-Tsi, the Province of Rain and Quiet Water, offended the youth whose knees had untangled the sweetening growth of Mount Hino and whose heart gave blood to fingers that cradle a floating flower. Two tangled odors, one of yellow grease, the other of Bimba clung to their robes plicated beneath the abdomen, swollen as decaying fish beside the water of Dark Okanoy. Two men gleaming in their greed as they pressed square coins from thumb and finger into veined leather pouches.

Two collectors pressing heavy upon teak stools, spindled and delicate, protruding carved legs as bean sticks from below the girdled waists. Kono could not command his eyes to relinquish their olive faces. Faces framed through the unfulfilled transparencies and the golden tracks of his abacus.

He had learned of the drifting mist that shrouds men from fulfillment, of the cloak that Karma bestows to men. He watched Loge, the larger man, a brutish animal who was called The Locust by peasants

of Huang-Tsi. A locust of the flooded fields where men and women arched as cranes to the bowing rice fronds. He liked to lash them from their haunches in the water, to crush them as threshing stones tear brown chaff. His bounty taken, he would stride off alone, leaving the peasants to recover themselves, to stir their hands among the wet harvest and cry fearful oaths to Amida Buddha, who would forgive them.

Loge had nostrils more alert than his eyes. He could contort their hairy holes to scented breath of young women. Serving girls who brought liquids to his cup, not to appeal to his thirst, but to depress their eyes sideward, to feign reluctance while pressing an invitation. The sharp quills of their laughter from behind bamboo cornices pricked and irritated him. He would hunt them when his first joy, the Counting of The Tithes, was completed. Hunt the children of fishermen, as the cormorant in lily shallows finds the carp. Hunt them as the Traveler of the Sky hunts the West where Po-chu-i the Poet sings and tries the lyre strands. Loge would search them out to pinch their bellies. He smiled, counting the tithes over again, smiling as one who has realized a great joke. Kono Luey observed the play of faces and resolved to leave his father's house.

II

Roads will wind where the heart would have them lead. Kono Luey ran while walking, his mind racing beyond his sandals. He might stumble many times, but today in the world he would come to know he could begin to deny those fat part-ridges of men, to learn as a tongue knows of the broth and the spoon is denied, to do even as Dhammapakka, The Wise, had told him, to escape the dominion of Mara even as the netted fish struggles to be free of dry ground.

He ran the clay paths, not wishing for, or caring toward a destination. As he strode he watched cone-hatted merchants bob as they ran carefully, the beam behind their moist necks bending, extending across the shoulders where hung the woven baskets in which were carried salted foods, rice and perhaps poppy seed that made their teeth like chicle. He watched a farmer stoop to give his waste to a yellow field. As late afternoon enclosed, moulding dark tallow, drew and shaped turquoise shadows, the boy could feel the beetle of hunger in his stomach. Upon coming to a turn in the quiet pathway, he could see almost hidden by a stand of low evergreens a shelter no larger than the hunting blinds of his father.

He approached the hut, serene and alone, almost forgetting an olive face. When he was near enough to see how weatherbeaten leaves were rotting, holy prayer strips fastened to rude joists, he heard the

voice of an old man seek him from behind the blind.

"Come within, my son, come join with me in eating humble rice cakes. You have traveled far indeed, for your legs are gray and tell of many paths."

Kono Luey looked at the kinky man, then down toward his legs, aching and bramble scratched. He smiled and knelt beside the hermit to accept his unexpected generosity.

"Why do you travel alone with no assignatory? Your waistband tells of estate and family. Highwaymen know of ransom and you are so young, quite incapable of sure defense."

"I do not care, Buddha will watch kindly my steps."

"Yes, indeed he will, but surely we are to forage our own safety. A dove does not provoke the Wolf."

"There are wolves in my father's house."

The hermit smiled, pleased with the young man's figurative reprisal. "You are determined to fly away I suppose, as many young men have done before. Wolves are strange house pets indeed. Surely you have other meaning."

The boy watched each move of the white beard who spoke with such carefully chosen words. He would not trust too quickly. His father had told him the need for caution when watching a smile.

"Loge has made me run away. Loge who hates."

"Hates whom?"

"The people who gather rice from the field are his hate. It is not their

taxes he would gather, but their wills. His smile is scum and he defiles the daughters of the fishermen who serve my father."

"There, there. . . . We are not the magistrates of men. Our lives are not white petals, pure stalks always pointing the sun. The degrees that shade are imperceptible. Amida Buddha can only know the stain, the coloring."

"I beg courtesy to your many years, but I cannot return to those of my father's house. If you knew Loge, you would not talk of forgiving."

"I know Loge, my son. Not to face perhaps. Logee who drinks the common spring with worn utensils. We may learn of our thirst, from the parched lips of others. Logee is a teacher. Be humble to the effrontery of others; to their involvement with life, their cloak of Karma. Our antagonism is our own disgrace."

It was a controlled voice with which the recluse spoke, a thin throat teaching words spoken by foregone tongues, sciving the clear papyrus of an imagining boy, a boy possessing hunger for wisdom that vied with the kind of his entrails.

"Out of the land—rise, my son! Out of pictures and schemes. To leave with outdistancing mind the frozen words that possess each object they implicate. Never to allow Fulfillment, never to allow the Truth! Be not as others: those clacking geese, that pyramid them-

selves through the sky, only to return again, their evening of wandering toil unremembered. Feel desire as the want of herbs to ease the grinding joints, tingling flesh, not as unbridled stallions kicking spring sod. Repel Mara, the Encroacher. Repel him, for he is the substance of our land. But forgive my clinging words. You are young, my son, so young."

The old man paused, thinking of the day when he had rejected the life of the village. A day when he too had revolted as Kono Luey. He had relinquished necessities considered most desirable by other men. To build a hut beside the stream, Toyama. To live in a distant wood and contemplate paradise in greenery, to see the Wistaria climb with spring morning and with evening the shrill of night birds.

"Forgive my words, young traveler, for now that I recall the way I have pleased here, mine was a gluttony not for tithes or maids as Loge, but for my solitude." Kono Luey watched the old man as he allowed himself the luxury of humility and began to understand.

