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*The*  
RELEASE *of the* SOUL

GILBERT CANNAN

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# *The Release of the Soul*

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## ERRATA

*Page 5, line 10 — read its for to.*

*Page 83, lines 5 and 6 transposed.*

ATAMOS

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Page 173 of 173

*The Release  
of the Soul*



*The*  
**RELEASE** of the **SOUL**

BY  
GILBERT CANNAN

Author of  
*"Pink Roses," "Mendel," "Old Mole,"*  
*"Round the Corner," etc.*



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*To  
Gwen*





*"There are seconds when you feel the presence of the eternal harmony perfectly attained. It is something not earthly—I don't mean in the sense that it is heavenly—but in the sense that man can not endure it in his earthly aspect. He must be physically changed or die. This feeling is clear and unmistakable: it is as though you apprehend all nature and suddenly say, "Yes, that's right." God, when he created the world, said at the end of each day of creation, "Yes. It's right: it's good." It is not being deeply moved, but simply joy. You don't forgive anything, because there is no more need of forgiveness. It is not that you love—oh! there is something in it higher than love: what is most awful is that it is terribly clear and such joy. In those few seconds I live through a lifetime and I'd give my whole life for them because they are worth it."*

DOSTOYEVSKY



*The Release  
of the Soul*



I

**L**OVE must be written of in words as hard as diamonds and as true in every facet. It is only when thought, fused by love, has passed beyond words that it can find the use of them and so charge them with virtue that they too shall issue from the ordeal and become as flowers giving up their passion. No other words can withstand the terrible impact of Love's force, that makes them also take the course of the soul as, discovering the soul in the beloved, it moves to meet it, meets in God, bursts into flame, into flower, into wingless flight.

The soul is patient and will accept nothing of life except upon its own terms. The soul is for ever smiling at life because it knows the depth of its own patience and its own silence.

The soul can feel everything in life and understand it. There is no anguish of the mind, no bitterness of the heart that the soul cannot penetrate with its sweetness, for there is no folly in the soul, no blindness of vanity, no haste and no urgency, while life, that is so restless in its eagerness, rushes from form to form, throwing up so many that their very profusion would seem to confound and confine the soul. But the soul asks nothing of life except that it shall create a pressure huge enough to force it at last, when it has no more patience and no more silence, into action.

Life enters into a man in the moment of his conception, bringing with it ideas and memories into which the soul, smiling at the joke of another man-child being born, does not enter, though it surrounds him lovingly and waits to see what he will do with his desires. With every tremor of the delight of living that passes through this new form of life the soul trembles but it abides in its loving pa-

tience, knowing everything, understanding everything, yet never intruding. The soul of a man never comes to his aid until he claims it, until he discards everything else that he has and turns to it for the strength without which he can endure no more. It is nothing to the soul that life wastes itself in a profusion of forms, for it would be nothing to the soul if life were to cease altogether. The soul could then turn to God in whom there is a more perfect understanding, a patience more enduring, a silence more profound, and an implacable and infallible will. In the soul there is no will, neither any desire. The soul has no activity except in love, for the soul is an emanation from love, which is nearest to God, as life is farthest.

It is said by some philosophers that life is a force, but those few who have lived with completion know that life is an appearance only. An appearance endowed, like everything else, with fecundity. It is an enchant-



ing and a diverting spectacle, but it only becomes capable of yielding experience and such virtue as it can contain when it reaches such an intensity that the soul must enter into it to relieve it from destruction in self-mockery. Life knows this and, for all its confusion and the heated arrogance that runs through it, appeals continually to the soul to come to its aid. All forms of life that have not known the soul live in a state of terror-stricken prayer. Flowers and birds, trees, beasts, mountains and blades of grass ask so little of the soul that they can be satisfied, but men and women, even little children, ask so much that they live often in terror even of the soul.

In so far as life is an appearance it is a comedy. In so far as it is a hunger after the soul it is a tragedy, but it is in the comedy that this hunger is most acute, because it is unconscious. The sharpness of this hunger makes such beauty as comic life possesses, a beauty that lures mind, body and spirit in men and

women to their destruction, to the only discoverable Hell, that which men and women make of this earth. This beauty has its truth, but there is no comfort in it nor sustenance and only such light as is reflected from the light of tragic life. It is indeed a mirrored beauty, shown in the human intellect become as hard as polished steel. It has an adorable charm and a power to soothe as the intellect reflects the soul's indifference, but never to tenderness or its love. The intellect has a bewitching power of mimicry. When it has done with aping life it dares even to ape the soul, producing a burlesque of it so entertaining that by innumerable men and women it is accepted as a substitute, saving them the trouble and the agony which are not to be avoided once the appeal to the soul is made. The soul sees and understands all the comedy of life but does not enter into it, though, whenever the comedy breaks into tragedy, the soul is ready, only however if it be called

upon. Between comedy and tragedy is a region in which dwell the damned, the inert, the supine, the waste of the world.

Men and women are born, willy-nilly, to play their parts in the comedy of life. There is no avoiding it, because the presence of life has created the mirror of the human intellect with its alluring intensification of the spectacle of existence. In it are shown colors brighter than colors could ever be, the eyes of women shining with an incredible brilliancy, white shoulders and brown skins, jewelry, hangings, rich carpets, a mysterious grace of movement, above all, a subtle falsification of values that seems to simplify and make intelligible much that is painfully mysterious and incomprehensible. So convincing and so delightful is this mirrored spectacle that the ideas commonly current among men and women are based upon it and he whose ideas are based upon some perception of reality is unintelligible to his fellows. Poets,

saints, mystics are misunderstood, while those who have polished their own intellects into mirrors with which to flash a new beam of light upon the reflected comedy are applauded and acclaimed, and rightly, because, by adding that much falsification, they have increased diversion and those who have become almost insensible with their aching hunger for the soul ask nothing else—only to be amused, only to be distracted.

The great mass of men, though they live in it, know little of the comedy of life. Laughter to them is a pleasure, like eating or drinking or making love. For simple men the pleasures of life are touched with holiness, but simple men are few and growing fewer. The powers released from the earth and used by men have made their lives impinge one upon the other so that simplicity is fretted away; the bloom is rubbed from the lives of men and women by excessive contact and they are left in an exasperated and helpless vulgar-

ity. To escape from this distress they seek diversion and distraction as the gentles used to do when they suffered from the same malady through being herded together in courts and great houses. Now there are neither courts nor great houses, but there are great cities and there the comedy of life is grim because there are no manners. The mirror of the human intellect has become a distorting glass; it is cracked, fissured, and blotched, and yet the dull eyes of the dwellers in the great cities can only stare at it dully. There are no great figures to be seen towering above their fellows; no women who outshine their sisters in beauty or charm or flaunting wantonness, only restless, listless men and women, staring, staring into the mirror in the vain hope of seeing what once was shown there, the pomp of kings, the majesty of churches, scarlet cardinals, hunters and adventurers, voyagers and statesmen, ambassadors, ships with silken sails, Cleopatra of Egypt, Caesar,

Raleigh and Lorenzo the Magnificent; glorious men and women with their many-colored followers, their banners and their armies. Instead of stateliness they see the splendor of huge warehouses, glittering shop windows, illuminated signs flickering and winking, and themselves dwindled into a shuffling, huddling herd. They are told that this reflection in the cracked mirror is democracy and they do not believe it, because there is no belief without confirmation from the soul, and that, in the superficial throng of modern life, is not forthcoming. They are told that, if they will only look long enough into the mirror, there will appear more than the glories that have been, that Jesus of Nazareth will come again, that they will see themselves united in brotherhood, losing all that they have to lose—their chains—and they do not believe it. Yet, numbed and racked as they are by the creeping tragedy of their existence, they have not the energy to turn away, they have not the

love in their hearts that would make them look for a moment, only for a moment, into each other's eyes. The whole drama of their being is played out through the mirror, eyes meeting eyes in its reflected light, hands reaching for hands by what the eyes see there, and, to maintain the mirror in its place, they sacrifice all that they have, the simple joys, the simpler griefs, the physical sympathy they had one with another before the pressure of modern society packed them so close together. They make this sacrifice because they are persuaded that from the mirror, the reflection of life, itself an appearance, will come miracles. They believe in miracles, because in their deepest memory they know the miracles of dawn and the night, of the dew and the rain, of the wind sweet from the ploughed earth, of birth and death and happy mating. These they know, but, in their distraction, they do not associate miracles with their own energy, which has delivered them from the burden

of brutish toil upon the earth, to have escaped from which, at whatever cost of blood and waste of youth, is to them almost satisfaction enough. Exasperated instincts cry out against the increasing pressure to which they are subjected, but these modern men and women look for deliverance from the reflection of life which was once the joy of courtiers. Robbed of beauty, they look for beauty there and their eyes set in a dull stare so that they cannot even see the charm of what is put before them and they find some faint consolation in mere movement. That is all they have, and he who would tell them that their hopes are vain and their satisfaction base will be met with a howl of anger.