Kono Luey felt the kiss of humility the hermit proffered. An understanding with which he could forgive the urgent eyes, the untallied thoughts in evil men. His lips molded firm as he looked to where Po-chu-i did try the lyre strings, the day subdued in carnal eventide. He smiled the cherubic smile of Amida Buddha and closed his eyes to find a quiet dream.

The Great Silk Route

● **Stephen Morris**

A prayer gong kindled as we made our way
Past fallen camels waiting for the kites.
We moved past them on foot. Some robbers fell
Down on us from the hills and after some
Expense of ammunition, blood, and five
Of our dear friends, traders and porters both,
We leathered on. And we could hear
Stern lamentation, drums and frenzied prayers
In tongues we knew not. Even great prayer wheels
Did not delay us in the villages
Nor suspect wine nor boated cups
Of unicorn and rancid oil. We paid
And left our coppers, newly struck at Rome,
With them and hammered on. The porters then
Displayed budgeted fear of what might lie ahead
And some were to a panic disposition bent
But we carved off one head, hacked off one ear,
The rest remained with us and shivered on.
Out of that village two days and a third,
Stumbling over pebbles of Gobi,
Blue in the distance, ochre close at hand,
We found ourselves in a huge bell of night
Named blizzard here, which nearly vanquished us,
Burying men and mules below the sand,
Whipping our eyes to shreds and making all
The singing resolution in our hearts
Fall to a choking silence, overvailed.
That sand wind battered us an evil week
Of hard delay, to chew on grit and know
The full malignance of this lidless land
Bubbling demons, arrows, slings and storms

Sent by the Mongols, Tartars or Khan's kin.
Yet our ferocity, our ground desire
Troubled wide heaven, made the sun to move
In contradiction to the frowning stars
That burned and stung and slashed their evil on
Our purpose.

We are little men, we know,
Puny in size and weak in pith of thew,
Lacking in flint and slow of artery,
Owning small pressure of the sting and force
This continent requires. But we have that will,
Step over step and through the licking sands
To dominate this fearful circumstance—
Come Barbary of pillage, black eyed men of scorn,
Come storms, come hazard and the wavy blades
Of old Damascus, come they all at once
And we will bruise them to the dripping heart.
We will prevail, come weather foul or fair,
Winter or summer, blizzard or fried sky,
Water or not, biscuit or not, camels or not,
Let the kites darken all meridians
From this pan to Cathay, we will press on
And finish that which we have well begun:
One choiring will among us to reach home,
Kiss our own wives in honest amity
And set out once again to anywhere
That suits the measure of our company.
Out of our band shouts purpose, shaking fists
At all the grievous cross slings of the hills,
One plan, one trekking, one line on a map,
That is our fixity, that is our goal
And we are one in forged iron of our will
Lance edge against the world and holding firm
To pierce this wilderness and never quail.

Lord Acton and the Meaning of History

● Catherine Cline

[The strongest and most impressive personalities, it is true, . . . project their own broad shadow upon their pages. This is a practice proper to great men and a great man may be worth several immaculate historians. Otherwise there is virtue in the saying that a historian is seen at his best when he does not appear.—LORD ACTON.]

CURRENT THEORIES concerning the relativity of truth, the influence of environment on the individual and the effect of these on the selection and interpretation of historical material, make the twentieth century student skeptical of the possibility of achieving the impersonal narrative which Lord Acton considered his goal. Whatever the merits or possibility of such an approach, Acton himself failed completely and magnificently to conceal his own personality and viewpoint in his historical works. His writings, as a result, present insight into one of the most interesting and unique minds of the late nineteenth century. Acton, as a scholar, is significant as the personification of the ideals of nineteenth century scholarship. Acton as a moralist is equally significant for his protest against the ethics of his time. Acton as a political theorist is even more significant for his clear expression of the highest political aspirations of Western civilization.

All these aspects of Acton's thought may be discerned clearly in his treatment of religion, which is one of the most prominent themes in his works. He considered religion "the first of human concerns" in every age and "the salient feature of the modern centuries." This paper is based on two collections of his writings in which religion is of special importance. *The History of Freedom and Other Essays* (1907) is a collection of articles published during the period from 1861 to 1895. *Lectures on Modern History* (1906) is a series of lectures delivered at Cambridge University, where he was Regius Professor of History from 1895 to 1902.

The man who emerges from these lectures and essays on religion is characterized by a profound concern for the problems, methods, and meaning of history. Lord Acton was primarily, although by no means exclusively, an historian. The creed which he professed as an historian reveals clearly the faith he held as a man. This discussion will therefore be divided into a consideration of his views on the purpose and scope of history, the method of history, and the lesson of history.

II

Although Lord Acton shared the nineteenth century enthusiasm for history, he avoided the extremes of his contemporaries in his conception of its purpose. While he rejected the "history for history's sake" of Ranke and his school, he considered the nationalistic purpose of such men as Treitschke and Michelet as the "service of a cause" and therefore not productive of true history. He maintained, however, that this study had broad aims—religious, pragmatic, and moral—beyond itself.

Acton's conviction that one of the purposes of history was to demonstrate the truth of religion, reminds us that he was a devout Roman Catholic. He admitted that a non-Catholic would not recognize, as he did, in the history of the Catholic Church "the unfailing hand of a heavenly Guide." He expressed the hope, however, that a view of the general progress of mankind as it approached its goal of liberty would help his students to see "that the action of Christ who is risen on mankind whom he redeemed fails not, but increases; that the wisdom of divine rule appears not in the perfection but in the improvement of the world."

History, according to Acton, had a pragmatic as well as a religious value for society. It was a guide which, by exposing the errors of the past, would lead to the eventual triumph of political wisdom. Modern history he considered especially valuable in this respect, for it created an understanding of the forces which still governed and divided the world. Since he considered political guidance one of the chief purposes of history, it was natural that Acton's writings should be largely concerned with the political element in the past. He believed, moreover, that public events were caused by the movement of ideas, and so he included intellectual history in his narrative. Economic, cultural, and social forces were almost completely ignored in his writings.

A pragmatic aim in the writing of history further required that the most instructive subject matter be chosen. For Acton, this destroyed any justification for the writing of purely national history. It seemed obvious to him that the wisdom he sought was to be found in the history of no one nation, but in the broadest possible sphere. He became almost lyrical when he asserted that, "ideas that give life and motion, that take wing and traverse seas and frontiers" make it "futile to pursue the consecutive order of events in the seclusion of a separate nationality. They compel us to share the existence of societies wider than our own, to be familiar with distant and exotic types, to hold our march upon the loftier summits, along the central range, to live in the company of heroes and saints, and men of genius, that no single country could produce." As a result the scope of Acton's writings was tremendous, ranging from ancient Greece to the nineteenth century and encompassing all of Europe and America. It is an indication of his vast erudition that he seemed equally at ease in these diverse fields.

Lord Acton's cosmopolitanism in an age of blatant nationalism may be explained by his background. Although he was English by birth, his mother was of the German nobility. He lived for a time at Naples where his father was associated with the government. Because of the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the English universities, Acton received his higher education in Germany. It was not strange that this scholar of broad experience would feel that, "a single speech of Antigone, a single sentence of Socrates . . . come nearer to our lives than the ancestral wisdom of barbarians who fed their swine on the Hercynian acorns."

Perhaps Lord Acton's most signal contribution to historiography was his statement that the development and maintenance of a set of moral standards was one of the objects of history. The historian's task, as he conceived it, was to make deliberate and severe moral judgments on the important figures of the past. Individual men figured prominently in his theory of causation; so, their actions, fraught with important consequences, were subject to sharp scrutiny. Two tendencies current in nineteenth century thought prompted Acton to emphasize this duty of the historian. The first was the idea, originating with Machiavelli, that in political life success made a deed morally right or permissible. The other was the inclination, characteristic of nineteenth century romanticism, to view the past with such sympathy as to excuse immoral actions on the basis of environmental influences. Acton pleaded for an inflexible moral code, the same for every age. He expressed the belief that "the code that is greatly modified by time and place, will vary according to the cause. The amnesty is an artifice that enables us to make exceptions, to tamper with weights and measures, to deal unequal justice to friends and enemies. . . . If we lower our standard in History, we cannot uphold it in Church or State."

What then were the tests which Lord Acton applied to the actions of the past? The important figures in history were judged on their adherence to what Acton called "political principle," which meant integrity and respect for human life. On this basis he condemned such diverse figures as Mary, Queen of Scots, Louis XIV, the Duke of Alva, and the Churchmen Richelieu, Pole and Lorraine. He criticized Martin Luther, not for destroying the unity of Christendom, but for his inconsistency and cruelty during the Peasants' Revolt.

There was another standard by which Lord Acton measured men of past ages, the contribution to or obstruction of the progress of freedom. By this criterion, James II, Strafford, Laud, and Charles I stand condemned. Interestingly, he considered Pride's Purge, which led to the execution of Charles, equally immoral. His denunciation of Cromwell for approving this action reveals the various considerations which moved him to criticize men whom others found admirable. "It (Pride's Purge) was an act of illegality and violence, a flagrant breach of the law, committed with homicidal intent. Under ordinary circumstances such a thing would

have to bear a very ugly name. . . . Then the Protector professed to see the hand of God, a special intervention, when he succeeded, and things went well. . . . There is not a more perilous or immoral habit of mind than the sanctifying of success." And then Acton's final indictment, "He was the constant enemy of free institutions."

If history is to demonstrate the truth of religion, teach political wisdom, and help maintain moral standards, it will be effective in the degree to which it is read by a large segment of society. Lord Acton, although in constant contact with scholars throughout Europe, resisted the temptation to write solely for other historians. Since he was writing for the general educated public, an interesting style was an important consideration. In general he was a very successful writer. He is among the most quoted authors in the English language, for he spoke with such definiteness, conciseness, and wit, and with such mastery of paradox and clever use of detail that his statements are memorable. He experienced no hesitation, for example, in asserting that Thomas á Kempis was the greatest writer who ever lived, that Thomas More had the most original mind of his time and that the Italians reached the highest perfection of man in art. Such sentiments stated without qualification, have a ring of authority.

The concise, pithy quality of Acton's style is noticeable in a statement like the following: "Next to the discovery of the New World, the recovery of the ancient world is the second landmark that divides us from the Middle Ages and marks the transition to modern life." Sometimes by the use of irony he was able to give a very subtle yet brief characterization. Columbus in proposing his scheme to the Court of Spain was "eloquent on its religious aspect. He would make so many slaves as to cover all expenses, and would have them baptized." By the skillful employment of a single detail, the destruction of old Saint Peter's, he conveyed the tone of the Renaissance, for it "was not only a monument of history, but a sepulchre of saints." He delighted in paradoxical statements such as the declaration that Luther never became a Lutheran. Acton was, in short, a master of English prose.

III

In his views on historical method, Lord Acton was in complete harmony with the scientific atmosphere of the nineteenth century. He had been trained under Döllinger and Ranke in Germany, and he shared their views on the importance of an exhaustive study of all available documents on a given subject. He was enthusiastic about the increasing availability of historical materials through the opening of the archives in various countries, and his writings display an intimate acquaintance with primary sources. In his discussion of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, for instance, he draws on documents which were scattered throughout the capitals of Europe.

Lord Acton was scientific not only in his attempt to consult all

pertinent sources, but also in his critical attitude toward this material. He checked all information as closely as possible, and in a doubtful case such as the authenticity of the Casket letters of Mary Queen of Scots, he discussed the evidence on both sides. In every instance he considered the character of his authority, and he dismissed as unsatisfactory anyone whose conduct he disapproved. Father Paul, whom Macaulay admired as the best modern historian, was the only authority for a statement that Pope Adrian VI considered making concessions to Luther. Acton refused to consider this evidence because Father Paul was suspected of being the author of a book which recommended poisoning, and "we cannot take our history out of Newgate."