He who can endure the mockery of this reflection no longer, he who would seek to bring love and life together, he who would find in human life once more the rich savor of humanity, must turn away and seek the soul that has surely not deserted these people, else



they would have perished and no trace of them would be left, neither of their comedy, nor of their tragedy. The soul loves both, and understands and waits.

The soul is not God; life is not God; love is not God, for God is unimaginable. God is indifferent to the soul and to life and to love, because God understands them all so perfectly as He uses them in His never-ending creation, that lives to put forth beauty, immaculate, inconceivable, delivering passion out of passion without end. He that seeks the soul seeks not God, but only the ecstasy of God for this is all of Him that can be known. He that seeks God finds nothing but the bitterness of his own arrogance and is crucified by his own ambition. He that seeks the soul finds more than he seeks and finds it in no sudden illumination, but after a long anguish of isolated preparation.

First he must turn from the reflection of life to life itself. That is not so easy because it

means that he will begin to use words and thoughts strangely, for, in modern society, words and thoughts refer rather to the reflection than to life. The pain is great and without the aid of the soul is hardly to be endured, but for the healing of every pain the soul brings love to which, unlike life, it has immediate access. The healing of pain, like the pain of apparent separation, is the first gentle assurance of the soul's presence. The touch of love is the first intimation that the apparent separation from humanity is in reality a nearer approach to it. The first step towards the soul is thus easy. It needs but the prelude of a moment's closing of the eyes to the spectacle shown in the reflection of life. It is at once seen then that the spectacle was but the reflection of a reflection, from projected memory thrown upon the mirror of the intellect. Hatred and bitterness inevitably follow upon this disillusionment, but these also the soul understands and it waits while

cheated instincts let loose into this hatred and bitterness all the passion they contain. Hatred and bitterness will disguise themselves as love and go out among men and women demanding that they shall love with a like ferocity, and the end will be ashes and destruction and egoism quivering and naked, an egoism so stark that no friend nor lover that it had among the men and women gazing upon the reflection of life and living through it can remain. Yet among these men and women this egoism exposed and unashamed will see some beauty and, desecrating it, will thrust its way towards it, in agony to see it wither as they gaze. There however, among the gazers, it is the law that beauty shall only be seen in the reflection, and, for breaking that law, this egoism is rebuffed and scorned even though it have assumed the most fiery eloquence or the most lyrical music. Hatred and bitterness then throw off their disguise of love and turn upon their victim who has learned by this

however that his desires are not sufficient in themselves, and that they are too easily deceived. More is needed and he discovers in himself the hardness of the will and its power to endure. Hatred and bitterness struggle to possess themselves of his discovery but it has brought, as discovery always does, its surplus revelation of mysterious possibilities hitherto undreamed. It is a joke that, among all the men and women through whom he moves in his daily existence and the fulfillment of his hourly needs, none suspects this turmoil that is taking place in him and he can tell none of it because the current speech has no word for its events since they are reflected only in their remotest and most external consequences. He begins to be aware of beauty in the most sudden and unexpected places: always sudden, unexpected and in apprehension so brief as to be almost imperceptible. Yet these moments accumulate and confirm each other and he gains assurance. He has

learned already that in this new life which he is leading violence leads to a pitfall or to a sudden abyss the recoil from which stuns all his sensibility. Therefore he has ceased to look for violence except that which he is in-creasingly glad to find in the periodic commo-tion within himself which has already begun to arouse an almost recognisable rhythm. He listens for this and soon can very nearly de-tect the rhythm in other people, even in things; the world is full of color and music, though not yet of form, which is to him still something rigid, painful, distasteful, too reminiscent of the captivity from which he has escaped. Still he knows not the object of his seeking and a growing helplessness over-comes him, as he feels the pressure of life growing more and more intense. His help-lessness sickens him, as his will, upon which he prided himself, fails him again and again. Too often he is at the mercy of the desires of others, lives through them, succumbs to the

charm of individuals, or to the power of groups, and lives coldly without experience. This coldness is the hardest to endure and he longs for the comfort even of the throng from which he has departed. Yet he endures. Without knowing it he has imbibed something of the patience of the soul, and without it he could proceed no further.

With this patience comes the sweetness that is strength, and with that the first glimmerings of humor, the subtle power of detachment which admits to the play of forces the invigorating stream of laughter that comes bubbling, clear and cool, from sources unimaginably deep. The weary mind is refreshed and is made aware slowly and surely of its faculties and its limitations. It can begin to find its way among the chaotic impressions received by the senses and reduce them to some kind of order. It can separate itself from the brain and put an end to that organ's usurpations. It can then see through the eyes,

feel through the hands, hear through the ears and stop forever the brain's vicious habit of seeing, feeling, hearing *with* the eyes, hands, ears. The body then becomes a treasure to the mind, a beloved dwelling place, full of undreamt possibilities, full too of a spirit that is identical with it, sharing its character, its predilections, its appetites, its desires, its storms of joy, its reactions into depression, its delight in sun and wind and rain and in the good earth that puts forth out of its richness such a tang of bitter-sweetness, a kindling affluence that assails the senses and sends a cry of welcome ringing through brain, mind, spirit—every power of apprehension with which a man is endowed.

## II

It is at this point that the life of a man or a woman becomes interesting and dramatic. Innumerable are the lives that are lived through without any approach to this point; they are lived in a kind of dream, untouched, undeveloped, in a strangely innocent isolation. Such lives are valuable only for their innocence in which is secured a reserve of vitality upon which humanity can draw in times of crisis. To this reserve the adventurous can and must return when they have sought and found the treasure of the soul which gives them its power not for themselves but for humanity. The soul is not at all concerned with the life of the individual and he who seeks to use its power for himself can achieve nothing but his own destruction. He becomes a para-



site both upon the soul and upon the innocent of humanity to whom he is forced to turn for the vitality to endure the agony of what out of ambition or vanity or boyish pride and blindness he has made of his own existence. Such is the tragic fate of most of those who are called great by the many who mistake the social comedy for the history of human life. They are led in their arrogance and hasty folly to pit themselves against the soul and are driven to find a kind of glory in the magnitude of the ruin they bring about in their own.

Every now and then there appears among men a creature of genius, like Napoleon, in whom human faculties are so far superior to those of their contemporaries that, whether they seek it or no, they are forced into leadership. They can act when others are confounded, think when others can only chatter in agitation, enjoy when their fellows let opportunity slip through their hands. They

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have, like all men of genius, the inborn capacity of ready access to the power of the soul, and they can reach to the power of the soul through the lives of other men and women—their most dangerous faculty and their most precious. It is entirely within their choice whether they shall use or abuse these capacities, labor through life towards the revelation of the deep peace that is too great for human understanding, or towards a splendid denial of it which can only end in disruption and destruction.

In the instance of Napoleon Bonaparte the choice was made early. Here was a man of genius appearing upon the human scene at the the supreme moment when the European consciousness was emerging from the feudal structure of society and had enunciated the cardinal spiritual principles of liberty, equality and fraternity as the basis of the social structure of the future. Marvelously endowed for the occasion, Napoleon, fiery, pas-

sionate, chaotic, prophetic, had the good fortune to encounter a woman, Josephine Beauharnais, a Creole, a creature also of genius, who could bring to birth in him that deeper consciousness and insight into the processes of life without which great things are never done. It is impossible to say what weakness it was in Napoleon or Josephine which made this birth abortive, but the consequences are clear enough. When the moment came, as it comes in every serious crisis, great or small, when the choice has to be made between acting and play-acting, Napoleon chose the latter, and wasted the terrific force of his will in striving to force the comedy of existence to take on the semblance of the reality of the forces which he well knew to be at work in the affairs of men. Having, by a sudden intuitive contact with the soul, become aware of the power of his will he relapsed into the illusion that his will was in itself sufficient and that by destroying all the visible powers