Having ascertained the true facts, it was the duty of the historian, according to Acton, to present them to the reader as objectively as possible. He accepted the fact that historians had beliefs and opinions about the past, but he believed that unprejudiced history was possible nevertheless. True impartiality, he asserted, consisted in making a stronger case for the opposite side than they made for themselves, and admitting freely the weaknesses of one's own case. Acton made a definite attempt to achieve this kind of impartiality in his discussion of religion. In his treatment of the Reformation, he exposed mercilessly the corruption of the Church, and the unintelligent handling of Luther's objections by Rome. In discussing Henry VIII's divorce, Acton gave an unusually strong argument for the possibility of a real objection to the validity of the King's first marriage and expressed the conviction that the Pope's refusal was motivated by purely political considerations.

Not only did Acton himself adopt this attitude of strict objectivity towards religious groups, but he vehemently criticized other Catholic historians who did not. He denounced the view that facts were tools of religion which could be ignored, suppressed or misinterpreted when they proved embarrassing. Historians such as Möhler who attempted to dissociate the Church from the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, "betrayed duties more sacred than the privileges for which they fought; they have lied before God and man." He was convinced that, "such things will cease to be written when men perceive that truth is the only merit that gives dignity and worth to history."

IV

The central fact of history, as interpreted by Lord Acton, was the steady advance of mankind toward liberty. The right of every man to follow the dictates of his conscience was the highest political end, and a nation was truly civilized to the extent that it realized this ideal. Although various pre-Christian groups like the Athenians sought individual freedom, only Christianity, according to Acton, put freedom of conscience above all other values.

Acton believed that Christianity had provided a practical as well as

an intellectual impetus to the progress of liberty. By attempting to control a certain area of men's lives, the Church had clashed with the State, and the resulting compromise, by limiting the scope of both ecclesiastical and secular authority, had promoted individual liberty. He viewed this limitation of power as the seed of constitutional government, which was the most effective guarantee of freedom. This development was most complete in England, but traces of it were to be found in every country which had been Christianized during the middle ages.

Acton recognized that in spite of this assistance to the cause of liberty, Christianity had also been the inspiration for the most flagrant infringements of individual freedom. He explained, but did not excuse, persecutions by Catholics as proceeding from fear of the practical consequences of heresy to society, rather than opposition to the principle of freedom of conscience. He criticized Protestantism because it had departed in principle from the ancient Christian idea of freedom of conscience, and had proclaimed that dissent should be persecuted simply because it was error. It was within a Protestant sect, the Independents, however, that Acton found the first recognition after the Reformation of the moral duty of toleration. He believed that since the seventeenth century this truly Christian attitude and the practical considerations of policy had combined to produce a great advance in human freedom.

Lord Acton discerned forces in nineteenth-century Europe which he considered, in the light of history, threats to this priceless liberty. Absolutism of any kind was incompatible with true freedom, and he feared that certain tendencies were operating which made an absolute state imminent. The decline of the Church had removed one of the strongest bulwarks against complete domination of the individual by the State. The consequent decline of belief in a moral law had made the interest of the State the only standard of conduct.

The history of democratic Athens had proven, according to Acton, that individual freedom was in as much jeopardy from a majority with unlimited power as from a despot like Louis XIVth. Although he was sympathetic to social needs, he warned that socialism was an "infirmity" that attacked mature democracies, and asserted that the failure of the French Revolution was that it had sacrificed liberty for equality. He likewise viewed nationalism, exemplified in Germany, as a "retrograde step in history," for it was willing to sacrifice all things to make the state in its own image. According to Acton, any force which demanded complete allegiance or possessed complete power—be it Church, King, or people destroyed individual freedom.

Lord Acton emerges from the confusion of the nineteenth century a noble yet lonely figure. He was a religious man in a period of unbelief, a strict moralist in an age of shifting values, a European in an era of nationalism, a lover of freedom with the insight to see the powerful forces which threatened its destruction.

February Incident

● Claude F. Koch

THE HANGINGS had ended at Tyburn, and, because of the mood of the day and the time of the year, as they walked through the narrow misty streets under the jutting bay windows with their mullioned glass, they thought of Kit Marlowe—and they talked of him as they turned onto London Bridge.

"He would have come to that. He was eaten by an angry worm, Jack," the slight man rubbed a hand veined and translucent as quartz across his unwrinkled, balding forehead, and drew a finger down beside his nose, "like that pride-bitten fat knight there."

The crowd jostled in the moist air across the bridge, reedy soldiers bent from the Flemish wars, waddling burgesses, and lean Puritan goodmen. Heminge searched toward the direction of the jerk of the head.

"You've a bit of that yourself, Will."

The knight was a fragmented figure in the patchwork of bodies. From the shops under the houses lining London Bridge that Saturday morning in 1601—the Forty-third Year of the Glorious Reign of Elizabeth—hawkers sang their wares, the hair on the severed heads impaled on the portals stirred in the pungent swell of the wind. The mob stumbled back against the stores as a hungry-looking scarred man tugged by a bear on a chain. It eddied back

again and flowed along toward bankside, pressing one way—a shouting, boisterous holiday pageant. But there were double sentinels at the gates to the bridge, and a burly captain with a flaming nose peered belligerently across the crowd.

"There's Sir Choler," Heminge drew his thin companion to the side as they watched the troops. "Your *Richard* is not the play for this humor, Will."

The little man nodded gravely; he tapped his nose and watched the beard wave from the nearest head. The beard was fair. They stepped clear of the crowd and cut out from the bankside path across the fields.

"But my Lord Essex will pay, and that we may need after this lean winter," Shakespeare tugged at a stalk of budding hazel and picked meditatively at his teeth. *How like a well-tended garden the years had brought forth good fruit, and how like the image of a formal garden seem the years in prospect, offering order and decorum.* This February was somnolent, doubtfully promising spring, and smoke hung in vague spectral conformations over huddled London across the Thames. The wide cart track along bankside was invisible among the head-high wild rose and blackberry, but its murmurings carried a low, muddled tone like the tryings of a distant lute in the hands of an inexperienced player.

"We'll come up in the copse and see if the Old Lady's guards be by the Globe."

"And, Jack, someone in the tower to watch towards the bridge—let us clear away from this with our heads at least."

Aye, John Heminge thought, with our heads. The bold, striking Essex—pouched about the mouth in pride and petulance, irritable and cocky and out of favor at court. He had come the week before, boisterously surrounded by his worshippers, arrogantly hurling a bag of gold across the boards where *Hamlet* was in rehearsal. Gold for the old play *Richard II*, the play with the outlawed abdication scene, the play where the popular, proud, worshipped Henry Bolingbroke deposed his sovereign. *That I want. Saturday—and it's to be free to my people, to the folk of London.* It had been a meagre winter—plague and the weather. What could they do? And Essex could be a powerful enemy.

"The Queen is patient with him," Will Shakespeare kicked a stone toward the clustered bushes beside the cow path; "perhaps she waits for him to show his hand." He spoke absently, the Elizabethan brogue honeyed on his tongue, meditative, slow. "I want to get out of this and get back to Warwickshire—this time of year, in Stratford, the mutton is good, broiled outside on a spit, Jack."

Heminge pushed his chin into his ruff and stared at the ground. Shoots of crocus and primrose suggested green between the stones;

the earth smell was hollow and dark and enticing. He looked down to the slight man's side, disturbed by a sense of movement there—remembering him walking with the child Hamnet through this same path—but that was years ago and the child was dead. And they had walked many times since, he and this gentleman his friend—with his great house and his coat of arms and his hard won place in the order of things.

"Maybe," Heminge jogged the little man's arm, "you'll do well to go back there for a while after this day's business."

They were out of the blackberry tangle and behind the circular theater, and the murmuring had swelled as they came, breaking—like fireworks over the Thames—into separately recognizable sources. Growing laughter and shouting, the crying of chestnuts and small beer, and—over the satins and motley of the crowd—the sudden, shrill call of the trumpet to the play. Five coaches, new and rare still for London, gilt shining and blue and red polished wheels, were pulled to a side; as they halted to watch, Heminge and his companion could see the richly gowned occupants alighting, masked women, and sworded men in plumes and cloaks. Two boys in their teens, in the short aprons of shoemakers' apprentices, hurled stones from a covert toward a hunched beggar. The bear cavorted lugubriously under the whip of the scarred man in the center of a yelling circle. Up and down the smoke blew, shadowing

up from fires around which holiday parties gathered, masking the distant outlines of the towers of St. Paul's across the river, whirling thin streamers over the umber boards of the *Globe*, hanging under the thatch, until the earth itself seemed in movement. And the bitter burning fragrance sweet over all.

Across his companion's face Heminge saw the vagrant moods play, scorn pulling down a corner of the precise mouth—but pity in-drawing the expression in the swift brown eyes.

"But they *are* happy, Will," Heminge spoke out of the connotation of the little man and the multitude and the bare stage calling them to illusion in the blue and acrid afternoon.

"I know, I know—but some torch'll send it all up. What will Essex do at last to England?"

The trumpet flared up again across the afternoon, holding expectancy sweetly for a moment, and as it fell away the receding notes seemed to suck the gay crowd toward the bank-side entrance. Heminge and Shakespeare had padded across the thawing earth, when a growing thunder of hooves and the blare of an alien trumpet announced the arrival of Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex.

II

In his hand was the gnarled stick he had carried through the Irish

Campaign; the red plume he had wrenched from a Spaniard at Cadiz was erect on his yellow velvet cap. Pressed to his sides, helmeted and armed, his ribboned followers: the Earl of Southampton, Sir Christopher Blount, Sir Gilly Merrick, the poet Chapman, Sir Edward Baynham; the groundlings swayed against the boxes to clear his way to the stage.

"Essex! Essex!" they shouted, until the open sky above the pit seemed to give back their cry.

A masked woman hurled herself from a box and ran to kiss his hand. In the upper balcony, over the stage, cornet, lute, mandolin, and drum struck up a Welsh dance.

Essex paused in the middle of the pit, raised his hand with the gnarled stick, struck off his cap with the courtliest of gestures:

"Friends," he said, "Countrymen . . ."

From his concealment behind the curtain of the inner stage, William Shakespeare watched with an ironic half-smile.

"Condell," he whispered, "for God's sake, Condell, look. He has poor old Chapman in tow."

"I know you join with me," Essex was saying in his angry, scraping voice, "the Queen has been deceived. Even my life has been threatened. Watch and wait until we move to aid her . . ."

Then he was on the stage, royally, elbow crooked as he sat, fist clenched on his thigh. And the play began.

III

It was not a good play anymore. Heminge was not the *Richard Burbage* had been, but Burbage was dead drunk at the Griffin's Head. "I'm the Queen's man," Condell was saying, "that's all he'd shout, beating the table top with that big ham of a hand of his until you'd think he was freeing a spirit from the oak."

"He's still there?" Will Shakespeare tugged at the shoulders of the slight apprentice who was Lady Gloucester. "Keep your voice higher, boy."

"We couldn't get him home; he raised a lump on Armin and hurled a tun at Ben, sending his nibs back into a tub of lard."

"So Ben Jonson hit the perfect matter to fit his form, eh?"

Condell tittered; he had the ashen look of a condemned man. His pinched shoulders shook with the frail laughter, and he fumbled his shawl tighter about them. He needed little paint to dissemble as the old Gaunt he portrayed this day. The sharp syllables of Heminge's voice rose on stage, a drum rolled, and four supers with pikes parted the three of them in a scramble for the stage door. The apprentice cocked his head and trebled: "How's this, Master Will?"

"Thank God I did you in in the first act, Rob boy," Will Shakespeare said gently. "All apprentices should be done in in the first act."

"Ho! Ho!" from the tower above them, the shout blasted down the

stair well, "troopers on the bridge, on the bridge . . ."