that menaced peace he could establish it. By itself the human will can only be destructive because it remains impotent, however much of purely human power it may be able to accumulate and erect into the semblance of an edifice. By a concentration of will a man like Napoleon can discern something of the power of the soul, but, without a relaxation of it, he cannot draw into himself its sweetness, its patience, its miraculous swiftness of selection, and he remains as blind as his fellows but without the innocence which keeps them from harming themselves and the world too much. He is suspended between human innocence and the purity of the soul and can neither regain the one nor win the other. Great though his position and opportunities, he can employ nothing but human forces. Having attracted to himself the lives of millions of men who believe in their blindness that he can lead them into a triumphant serenity and weld their different purposes into a so-

cial entity which shall protect them against the excessive burden of their private undertakings, and against the dangers which threaten them from without directly they declare themselves to be a social entity, their leader, their worshipped hero can do nothing with them but send them out to destruction and tax their families almost out of existence to pay the cost of it. They do not know that by accepting the power they have thrust upon him he has betrayed both himself and them; but this he knows with an appalling and increasing clarity. In the fatal moment of choice he has lost forever his contact with the soul, but from his brief illumination his imagination has been kindled and his memory vivified so that he cannot but follow in an acute torture of mind the reversal of all his hopes, which follows an implacable logic with an irresistible motion that in moments of apparent success he may mistake for the force of destiny, as indeed Napoleon did, growing

more and more wildly superstitious as the consequences of his ambition drove him nearer and nearer to the prison that he had made of life both for himself and for those who had hailed him as savior and lord. Such bitter confinement follows inevitably upon the betrayal of the soul; and the perverted genius of Napoleon has made the whole world a prison-house from which humanity struggles desperately and, as it would seem, in vain to escape from generation to generation, until at last the half of Europe is in ruins, while the rest of the world and its peoples are ravaged in the desperate effort to procure food and raw materials in time to stop famine and pestilence. Meanwhile, the nations, like the individuals of which they are composed, all believe pathetically that they can shuffle out of their responsibility by passing it round from one to another, each waiting upon the other to make the choice that has to be made, the choice that was made wrongly by Napoleon,

partly through arrogance, partly through ignorance, but mostly through fear lest the power he coveted should fall into the hands of men who had not his genius. It were well had it been so, because power is better in the hands of men who have not the courage to use it, and best of all in the hands of men who are simple enough and honest enough to take orders from their betters, the true leaders of men, those who have lived both in their own mortal lives and in the immortality of the soul, men of no time and period, men who ask nothing of life except that they shall give to it their power of procuring the release of the soul.

In England in the eighteenth century, there lived such a man, William Blake by name, an engraver, a painter, a poet, one whose life was dedicated to the marriage of Heaven and Hell wherein the earth upon which he lived should become blessed. He too, like Napoleon, was gifted with genius, and, like Napo-

leon, had his moment of choice and chose well, so that the soul lived in him to the end of his days and suffered him to create a whole world of the spirit in which humanity should some day dwell. And, truly, as the glittering and pompous world created by Napoleon, in grotesque mockery of the soul, falls into ruins, the world of William Blake becomes visible, a world wherein all things beautiful are but faint imitations of the terrible and undying beauty from which they emanate. Already the inward eyes of men begin to perceive that world; their lungs ache in half dilation as the hope of breathing its air comes to them; tears of gladness well up behind their eyes, smiles are ready for their lips, tense with anxiety, and yet they neither weep nor smile because they do not know whence comes the new wonder of which they are dimly aware. They believe in their hearts that they have to create it for themselves, not knowing how much has been done for them



by the mystics, the seers, the poets and the artists who have created where others have destroyed and have never been diverted from creation by the appalling but always absurd calamities that men have brought upon themselves in the intoxicated elation of the discovery of a new power or a new instrument. The wise few have always taken every new discovery as a matter of course, because the possibilities of invention are endless, depending as they do upon the boundless fecundity of the imagination, which has but one limitation, namely that it cannot know or see God or divine His purposes. Yet when that limitation is loyally and cheerfully accepted, what is there that the imagination cannot do?

For too long it has been accepted that the imagination is a strange unaccountable power that produced the plays of Shakespeare, the tragedies of Sophocles, the paintings of Michael Angelo and the music of Bach and Beethoven. The imagination is simply that

power in the human mind which perceives and establishes relationships, the power, that is, by which a man escapes from himself into other things and peoples and through them into some sort of comprehension, dependent of course, upon his character and desires, of the world he lives in. Without imagination a man could not exist. He could not even walk through a door, or dress himself in the morning, or procure his food. He would remain as helpless as he is in infancy.

Now the simplest relationship of all those established by the imagination is that between a man and his work, no matter whether his material be the earth, or wood, or paint, or words, or bricks, or stocks and shares, or legal fictions. There is nothing that he can use that has not been created by human labor out of the handiwork of God. No matter what his material, a man at his work can concentrate upon it so long and so lovingly that in due course he becomes aware of a living vi-

brant relationship between himself and it, and through the relationship feels all the effort that has gone into the making of it, that calls for greater effort on his part, and, feeling so, he becomes possessed by it, is lured out of himself into a loving carefulness through which suddenly there begins to pour a power greater than himself, greater and more divine than anything that is in the material upon which he is engaged, and he finds that he is fashioning something new, something that has never been thought of before, something almost bewildering in its joy-giving power, recognizable as the thing he was trying to make and yet utterly and inconceivably different and superior, something that calls upon his whole faculty of reverence. That is the process of art, which is the process of work, that, without this sublimation, in however small a degree, is not work, but a degradation of the power of man. There is no task so humble that it cannot contain this sublima-

tion, this sudden liberation of the joy that is in man, as in all things living, and this joy is forthcoming always in proportion to the capacity of the worker and the value of the work to humanity. Without it, no other joy can be procured and the inexhaustible richness of life cannot be explored, for a man's life is lived through his relationships and the key to them all is his relationship to his work. The joy that comes from this is no fitful capricious thing. Once the true relationship is established there is no end to its fertility, and the meanest and most monotonous task can be enlivened by it, because no task is isolated and there is none that cannot be so wrought upon that it shall contain all the joyous work that has ever been done in the world and so call forth in the worker the sublime powers that are latent in him, which, when they have fulfilled their function, can summon up the flooding and omnipotent energy of the soul; and it matters nothing whether the force that is

brought to bear upon the work be of the muscles or of the brain. The joy of work is its only valid reward and those who look for any other lose that and are stultified until they become incumbrances in the way of their fellows and dwindle away into the misery of a parasitic physical existence, without thought, without impulse, without delight in the simple doings of each day.

Yet work is not an end in itself. Nothing is that. Even God is not that. Work is the sweet necessity that mothers sleep and appetite and good digestion, that brings health and the glow of having each moment flowering nobly into the next. It calls for no feverish energy; that indeed comes most often from avoidance of work, and, not seldom, the busiest man is he who works the least, having neither the ease nor the leisure nor the peace of mind to choose rightly upon what he shall concentrate. A modern city is full of these fussy idlers creating disturbance and distract-

tion and impeding the smooth running of the machinery of existence.

How marvelous that machinery has become, and how lovely are the vast, intricate railway depots, the huge warehouses, the wharves with their great groping cranes, the enormous ships belching their smoke, the colossal steel bridges, the steel rails that cut so remorselessly through the wild places of the world, and alas, also through the weakness of humanity! In spite of the remorseless, Napoleonic abuse of these things, they contain wonder and beauty and power. They have been blindly built and in blindness they are used and must be so until in the men and women who profit by them there is awakened the power to see the world, and something of the universe in which they are contained. They cannot see because they are living in this strange world of abused forces without a technique with which they could learn to use them.

Technique in living is like style in literature, to be acquired only by the practise of it. In the industrial world there is no technique except that crude process which consists in earning, spending, and, if possible, saving money. The bank is the nearest approach to God that the modern man or woman knows, and, indeed, the banker, like other foolish men, taking to himself the respect due to his function, frequently behaves as though he were God, though, to be sure, a very barbaric deity, even more jealous than the God of the Hebrews. All the real intercourse of modern men and women in an industrial community takes place through the bank, and into that intercourse the soul does not enter, so that the result is a grotesque parody of what human life should be. The feudal state in which a king arrogated to himself the impossible was bad enough, but this is caricature carried many degrees farther in the direction of grim burlesque. Nothing is admirable in it except

the toughness of humanity in enduring it—nothing; art withers away, beauty languishes, religion perishes. The banker apportioned the credit created by human industry to thrift and withholds it from industry and so exhausts the worker with anxiety and poverty that he cannot concentrate upon his task, cannot establish the key relationship between himself and his work and is thus barred out from all his other relationships and cannot find any joy in living. Love in such a society is driven underground and must work through starved instincts and suppressed passions, meanly instead of nobly, inarticulately instead of in song, and in desperate entreaty to the soul that remains hidden and confined and withholds its aid. Slowly and surely the character is squeezed out of men and women, the virtue out of words, variety and contrast out of existence, because, for all the immense undertakings that are promoted, the joy of work is withheld from them. The incalculable power of



organized industry is lost in the juggling manipulation of credit based upon thrift, which, being thus isolated from all other virtues, becomes the most destructive vice of which human beings are capable. Thrift regarded as a means of escape from work is a more deadly poison than opium or alcohol or any other that reduces the marvelous energy of man to lethargy. It is small wonder that the communities engaged in the war hailed with delight the reckless expenditure that it entailed, though they could not see that it led to thrift intensified and promoted on an enormous scale by a fortunately (or unfortunately) placed minority. But without industry thrift is worthless. It is soon exhausted. Without the joy of work there is no real value in industry. It leads not, as it should, to an intensification of vitality, but to lassitude and boredom, out of which grow inevitable calamities—war, famine, pestilence, and moral bankruptcy.