The supers at the stage door took up the cry. Condell gestured toward the stage; "Tell Essex," he shouted. Beyond the curtain of the inner stage an uproar had broken in the pit. Essex could be heard, ". . . will stand by me!" His voice rose, sharp and irritable above the rising clamor. ". . . by me, by me," echoed from the boxes and the thatch, to be lost in the tolling of the alarm bell from the tower. A jar of feet across the stage, and with a startling *rip* the tapestry came down. Drawn swords gleamed over the heads of the crowd as Essex's followers massed around him. Will Shakespeare pressed against a wall and sat on the prompter's chair. His eyes were bright, and with somber incredulity he watched the inner stage curtain jerk to. A soft rain whisked across the pit, and the precise man saw the dew settle on the drawn swords, weaving, weaving in the air above the scrambling playgoers. Heminge was pulling at his arm:

"At the Griffin's Head, we'll meet at the Griffin's Head," he was yelling. Will nodded, his eyes fixed still on the moving, brittle light at the sword points. The timbers of the playhouse creaked and gave to the jostling mob. A woman stumbled over him as he sat, and was jarred to her feet by her cursing escort. He caught the heavy scent of violet and the shocked light in her eyes as she pressed against him. Back of her were framed fantastically the crossed swords. Then the playhouse was clear; he could hear the hooves of

Essex's departing troop. The apprentice huddled sobbing in the far corner of the stage. The slight man arose and crossed sadly to him:

"Get up, son; they're gone now."

The boy's head lay against the downstage door. Grease and charcoal streamed with the tears across the quivering mouth. A tassel of his woman's wig hung over one eye, and he inched his head back and forth to dislodge it. His arms stretched, inert and twisted, against the boards.

Shakespeare knelt, "Rob, boy, what is it, son?" Saliva welled from the rouged mouth as the apprentice tried to speak. The man stared around at the empty, darkening theater. There was a shocked deliberation in his movements as he lifted the boy. Once, a muffled scream as the broken weight of the arms fell. Then the boy fainted, and Will Shakespeare grunted with the weight of the body out into the leaden afternoon, across the clearing, and on to the empty, bitten road along the bankside. No horses, riders, or carts dotted the long, chilled path against which the stilled houses pressed, and—cursing the high Essex—the little man struggled the body back into the theater, forced water between the lips, and spread a long costume over the limp form. The eyes flicked open, frightened and dark.

"Son, I'll be back."

Then he turned out of the theater and faced the road yearning lean and dusty into the shadows. He hurried along, watching the indefinite river and the moving lights or

the farther bank. The evening was quick in coming. Far up the road, beyond his vision, a confused murmur arose in the still air. The world quivered on the edge of reality, and he remembered the blood on the boy's wig and kicked a stone. It was always so, brutality and shadow. And even pain—was it real? He could not think, but only remember; in Warwickshire, when he was a boy, before the players came to Coventry to stir his blood—then it had been different. *Plague in the streets and heads on the bridge, and the trampling of lads in the dust of all the stages of the world. What hope for England where blessed Mary's Son wore a different mask for every altar?* A horse neighed under the trees toward the river and a Yorkshire voice growled:

"Stand! Don't ye know there's a curfew, man?"

"It's one of them players."

"Speak up; what're you doing out now? Who's man are you?"

The little man stood still. He could see them now; three soldiers of the watch—metal helmets and breastplates. Their faces noncommittal in the shadows. . . . Mortal men, mortal men. But one had to be careful.

"There's a boy," he said, "hurt at the Globe—he was trampled . . ."

"Whose man are you," insisted the voice—and a lantern flared in his face.

"I need a horse," Will said. "Help me to get the lad in."

"He's harmless. It's one of them players, the Lord Chamberlain's Men."

"They weren't for the Queen when

they played for Lord Essex today.”

“Ah—they’re harmless . . .”

Will Shakespeare listened to the chatter of voices. *Whose man are you?* A cricket was calling his tuneless summons in the berry bushes by the road. Only Warwickshire and the boy were real. Wine-gold leaves over the lanes of Stratford. He lunged with his foot and kicked the lantern. The spinning flame shattered their shadows as he broke into the thicket.

IV

“It would be a tedious and a bitter tale, Ben,” William Shakespeare settled his feet cross-legged on the plank bench and swung the mug out in a drunken arc, beneath which Heminge dodged cautiously, “Back I went, and had ye not bribed the guards and found me, we two would doubtless still be toiling down that damn’d road, the lad weighing on my back like all my sins—and the way as dark as Hell mouth.”

Out the open door of the Griffin’s Head, in the spare, silver distances scattered leaves fell.

“Poor Rob was nothing to them then, the great men—and he’ll be little good to anyone else nor to himself from this day.”

Falling and settling. Ben Jonson hunched forward on the bench and watched the leaves come to rest on the corduroy surface of the blue-green chalked stream beside the door, the line where each touched drawn with a violet and certain pencil. They bobbed down the stream and he hummed to their motion under his breath. Disorder and alarum

would hang with Essex. Lichens were green on the knots and boles of trees and spring waited in its tiring rooms to renew the year.

“These great men, Ben,” continued the persistent voice at his side, “these Gentlemen and their Place and Rank, Order and Decorum—it’s all a sham. I have a tale of them, a true tale. Though no one will pay to see it, Ben.”

Ben Jonson shrugged his heavy shoulders irritably, winked at Heminge, and fingered the manuscript on the oaken table before him.

“Peace, Will,” he said, “you’re a substantial landholder yourself now.”

“Read it, Ben. Here’s their world, and they’re all here: Achilles and Hector, Troilus and Cressida, the Queen and Essex—what do names matter? Time-servers, bawds, and caterpillars—and haught conspiring men. . . .”

Heminge filled his cup. Marlowe had sat there long ago. *Eaten by an angry worm. . . .*

And William Shakespeare, Gentlemen, slammed his pewter mug to the rushes of the floor and buried his face in the arms of his leather jerkin:

“We’ve lived too long with ghosts, Ben, and the year’s already old.”

Under Jonson’s fingers the script read *The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida*. With a gesture of resignation he shoved the manuscript across the boards toward Heminge. As he glanced out the door again the fair day was invaded by an old discord, and behind all things were trumpets.

Introducing Four Poets:

The Death of Socrates

● Joe Gabriel

He never made a fuss over the fact of dying
Nor troubled the chroniclers for the deaths of kings.
When the cupped hands prayed that never thought of praying
A visible intuition gutted the peace
Of Athens and, for centuries, beyond Greece.

He wondered about the women who could never feel
Eternity quicken the blood, nor anticipate
Across the mountains to Palestine's Eastern gate,
The consummate speculation of the years. O he could wait
Till time had bridged the day of the dying sun
For what his syllogism sanctioned.

How they would gather eager for news of death,
For word of the final darkness settling there
About the head and shoulders of the man
Who severed the fitful nerve desireless.

How breathless, behind closed doors, the revelers
Would estimate the time and marvel at jokes.
How some few friends, his wife, his boys would ply
All his delicate reasons, and who, forgetting, would cry
In fear of his dread composure, of water that splits,
Indifferent where it lies, the self-satisfied rock.

For nothing absolute had ever seemed
Real in the flesh. No nothing ever dreamed
Had pierced the frescoed dark with burning
Until a voice had come to bury him, and then,
Annunciation musicked in his hair
And danced unlearning.

Yet oblivious to wound, the tragic stair
Was still unmounted. Not to dare
Ascent was seventy years he bartered
And seventy years he tried to prove.

So in the cell light praised their blame,
And heard the coming of a ship to shore. The rancid
Eyes of passion disembodied on the floor.

And was it a final act of innocence
That made of death a weapon, of thought
A most improbable expectance, and of poverty
A flag that they might wrap his meaning in?

Bitter or sweet it was a drink to him.
Mechanical crowds would question the flavor, not he.
Meanwhile it was the rain that prayed for silence
For still the children continued to sing in the streets
And only the Attic stone cried out for shame.

Antigone

● August Kadow

Not Helen nor the sea-born Venus brings
such beauty as your long, dishevelled hair,
the stubborn love or hatred of your eyes,
and that decisive hand that pulls the ground
over the naked body of slain youth
rubbing the earthy ointment in the wounds
torn by the jackals and a brother's sword.

I see the others' beauty turned to stone,
a purity of form and abstract grace
perfected most beneath the sculptor's hand,
but yours that fled a sister's words to act
climbs out of rhetoric to stand before
the circling faces and the village fire
and there begins a metronomic dance.

Your body swings forever in the cave,
its motion never stopped by Creon's son
nor by the fall of Brutus on his sword
nor yet by any father's wish for death,
but swings until the walls in sympathy
take up the rhythm and transfer it to
the godlike pendulum within the heart.

The Poet's Lament

● Bronislaw Slawewski

Beautiful in completion, fair the flower
Flings joys upon summer's careless easel,
Daubing the world one darling varied hour
With perfection attained; we stay and marvel.
We stand and with our stares the countryside
Flood, till ourselves are inundated, our souls,
Till ourselves feel race summer's richness through
Our veins: the spontaneity that holds
Us bound by its bursting of tortured earth.

But how long within earth's damp darkness hide
These buds, these blooms before their bloom, their birth,
Spraying long limbs of roots at random to
Seek nourishment of sunken rains: the key
To painful growth and frail longevity.

The Mummy

● Riley Hughes

The learned Egyptian teacher
has dark and musty answer. In
his glass case sterile with
the silence of centuries
his flesh has turned to cloth.
With unutterable patience
he offers an almond eye
to all questions and all questioners.
Traveler, what would you
ask of him? God-men
with sharp and glittering feature
avail not. Lost in an oarless sea
without dimension he neither
eats nor is eaten. The
azure talon clutches nothing
and the shrill bowl is empty.

The learned Egyptian teacher
gives dark and musty answer.

The Theater in Philadelphia

Noisy Desperation

• Dan Rodden

THOREAU, if my antic memory is not again playing me false and it was indeed he who pessimistically observed that most men lead lives of quiet desperation, should behold the present state of the theater in Philadelphia. You will recall that last season was a particularly horrendous one; so bad, indeed, that Mr. George Jean Nathan adamantly refuses to perpetuate its horrors, and has respectfully declined to be represented by his annual Yuletide yearbook of insulting digressions.

Although this season in New York, I take it, has been a shade better than last, we Philadelphians, having been denied a look at such sufferable, if non-epic, items as *Bernardine*, *The Deep Blue Sea*, *Dial "M" for Murder*, and *The Seven Year Itch*, not to mention the revival of *The Children's Hour*, or the visiting repertory companies, have had few consolations. As a matter of fact, of the new plays to open locally, only two are still extant: *The Time of the Cuckoo*, entirely thanks to Shirley, greatest of the Booths, and *Time Out for Ginger*, about which more follows. Nor does the future hold much in promise.

"HOW'S IT GOING?" I asked tentatively as I stepped to the ticket window of the Walnut Street Theater to get my ticket for John van Druten's new play, *I've Got Sixpence*. There was no line.

"It's over their heads," said the woman who sold tickets. "They don't want to hear about real life. They don't get it. I think it's wonderful." She sized me up quickly. "I think you'll like it," she said. I was wearing a dark suit and topcoat, and a conservative tie, and I was wearing my glasses, which I usually don't. I didn't know whether to resent her estimate, or not. I prepared a face to meet her.

"I'm sure I will," is what I said. We parted.

Later in the evening, I resented her remark like all get-out. For while van Druten is, pound for pound, one of our most expert playwrights, in *I've Got Sixpence* he is involved in an over-the-weight match, and suffers the usual fate of the good little man. The hand wears the glove of O'Neill (and it didn't fit even O'Neill) but the voice is the voice of the turtle.

What van Druten is here concerned with is man's need for religious belief. He discusses the issue with all the depth and breadth with which it is usually brandied about at an actors' party in the East Sixties when, after the fourth drink—I, as an outsider, generally get mine in the toothbrush glass, which may explain my venom—someone arises to proclaim pontifically, "Man needs God," and they take it from there. Mr. van

Druten eventually makes the same point, but I missed the drinks. Cold sober, I was able to perceive that his principal characters richly deserve everything that happens to them in the body of the play, and have done nothing to inspire credence in their eventual, dubious redemption.