It is nothing to the soul if men will be so foolish. They are given powers for nobler things if they would but use them. The soul can wait and flood with joy the lives of simpler creatures. If men and women deny their divinity, there are always the passion of the flowers of the spring, the ecstatic fulfillment of the autumn, the loves and the migration of the birds, that, when they have no more song, call upon the soul to aid them in their long flight high up among the stars. Here and there, even in the vilest conditions, there are young men and maidens who find the illumination of love, and saints and martyrs and mystics who call upon the soul to fill their agony with joy, to give them strength to carry their innocence unharmed through the deepest suffering at whose end they meet and embrace the peace and the purity of the soul, knowing at last that no man or woman has a soul that he can call his or hers, that the soul, like everything else, cannot be possessed, but

that the human heart in love can be possessed by it. If a man loves a woman he belongs to her, to the degree of his love: if he loves a dog, a flower, a tree, a work of art, a song, a sudden glimpse of the sky, he belongs to them, to the degree of his love: if he learns at last, through many loves, great and small, to love the soul, then he belongs to the soul and by it is utterly possessed, not jealously, nor in any sense of property. Possessed by the soul, all his loves are enriched, glorified and transfigured, fruitful and creative.

### III

The religions of the world have failed to illuminate the modern industrial society of men because they were based upon the lovely and powerful instinct of reverence, without the perception that this instinct and the creative instinct are one and the same. Reverence is the dawning of the creative impulse, the desire to concentrate upon an object until it is flooded with more than its visible beauty. Every relationship contains in it the same elements as those which make up the joy of work. The difference between the relationships possible to men and women is in degree and not in kind. There is a simple and rich pleasure in the work of brain or hand, but the joy of it is a subtler and a greater thing, growing out of the pleasure with such a velocity and such

a convulsion of energy that it seems separate from it, though only to seem, because nothing is separate, nothing isolated. For the purpose of developing intellectual conceptions as mechanisms with which to convey ideas and divinations it is necessary to assume a separation which does not in fact exist and to write of the various planes of consciousness, which merge into each other like the colors in the rainbow, as though they were distinct. Once, however, the ideas meant to be conveyed are transmitted, the intellectual conception can be discarded, and indeed must be so if understanding is to be achieved and to become fruitful. Conceptions which are too deep and too powerful for the intellect must be symbolized and this is what the old religions of the world have done, while they have always made the mistake of inviting simple men, only too glad to employ their instinct of reverence, to expend it upon the symbol and not upon the conception which it portrays. Here again, in a

true religion, the symbol, quite frankly presented as a symbol, could and would become the object of passionate concentration until it was filled with more than its own beauty, a strange efflorescence, exhaling a kind of perfume to mingle with that of the worshipper's own creative impulse. On the contrary, however, in the conventionalized religions, the symbol has been presented as in itself holy, and presented only to the instinct of reverence, so that, in the end, by a complete and inevitable perversion, sterility has become the object of worship, mortification of the flesh the means of approach to it, and death its most perfect expression as the sure road to what the universe contains of spiritual quality and immortality. There has been no exception to this destruction and decay in any religious system and all the ancient religions, though men and women cling to them affectionately, have become inadequate and superfluous, especially since the cataclysm of the

European War, in which familiarity with death to a very large extent removed the fear of it from men's minds.

As the old religions lose their ascendancy and nothing arrives immediately to take their place, it begins to appear that their appeal to the instinct of reverence through the fear of death—with all that it was supposed to entail of eternal punishment, possible probation and promotion into bliss—was all the time immensely fortified with a much deeper thing, the fear of life, so full of apparent cruelty, injustice, hardship, inevitable calamity, violence, disgust, horror and sheer terror. There is a delight in the indulgence of the instinct of reverence which made that seem the clearest joy and the safest to follow, the surest in promoting community of feeling and good fellowship; and the generations who slowly made that discovery were right, only however with a half perception of what they had set out upon. Driven by their fear of life into the

fear of death as a lesser evil, they were blinded by it to the greater possibility and rendered insensible to the urge of the creative impulse which follows inevitably upon the exercise of the instinct of reverence.

Fear is ineradicable. It is one of the prime motive forces of human nature, and it is always, in an inevitable situation, sublimated with an incredible swiftness into courage. There is no such thing as your cool, calm brave man who has rationalized himself out of such a childish thing as fear, which, on the contrary, is the most ferocious of all instincts. Your imperturbable hero is a man whose sublimation of fear into courage is so swift and painless that he is all but unaware of it. It is an arrested sublimation that makes the coward, and sublimation is always arrested when it is impossible to discover the nature of the object that is feared. The civilian populations during the war lived in a state of arrested sublimation, because the facts of the situation



were withheld from them under pretext that their revelation would help the enemy. So, too, in an industrial crisis, when facts which have long been withheld are covered up more closely than ever, there is an arrested sublimation because there is a threat of ruin and no means of telling what form it will take or whence it will come. There is no great harm in being ruined and once people can perceive its nature and extent they will always accept it cheerfully enough—and set to work again, glad of the release from what was far worse than the actual ruin, the arrest of a powerful and essential instinct. Every instinct, every impulse is bound up in the instinct of fear which, in its sublimation into courage, supplies the motive force for action. There is in all human beings a tendency to inertia which nothing else is strong enough to arrest. Fear of death proved to be not strong enough because it ended in an arrested sublimation, since the thing feared, death and the life be-

yond the grave, could not be defined. Fear of life is infinitely stronger and its sublimation into courage proceeds apace as science has explored life and removed some of the more urgent of its menaces, at the same time aggravating others to such monstrous proportions that they lose their terrifying mystery and end, like war, in becoming merely absurd. Human beings dread their own tendency to inertia, but fear that is not sublimated into courage exasperates that dread and accelerates the movement of the tendency which no amount of purely external activity can check. Regarded from this angle, the Great War appears as a futile attempt on the part of the white races of the world to escape through external bustle and business from the dilemma in which they found themselves through their obstinate persistence in attempting to face the exposed and vastly increased terrors of life with no stronger motive force than that which emanated from the fear of death. The result

has been an apparently complete inertia and an almost deliberate refusal to think or to feel, ending in a cynical reliance upon the vast intricate machinery of modern social organization to stave off a collapse.

Some consideration of the Great War, even in a metaphysical and mystical discussion, is inevitable, because that calamity has made it possible for a little while to see human life without the charm which in normal times creates so many baffling illusions, so many delicious combinations of caprice and truth and beauty as to give the sensitive artist an excess of material upon which to concentrate. Now the surface of life is broken and for the artist there is metaphysic or nothing. There is no structure in social existence except the financial, which is too flimsy to serve as a model for the structure of a work of art, though it, too, has its implications that are worthy of contemplation, in spite of the fact that it is impotent to release men and women from their in-

ertia and to provide a means whereby the soul can enter into and play its part in human affairs. The provision of such means must be the concern of all who suffer under the spectacle of humanity withering under its bitter consciousness of loss of dignity. This has been lost through the old confusion of mind which identified dignity with material splendor and imagined that the symbols of gold, frankincense and myrrh contained in themselves the qualities which they represented, the ancient trouble of the impulse of reverence crystallising into idolatry, as it inevitably must when it is severed from the creative impulse. It is the age-long denial of that which has made the triumphs of industrial organization end in the terrifying nullity of modern city life. Not its restlessness, nor its brutality, nor its cruelty, nor its injustice, nor its hideous lack of leisure and privacy makes that life a torment, but the cold, vacuous nullity that lies at the heart of it. For the older

generations that has been disguised by such scraps as were left and they could hug to themselves old traditions, remnants of feudal society, of religion, culture, manners, memories of a simple, unsophisticated and honorable state of being; but for the younger generations there is no possibility of disguise. Food, housing and fuel are easily procured in the society they have inherited, but nothing else. The simplest needs of the affections are denied by its devastating nullity. To fill the vacuum all that is warm and generous in the human heart is sucked in to disappear. Nothing comes of it; nothing is returned. Young men and women who have gone bravely into the state of marriage find themselves suddenly destitute of love and understanding, inhabiting a house which has not become and can never become a home. No brave adventure of any kind, of the affections, of the mind, of the spirit, receives the slightest support from society, because there is no social activity, only

the listlessness which is all that can emerge from the nullity which human inertia has set up as the norm, and the danger is that human beings having behind them generations of obedience to authority, will accept this and continue to respect the complete absence of any moral sanction as their authority, complacently regarding the completeness of their degradation as an achievement and an end in itself. The psychological tangle here arises from the fact that as men emerge from the condition in which they were dominated and actuated by the fear of death they regard the waste of life as proof of their emancipation. Their notion of freedom is still negative. They think of it as freedom *from something* and not as an active, superb, inspired condition. They are under the delusion that there is more liberty in being a creditor than in being a debtor, though of the two it is always the creditor who is the more closely bound.