Edmond O'Brien, as the caddish hero, gives what is easily the most vehement performance in several years, and possibly the worst. (Here van Druten must share the onus: O'Brien's part serves well to bear out an old theory of mine that you can get sympathy for any kind of character in a play, however sinful, excepting a bore or a boor.) And while Viveca Lindfors has her moments as his victim, something has got to be done about her postures. If she is going to stalk and turn that way, she is simply going to have to carry a sword and stand for King Charles.

Patricia Collinge, as O'Brien's feathery aunt, is easily the best thing in the play. It is interesting to see that, almost forty years after she played *Pollyanna*, she has finally come full cycle. None of the opinions she expresses here as van Druten's *raisonneur* (he is, I am told, of an Eastern-mystic bent, with such as Huxley and Isherwood) are any more acute than might have been rendered, in her most vapid moments, by the Glad Girl. The rest of the cast should have waited for other work, preferably not in the field of theater; I except Vicki Cummings, who has a past record of excellence.

Here is a point I think is worth making: I don't mind saying that I, as a Catholic, was mightily offended by the representation of my religion in *I've Got Sixpence*. I am prepared to admit that there are Catholics as superstitious and uninformed as Miss Cummings' suitor is in this play. And I hope that I am not one of those who automatically conclude that an individual character, of whatever race or creed, should be thought of as representative of the whole. But when, as here, a play sets itself up pretentiously as a comparative study of the various religions, I want, for my faith, a fair shuffle. Van Druten represents Catholicism in single phase, as stupid and priest-ridden, and I quite frankly confess to being—mightily offended? Nay, mad as hell.

SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER, feeling sufficiently recovered, I attended N. Richard Nash's play, *See the Jaguar*. Mr. Nash, a few years ago, wrote *The Young and Fair*, which showed him as a promising, if somewhat obvious, melodramatist. With *Jaguar*, Nash succumbs to the temptation towards tragedy which must accost any serious writer, and you respect him in failure, the while you scorn the bumptious, on-the-surface, glib pretensions of van Druten, and almost rejoice in his come-uppance.

Nash thinks (as we all do, which doesn't necessarily make it so) that tragedy is the highest form of drama, and he knows that, historically and demonstrably, verse is the vehicle for tragedy. But, in his desire to match up his verse with his tragedy, he faces up to the same problem that has heretofore thrown such a redoubtable wrestler as Maxwell Anderson. The

justification for verse in drama—say rather its glory!—is that it provides the playwright with an instrument to make his climactic moments soaring ones. Even Eliot, who cannot do it, has recognized this. But in deliberately choosing backwoods boobies to speak his theme, Nash—like Anderson, with his *Winterset* street boys—has double-crossed his good intention. For, while his yokels submit, with ridiculous ease, to unrimed iambic pentameter in their early action, they—and his pen—reject the metered line in favor of the coarsest terseness when the action pulls them to a climax. They are reduced—or heightened, as it turns out—to vulgar truth.

Arthur Kennedy, as Nash's sensitive hero, and Constance Ford gave good performances, and the play was well directed, but it didn't quite come off. An instance of its failure may be seen in the fact that one of the local reviewers pronounced it "an old-fashioned Western melodrama, harking back to Belasco, and agreeably free of symbols." Poor Nash, who had intended a veritable Easter-egg hunt.

WHILE HIS BETTERS were cantankerously biting off more than they could possibly chew, a toothless radio writer named William Archibald bit into an over-ripe peach which he entitled *Time Out for Ginger*, and gummed it rather satisfactorily, I thought. Unlike them, he was up to his task. In fact, I'm sure he has sequels already in mind: *Ginger in the Land of the Lost Volcanoes*, *Ginger Meets the Wolf Man*, and such. Why the New York reviewers chose to be so sarcastic, I can never guess. For if ever a fairly pleasing nothing appropriately labeled itself SUGAR, and sat pleasingly on the shelf, I don't remember it. Melvyn Douglas, having decided to play the leading role, has demonstrated once again that, if the material is weak enough, he can seem incredibly superior to it. And Polly Rowles is elegant as his wife: their scenes together constitute an agreeable respite from the text. Assorted juveniles cavort in the manner to which you have become accustomed, and—all-in-all—you'd almost think you were sweltering in a summer theater. *Aren't the flies bad?*

CALL ME MADAM finally got around to playing Philadelphia. I went to see it, after *Sixpence*, and *Jaguar*, and *Ginger*, principally because I wanted to be reminded why I had once thought I loved the theater. It wasn't because I thought I'd get a tremendous theatrical experience. Which I didn't. And it wasn't because I didn't expect a road-company simulation of Madam Merman's Broadway performance—which is just what I got. Elaine Stritch, who is physically as unlike Ethel Merman as it is possible to be and still be a woman, did an impersonation—or approximation—complete with grunts, the skirt-kicking swagger, the goggle-eyed indications of love, and the belting, blatant song style. The whole production was a top-drawer rendering of a middle-drawer piece of merchandise. But *Call Me Madam* did manage to remind me why I go to the theater, and to make me forget that I'd had a really bad dinner at an ordinarily good restaurant. For which, thanks to Messrs. Lindsay, Crouse,

and Berlin, who need my thanks like Miss Merman needs Miss Stritch's clippings.

ONE OF THE JOYS of such a random assignment as mine is the feeling that you can miss, if you like, such plays as *Be Your Age*, *The Grey-Eyed People*, and *The Intruder*. I especially enjoyed missing the latter play, because I didn't have to see Eddie Dowling and Margaret O'Brien, all in the same evening. My fondest evening-in-prospect is the one when I won't have to see the revival of *The Bat*, which is presently hovering over our town.

The Delaware

● By James F. Martin

Crying gulls wheel over the blackened styx
 Slowly rolling past the swollen buoys
 To the sea, leaving behind the inflamed,
 Diseased pilings it has kissed, searing the
 Tender, tethered skin of bedded ships.

Crying gulls whirl in vain for manna that
 Power passed to pollution when Watt was born;
 Wheel in wonder at the dead life under
 A cover of slick, that came silently
 To softly steal away a gull's garden.

Crying gulls wallow here in dead water,
 Thin white feathers monument their graves
 On this black bosom after halcyon days,
 When Penn gazed on virgin land and water
 To presage the black blanket of man's ways.

Contributors

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