Herein lies the most obvious source of the

exasperation of modern life, that it is impossible to avoid thinking in terms of finance. Yet it is not desirable to escape. Sorry though the facts of human life may be, yet they must be accepted, for there is nothing else on which to build, no other point from which to proceed in the search for a technique which shall be acceptable to the soul, and through the soul to God. Man out of relation to society is inconceivable. He could not exist, could not have come into being, could not have risen so far above all other species as to be able to obliterate them at will. It is the keener social consciousness of the white man that has given him the ascendancy in human affairs and has endowed society with a power so great and so rapidly increasing that it has outstripped thought and escaped control. Thought is not swift, nor subtle, nor powerful enough. It is one thing to give thought for the morrow, another to translate thought into action swiftly enough for it to be ripe before tomorrow is

upon us. Against the impetus of modern society the intellect is as impotent as the old primitive and feudal superstitions which, until the last few generations, were enough to hold society in check. Now there is no known process of the mind that has proved itself adequate, no ideal that has not been revealed as a foolish dream. The need is desperate, but there should be no despair about the remedy. What appears on the surface of human life is only the very inadequate expression of what has taken place in the region of what, for want of any other term, we call reality.

Definition is a function of the intellect. That which is true and therefore beautiful cannot be defined; but it can be known at the price of the laying aside of the intellect, which has fulfilled its purpose when it has found a path through superficial phenomena by which the mind, the vehicle of the spirit, can move towards its desire. A simple man, like the peasant of the feudal society, having a mind, but no



intellect, could travel towards an intuitive knowledge of the region of reality, but could gain no awareness of his knowledge. He could brood and dream, but never could he bring his dream into contact with the facts of his everyday existence. The modern socially conscious man has lost that simple power and neither broods nor dreams, and his only sense of reality is an incessant growing hunger that is never satisfied, because he looks to society for this satisfaction as for every other, because such has been his training. He does not know that he can only procure from his relationship with society, as from ~~every other~~, what he brings to it. He gives grudgingly to society and his return is grudged. He gives only what is expected of him and gains what he expects—namely nothing, or worse, an increasing share in the nullity of society which little by little destroys every remnant of his inheritance, forcing him to live not by instinct and that habit which is memory, but by

custom and rules, in ape-like mimicry instead of in human spontaneity. He is old before he has begun to be aware of his youth. He cannot live and work and love generously and can only be stirred out of his inertia by the excitement of competition. He can do nothing joyously and for the fun of doing it, but only for the reward which he desires chiefly for the pleasure of preventing someone else gaining it. That pleasure in time becomes a frenzy in which every joy that life has to offer—and life can offer nothing else—is forgotten; work, love, fatherhood, motherhood, art, religion, mysticism, ecstasy are all submerged because there is no technique in modern life except the technique of competition. Life is treated as though it were a roulette-board, and the odd thing is that this result has come about through an exaggerated respect for life, a respect which in the comparative security of modern existence has usurped the place of reverence, and that wor-

ship which emanates from fear. What is ordinarily accepted as life is a superficial thing, a by-product, almost an accumulation of the waste matter thrown up by the conflict and play of the huge forces that sustain the universe. We move and have our being in and through this accumulation and can either become one with it or dominate it, pass beyond it into reality to emerge again with rare power with which to question it and so to dissolve and destroy around us all that is useless and burdensome, by the simple act of dispensing with it.

In the past, those who have had the courage to do this and to discard the dead ideas, dead laws, and outworn customs with which life is encumbered, have been expelled from society and denied the right to enjoy in it even that which was living and necessary. Hence the isolation in a society given over to Napoleonic destruction of a man so powerfully alive, so necessary to society as William Blake, of

whom his contemporaries said that he was mad, while they were doing their best to make him so as they entered upon their intoxication of definition which debauched the intellect and made it jealous of the imagination. So Blake told them when he assured them that they were making the brain do the work of the mind, but they set philosophy above art, imagined that they could prove their theories, and, when they had defined the various phenomena of life, conspired against the imagination which was already leaping in William Blake to fulfill its function of establishing relationships by the marriage of life and love. They would not heed him and he withdrew into his own vision of the universe, ignoring all their follies; and in his poems or pictures setting down, so plainly that none could see them, the highest and most active and most dramatic truth yet vouchsafed to the human mind, namely that all men, things and ideas are bound together in the white heat

of a creative impulse that is utterly indifferent to human comfort and human notions of good and evil, and yet in its incessant sure activity can give to human life an inexhaustible joy as immortal and as inconceivably beautiful as itself and as clear an intimation of the Godhead from whom it is but one of innumerable impulses. They would not heed William Blake, turned away from imagination to invention and projected, instead of the simple, God-fearing man of ancient days who was no longer anywhere to be found, an Economic Man, a Utilitarian Man, an Individual Man, a Political Man, a Democratic Man, leaving out of account altogether both God and Woman, though, to be sure, John Stuart Mill put in a dry word or two for the latter. Having repudiated Blake it was impossible for these philosophers to acknowledge his progeny, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Robert Burns, all of whom have been denied—except as purveyors of a re-

mote aesthetic pleasure—for three generations; and, having denied the creative impulse in such men as these, how could those in authority ever admit it in the lives of the humble and the unsuspecting many who bow to authority as they must to every other apparently inexorable fact of their existence?

William Blake was one of the few men who have been vouchsafed a perfect marriage, a true creative and imperishable relationship. Blake had nothing to learn in the matter of his relationship to his work. He had but to take pen or pencil in hand to pass into an almost trance of concentration, an absorption so violent indeed that, without the life-giving support of another relationship, he could not have endured it and must have become more mad even than he seemed to be to his contemporaries.

The life of an artist is different from that of other men in degree only and not in kind. Art is merely the most intense form of work

and it is in the artist's life that the processes and the issues of human existence are most plainly seen. The artist, more fully than any other man, knows the joy of work and only in that is superior, not in any prideful sense, but most of all in humble consciousness of inadequacy. There is no room in the artist's life for braggadocio or vanity. The exhaustion of his incessant work makes him weak, as Michael Angelo was weak, increasingly, maddeningly through the years as he found himself more and more the victim of a power that he could not control and was forced to seek escape in a kind of melancholy megalomania. So, too, the weakness of William Blake, which came from his isolation, denied him the power to correlate his vision with his actual experience of the human beings with whom he was surrounded. They were all bent on destruction and he was cut off from them since their purpose was not his. His creation must have become, in the end, as remote and terrible as

that of Michael Angelo but for his fortunate relations with his wife. Here was the perfect woman for him, one who could understand and surrender to the creative principle of marriage, which is the inter-penetration and inter-pregnation of two beings, absorbing their desires, their passions, their instincts, all that they have of intellect, imagination and crude force and transfiguring all into the creation of a universe in which both can dwell in security and knowledge of the soul and that ineffable love of which the soul is the bearer, upon condition only that this universe which they have created shall be continually re-created in their love, a process as swift and miraculously sure as that which sustains and permeates the greater universe which is God's conception. It is this spiritual conception which is the aim and purpose of marriage with its terrible and too often destructive intimacy. The physical conception of the woman is but an outward and visible sign of



it and so is the artistic conception that takes place in the man, whether or no it subsequently finds expression. This is the most direct and the most powerful of relationships, and all others, containing in a lesser degree the same elements, are subsidiary to it. Blake's wife, rare among women, understood this and welcomed the passion that went into his work as the fruit of their union and never fretted him with jealousy or dread lest something rare and beautiful in the man was escaping her. She knew that great work is the condition precedent to great love, without which there can be no continuance of great work, and she was blessed among women, having and holding the love of a man without equal in his day or in any time; sharing his suffering, doing what she could to warm the coldness of his isolation, tending the child in him, watching over him even in the glory of his death, when the clear passion of the man escaped from the confinement of the body.

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and, rushing out into visions of angels, sank singing into the purity of the soul whose power he had invoked and released through his unceasing labors, so that it should be ready against the day when men in the agony of their folly should turn to it.

Long and bitter has been the folly and slow and deep the agony, so slow and so deep that the surface events of human affairs have seemed to be disconnected from it, while the vision of William Blake has in appearance been utterly divorced from the ways of men, unintelligible to them and impossible to translate into their speech. They prided themselves upon entering into an age of reason and of action, forgetting that these things also need the confirmation of the soul before they can become valid and fruitful, and ignoring, what their less arrogant fathers knew, that nothing of thought or deed emerges into the external world until it has been created in the internal world of the spirit. In old days, when

men regarded that world as being entirely of God, they said that God moved in a mysterious way and they acknowledged their dependence upon His wonders, and this though they had no means of access to the world of the spirit because they had not created the social energy which should give the individual the force to endure the fiery ordeal of exploration. They builded always better than they knew, until there came those long generations that sat still, waiting for their inheritance to fall into their hands. They waited, and their inheritance withered away. Never, surely, can there have been such a complete disappearance of virtue and beauty from the handiwork of man, and yet in all that is now created in modern cities there are intimations of a beauty altogether new. In a great modern railway junction, or in a harbor, or a steel-girder bridge there is a potential loveliness very different from the remote dream of Gothic architecture, a superb quality of en-

ergy, like that of a stallion or a heaving wave or the swaying of a forest in a storm. In all these things there is a kind of expectancy, a waiting for confirmation, that, as it is traced back to the social energy that has created them, is revealed as an expression, as yet cramped and thwarted, of a release of the soul that took place in a generation that was somehow not captive and bound by its predecessors. The triumph of this generation, that which emerged from feudalism, has its most powerful expression in William Blake whose art transcends art only in being more nearly what art should be, a revelation of the processes that take place upon that plane of life where events are actual and intelligible because they have not yet been passed through and distorted by innumerable human imaginations, trained and untrained, naïve and complex, active or stagnant, that plane of life where relationships are intense, vivid, swift to emerge, to germinate, to create, and to put

forth seed. A picture by Blake is not composed, as, say, a picture by Velasquez is composed, attracting the eye into perception of the pattern and through that of the truth and beauty out of which it has grown; rather, in the contemplation of a picture by Blake, the eye is drawn instantly through the design and must contemplate the inevitably grouped figures emerging from the vision behind it into the confined space of the frame. There is more here than the inspired skill of the artist-craftsman; indeed, Blake was often lacking in skill; there is a direct invocation and release of the power of the soul. For the apprehension of it there is need to employ every single human faculty. When the Pre-Raphaelites in England, faintly stirred by this power that they did not understand, attempted to deal with it purely with their emotions, they collapsed into the morass of sentimentality, the outpouring of emotions so light and easy that they escape control. Any artist who could

make his peace with the Napoleonic world of destruction infallibly lost thereby the energy necessary to bear the powerful influence of the creative world of Blake. Almost all of the artists compromised and so for generations Blake's world and with it true art was submerged and well-nigh forgotten, so much so, indeed, that a superficial examination of the world would lead the contemplative mind to despair of the soul's ever being released to save men from the devastation of their own remorseless social energy. But there is reassurance to be found in the work of two men who labored quietly in France in pursuit of their different beloved arts, Cézanne and César Franck. Neither, perhaps, was directly influenced by Blake but both knew that the days of a recklessly instinctive art were past and that the possession of a talent imposed upon a man the highest and most terrible responsibility, in which, more acutely than anywhere else in human life, the moral issue was raised.

To bring to bear upon the employment and development of a talent no more than the blithe fecundity of youth is to nullify it, to sever it both from humanity and from the soul. Its productions may have charm and the most deliciously amusing qualities but they can never have true artistic value and they remain light and vain things for the gaiety of which the producer pays fatally in the corruption of his being. He has degraded what should be a joy into a pleasure and for nothing is the price more bitter than for that. Such degradation was quietly ignored by Cézanne and César Franck, who, without the fiercely inexhaustible energy of William Blake, set about the development of a technique which should admit his vision, and the release of the soul that he had brought about, into art and through art into life. Cézanne gazed upon Nature and penetrated what he saw until he could begin to perceive the forms, of whose relationships beauty is composed,

emerging from the inner world. His vision created a stir in his emotions over which his intellect maintained a tight control until they were disciplined, no longer at war with one another, and wrought into one single dominant emotion that could, at the moment of crisis, brush aside the intellect and allow his spirit to make contact with the soul so that it could rush through his being and meet itself, ringing with the same sure triumphant power, in the landscape upon which his love and his art were engaged. So, too, with César Franck, though the object of his loving contemplation was not Nature, but humanity, whose reverence and adoration of beauty were still confined in the triumphs of their forefathers, in Notre Dame de Paris, in holy pictures, in the sweet worship of the primitives of the Holy Family, the Trinity and the rest of the Christian symbols. Yet there is in Franck's music a new awareness of beauty, a melancholy knowledge that the old simple percep-



tion is no longer available, because that perception grew out of the energy supplied by the family united in a devout and easy ecstasy, whereas, in the modern world, perception of beauty has behind it the overwhelming force of groups of millions of human beings, a force that has swept the family aside and has ruined perception except in a very few who have had the endurance to resist its incoherent ferocity. Beauty remains, but the power to perceive it is lost because it must be apprehended with the whole force of modern social energy or not at all; and without a technique the individual cannot succeed, any more than he can succeed in living through his human relationships, though these depend upon the spiritual and the aesthetic. Without the support of the soul, human energy recoils from its every undertaking and destroys itself and all its works.

The work of the artist, then, has become of paramount importance. The work of no other craftsman is sufficiently intense to supply the

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necessary technique, which, however, once evolved, is not so forever, but has to be re-cast and re-shaped at least once in every generation. Already this technique is partially evolved, sufficiently indeed, to be described with a fair amount of accuracy.

In the generations that have passed between the primitive and a socialized existence, the artist has always been in revolt against the intellect, the human faculty which more than any other has made the transition possible; and he has shown his revolt most often by ignoring it, trusting either to his senses or the swift intuition of the aesthetic emotion which is endowed, like the creative instinct in woman, with rare psychic powers. During the transition, indeed, that was the proper function of the artist, who, however, like every other worker, is promoted by the socialization of existence. He is no longer the rebel, but the leader, the inspired revealer of authority, the creator of access to authority, that is, to the

soul. He no longer dreads the tyranny of the intellect, for the intellect has succeeded. He has no longer to keep alive the memory and the joys of primitive existence because there is now no danger of humanity having to fall back on it in the event of failure. The energy of the family and tribal traditional groups has been drawn up into our vast socialized energy, binding men and women everywhere together by their ready means of access one to another, sweeping away the customs, traditions and superstitions of the family, the tribal group and the nation, and imposing the terrible necessity of what only the artist can supply, a technique by which men and women can live and escape being driven by this new energy of theirs into inertia.

As we have seen, the artists have been quietly at work, Blake, Cézanne, César Franck and many others. No man can supply to the human mind a whole idea. No creative power but God's is great enough for that, but each

man working loyally upon his fragment of an idea contributes it to the whole, which, when it is complete, stands revealed so that men and women everywhere must burst into tears of gladness and for a little while believe that Heaven has come upon the earth, as, indeed, when the soul is admitted to all human activity, it will have done. There is no intoxication like that of an idea evoking new hope and energy from the consciousness of mankind. It is a dangerous intoxication which may end in the blackest disappointment, for an idea, after all, is nothing if it be not confirmed by the soul. Without that, it remains at the mercy of whatever energy there is moving among men, and can be swept away and lost as were the ideas that made Babylon and Egypt and Greece and old Japan and the lost mystical empire of India. Those societies were primitive. They could worship but not assimilate an idea. The mass of men and women in them were kept in slavery and were denied access

to the greatness created by their labor. The beauty made by the artists was for a few and had no bearing upon the life of the many. Neither from the visible nor the invisible world did it summon any mysterious power except such as was unconsciously evoked by the artist to enable him to give a poised form to his vision. Form then, was a matter of poise, and not as it is now, to the new consciousness created by social energy, a matter of relationship. God then, was remote and inaccessible and the primitive mind worked with a technique of myths and symbols which even the philosophers accepted until the discovery of geometry made it possible to dispense with myths. With that discovery began the ceaseless toil of the intellect against which the artists have been in revolt, with a few rare exceptions like Leonardo da Vinci, another of those who anticipated the modern world and foresaw the necessity of a technique of art which should be a technique of life, yet could

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not achieve it for lack of the sustaining power that only social energy can give.

The intellect will not rest from its labors, but it must learn in moments of crisis to abdicate. In common men, intellect takes the form of intelligence, the power to apprehend and to perform a given task, to sift what appears to be from what is. In men who are capable of being possessed by a creative idea, the intellect is fortified by and continually attempts to absorb the imagination, which gathers intensity the more it is disciplined. For most of the ordinary purposes of life, it is necessary for the intellect to remain in control because the imagination is too free, too eager, too generous to be trusted. But there are times of crisis when the intellect must abdicate and surrender the imagination to a greater than itself, times, that is, when a passionate relationship is involved—and every true relationship is spontaneous and passionate. (There are innumerable relationships that are contrived, or

artificial, or due to circumstance or accident, but these are not considered here.) A passionate relationship involves creation, and then the intellect must stand aside and watch, waiting for the result. That is the concern of the intellect, with preparations and consequences. It has nothing whatever to do with processes, which are the affair of the imagination, leaping free and calling upon every single human faculty to follow.

Now the intellect, like other powers, will only abdicate in favor of its betters when threatened with destruction, and this is the aim of the technique of the modern artist, as in course of time it will be that of the technique of the modern man. Of the imagination at play—its normal pursuit, ranging the realms of fancy—the intellect has no need to be afraid. It can be and is tolerantly contemptuous, just as it is of the emotions and the anxious instincts, but that attitude can no longer be maintained when the imagination,

by the sudden blinding establishment of a relationship, is summoned to the arduous task of assisting in creation, for which all the time it has been exercising in its playful occupations. The intellect resists strenuously, but in vain. Once a passionate relationship is established, it must run full circle. The imagination glows, expands, tightens into an athletic litheness and runs through all the faculties engaged, bracing them up for the encounter and the ordeal. And still the intellect resists, regarding all this as some new caprice or wild whimsy that will presently be laid aside as listlessly as all the others have been, until it becomes aware of a slow but irresistible movement of the whole being of the man or woman in whom it lives away from the external phenomena of life, impelled by a power which comes in increasingly violent vibrations from some point in life which the intellect cannot perceive, though it is confusedly able to catalogue certain of the characteristics of that

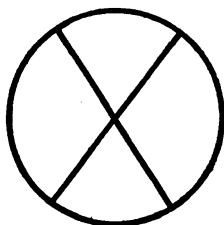


from which it comes; it may be a man or a woman, or a flower, or a tree, or a wood, or an idea, or a work of art; but the intellect cannot define it except as being somehow confused with that which it cannot begin to know, Love. The intellect, which is nothing if not agile, leaps ahead, endeavoring to deter the imagination with mocking assurance that all this has happened before; only to find, to its terror, that moving to meet the imagination is another force, more terrible, more ruthless, and more indefinable. The intellect needs all its agility to escape in time to avoid the impact and to return to its proper function of looking after the ordinary daily affairs of the man or woman in whom this stupendous drama is taking place, for with superb recklessness he or she has left behind all his other relationships and everything which was irrelevant to the passion of the moment, that is only so if it be the passion of eternity. This remains to be revealed, though that it is a serious business has

been demonstrated by the inability of the intellect to deter the imagination in its quest of the soul, for nothing less than that is toward. At this point, for the sake of elucidation, it becomes necessary to explain the history of this conception.

In the year 1916 at the very crisis of the war, its intense strain reduced or raised me to a condition in which I could think with an extraordinary clarity but without words. The English language, as up to that point I had used it, became entirely inadequate even if I had wished to express myself, which I did not. It was sufficient to be possessed by this clarity, for it was a possession which estimated to the nicest degree the elements of which my life was composed and discarded most of them, everything, in fact, except the power to think and to understand what was going on in the world around me, which was singularly uninteresting, a swift reduction of superficial existence to its crudest and meanest ingredients.

Soon this clear perception was broken by a strange activity of mind, increasingly intense, which rejected words as instruments, though, to be sure, I maintained the habit of writing, as I did that of eating, sleeping and talking. But my habits had nothing whatever to do with my increasing activity which absorbed every emotion and every thought, and at last began to express itself in symbols of which, having no mathematical training, I could make nothing, until at last there came a symbol that burned itself into my brain in whirling fire. At first it looked like a wheel, and, being by this time sufficiently recovered from the stress of it all to consider the matter humorously, I told myself that it was the Indian wheel of life and that I was suffering from an attack of symbolism from which I should presently recover, as indeed I seemed to do; for shortly the symbol ceased its whirling and took this shape, and as such I accepted it and set it down.



I could never see it without an intense and terrible emotion, but could make no application of it, except that I found in myself an entirely new appreciation of beauty in every form, a comprehension which I had formerly more divined than felt. I attempted to explain to one or two chance comers, but in vain. The intense activity subsided but the clarity endured and with it a patience altogether new, and, whether in myself or not, I knew with an indomitable conviction that something had been born into the world. Something of such tremendous importance that the disasters then overtaking my country and mankind were in

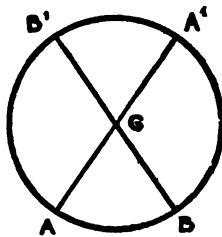
comparison trivial. This certainty increases and has become communicable without any deliberate expression on my part. The old world is dying: the new has been born. My only concern is with the technique necessary for the new world.

The new world is in a terrible condition, and is likely to remain so, which seems to indicate that something somewhere has gone very badly wrong. A spiritual birth has taken place; a Word—as the Scripture calls it—has been created, but has not been made flesh. These are phrases which I used in 1916 and afterward when I could not see the connection between the symbol and what was happening to me or to anyone else, because it was clear to me—in that strange clarity—that the symbol expressed some kind of perfection. It was still a fiery thing, but—as fire always does in my novelist's brain—it began after a time to project an endless succession of elusive characters, all kinds of men, women and children,

dogs, horses, houses, cats, trees, churches, all marching round and round the circle and along the diameters, in and out and round about, a regular Inferno like Dante's, except that they were all jolly people, even the miserable and the suffering, and they were having tremendous fun, as I was, too, in watching them, though the whole thing became more and more unintelligible and exasperating because I could do nothing with it, because I could not connect it with the life going on around me in which I took less and less interest. I knew clearly what was going to happen in the world around me and could only wait for it to happen, as it always did.

After a time, I could summon at will the characters, millions of them, who thronged the symbol, and then I lost interest in it, because I find a character is only absorbing to write about when his will is stronger than mine, and, besides, I knew I should want them later on. The important thing was to under-

stand the symbol and after a time I was able, intellectually, to make out something of the drift of it, though I knew that an intellectual apprehension of anything so passionately conceived was useless. Deliberately, and in cold blood then, I drew it again.



After some cogitation, I decided with a kind of convulsion of approval from my imagination—the first sign of activity it had shown for many months—that the center of the circle, G, was God. Man, who had once thought himself the center of the circle, had been removed to the circumference which I recognized, with another approving convulsion, as

Life. The point A I took to be Man, doomed, as long as he was alone, to be whirled round and round the stream of life, gathering impressions, of course, collecting scraps of memory and everybody's way. Then I perceived, making wild guesses, getting in his that he was connected with God by the diameter AA<sup>1</sup> and at first was inclined to believe that he could somehow pass through God along the diameter and become A<sup>1</sup>, B doing the same thing. There was no convulsion of approval and I was left alone for a long time until one day, lying in a cornfield, I became aware of the amazing loveliness of the green-blue stalks with their swelling heads swaying, swaying, swaying against the sky, across which floated the most delicate clouds, so frail that they hardly existed, and, though I hated to do it, I called the swaying corn B, and my imagination almost expired of convulsions. A alone could not move towards God, nor could B alone, but both, being in diametrical contact



with God, could, through that contact, become aware of each other, and, becoming aware, desiring each other, they must move towards each other and could only do that by moving towards God. In life they could never meet—they might conceivably crash into each other, jostle each other, get in each other's way, though that seemed to me unlikely—they could only meet in God, and for God's purpose, which is creative. After the meeting they do not slip back into life but march on into it transfigured.

After that, I lost all interest in A and B and mathematics and said good-bye to my intellect without a pang of regret. I discarded the conception of the circle and the diameter, for I knew that the medium by which man has his awareness of God and through God of the beloved, is the soul, that is only admitted to life through awareness of God and the beloved. No man passes through God except in identity with the soul, and I am inclined to think that

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even the soul does not see God, but has to pass through another medium, which is love, that again passing through other media for which there are no names. The spirit of man lives, once it moves out of life, in the soul, as the egg of a fish lives in the sea. It is borne by the soul towards the spirit of its desire and both are fertilized, impregnated with God's creative will, beyond which there may or may not be other creative wills. That is unimportant—once the process is perceived, it does not matter how often it chooses to repeat itself, on what scale, or with what degree of intensity.

The negative process, that out of which the myths of Hell have grown, is indeed rather frightful. If a man enjoys life, the superficial whirling movement, so much that he never becomes aware of God, then his capacity for the miracle withers away and he is simply left at the mercy of life with all his marvelous faculties functioning mechanically and torturing him for the abuses to which they are sub-

jected. Every encounter with his fellows aggravates his sense of separation from them and he lives in a condition which is worse than death, for death itself is nothing, and he is less than that.

## IV

If the soul has access to love and through love to God, and man has access to the soul, and if the whole mechanism of the spiritual world is so simple, how is it, then, that human life is so complicated, so full of bitterness and envy and evil? The process may be simple, but it is not easy. Nothing is easy, and in nothing do men and women more fatally deny their opportunities than in attempting to make things so. It is accepted that men and women are afraid of evil. They are just as much afraid of good, and what they really dread is the swing of the pendulum between opposites by which life gains the momentum for its own and its participants' movement into the soul and beyond, and out again into life, carrying with it all its dead matter

for re-creation. If life has one clear and obvious desire it is for variety, and in this desire life is wasteful and therefore evil. The desire of the soul, on the other hand, is for intensity and the soul can ignore evil which has played its part directly the imagination begins its ecstatic movement towards the beloved. The soul does not even need to remember, as the imagination must, not to resist evil, because the soul's momentum is from God, while that of the human spirit is from life. Evil is as necessary to good, as day is to night, sorrow to joy, black to white, and it was a deep instinct in Tolstoi, it was the highest ecstasy of the imagination that bade him see in "Resist not evil" the cardinal injunction of the teaching of Christ: only it is not a moral, but a mystical utterance. It is only when the Christian ethic is flooded with a mystical color that it becomes intelligible. For the mystic, the whole moral issue is bound up with the acceptance or rejection of the soul. Out-

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side that there is no valid test whatsoever. To accept the soul, it is necessary for the imagination to have behind it the full force of the momentum created by the swing of life between good and evil, a momentum which has been made by the urge of the soul outward in the creation of life and then inward in its recreation. It is not life that is important but the urge of the soul, which is all that can be known of God, since love also is known only through the soul.

Good is affirmation of that urge and evil is denial of it, and both are necessary, for without both the imagination cannot arrive at perception of life, nor find its way back into it after its transfiguration. It must have a clear perception before it can accept the soul and therefore must know good and evil to the extent of its capacity. More than that is not asked of any man. Every man has imagination, because every man has character, which is consciousness of identity, but the imagina-

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tion can only become active through knowledge of life, which is knowledge of good and evil. Every living thing in its sturdy vitality has the sense of being a separate entity which is the ego, and evil is the stubborn assertion of that sense as a principle, necessary up to a point, as it were, to detain the urge of the soul for just a moment, only a moment, for breathing space, respite, the expression of the exultant feeling of being alive, that cry of gladness that rings through children and is so beautiful and yet so inadequate to the passions and experiences of human life. It is the expression of innocence without knowledge and it becomes evil through persistence. With the awakening of passions in the grown man or woman there is no longer room for the innocence of the child. Respite can then only be won through the soul and never in defiance of it, and yet the first instinct of every living creature is defiance. Life is so sweet, so intoxicating; change of spirit, of desire, of direction,

all of which are demanded by the soul, seems to be too great a risk. Why encounter love and death when life is sweet?

That is the cowardly question that murmurs seductively in the heart of man, every moment, every hour, every day and night. In childhood there was a pretty gush of emotion, which is surely love enough, and in childhood there was no death: toys broke, flowers withered, playmates disappeared amid solemnity and tears, but days of dreaming floated by undisturbed. As their charm fades, ferocious instincts strive to defend it, to stay the encroaching forces which appear as conflicting and tyrannical wills. Alternatives become terribly clear and sharp and there is need for choice where none was before in the days that were too full for selection and there was merely an ecstatic drifting from one delight to another or a brooding and complete indifference. Slowly, as passions awake and begin their unending conflict, love and death appear and



they are terrible, because there is no defence against them and they brush aside the lusty egoistic enjoyment of life, whose surface cracks, breaks, crumbles. A young man seeing his friend die—as in these tragic years so many young men have done—will break into a passionate storm of denial. It is impossible that the living sympathy, exchanged for the most part in silence, should be at an end. Yet his friend is dead, and the warm hand will grip no more, not again will the eyes smile, or the voice give its deep encouragement; his friend lies dead, the friendship slips back into memory, and some day he, too, will be dead, and of the friendships no trace will be left except in those other friendships which it has fertilized. The intensity of that experience may work for good or for evil, creating either a heightened sense of the implications of life or an embittered illusion of its futility. Contact with love or with death inevitably brings about that intensification of life in which the

soul must be sought or denied. It gives a power of selection which works for good or evil, creation or destruction, according as the choice is made. It matters nothing to the soul which is chosen, whether it be sought or denied, for either way, when the impetus of the will is exhausted, the chooser, man or woman, must sink back to the point at which another choice must be made, preparedness for a new contact with love or with death.

Again, in their first contact with love, a young man and woman will cling desperately to the charm of childhood, which seems to be suddenly heightened by the shock and thrill and the easy delight of the experience and they will labor almost desperately to avert the transition from the condition of being in love to that of loving. Yet there is no avoiding it. The contact with love is even more terrible than that with death, for death is a matter of a moment, while love has all the years of life in which to burn. Love, too, breaks the sur-

face of life and on the plane of superficial experience is not to be endured. More than any other relationship, the love of a man and a woman cries for the support of the soul, for without that, it is, more than any other, destructive and devastating and more loathsome than death to the naive delight in being alive. Hence the reluctance of men and women to relinquish their first surprised joy in their sudden relationship, coming, as it does, to be an apparent solvent out of the turbulence of adolescence. That which is most alive in men and women is the love that kindles their being, that has come thrilling through the soul to take up its habitation in their flesh and blood, and that cries out whenever it sees the love leaping in the flesh and blood of others, and this it is that aches to move towards the central love from which it was summoned in the conception of the child destined to be its vessel. This it is that gives men and women their sanctity and their dignity, but the flesh

is greedy for the mere sensation of living and can absorb passion like a sponge, while the brain is cunning and delights in its skill in manipulating the body and in using it to absorb the joy and the passions for which the kindling love leaps like a flame. This perversion satisfies the desire of the human being to cling to the charm of childhood and so flesh, blood and brain are pampered and sated in their appetites. Every instinct is perverted to denial of the soul; body and brain are soon worn out, become fouled with abuse and with the strain of their usurpation, and the love that leaped in them can use them no more and that which was a flame becomes a dull smoulder, a torment ending only with death, when love surges up once more, bursts into flame, leaves the useless body and brain and speeds back to the infinite love whence it came. Death is the release of love, so that these two encounters with death and with love are in truth the same, terrible, convulsive, and yet the only

means by which the soul can be attained and life lived. It is the greatest paradox of all that life is most intensely lived through the encounter with death, for it is then that the love in men is in most immediate contact with the central fire of love, and the love in all—who are touched by it—longs most furiously to be rid of flesh and blood and the strange deceptions and treacheries of the brain. Yet so long as flesh and blood endure, the love that animates them can only proceed through the mechanism of the creative impulse emerging from the soul into form and the knowledge of good and evil, and with the impetus of that knowledge sinking back into the soul, and through that into the love which is the accessibility of God. Death is a revelation that love cannot long endure its confinement in form which it casts off in its desire to seek and to create a higher perfection. Grief is the revulsion of flesh and blood from their humiliation and if the passion of grief be pur-

sued to its end it cannot but reach a new kindling of love to perfect its form while it must dwell in it. Grief purges, sweetens and eases flesh and blood, tunes the nerves, humbles the brain, clarifies the senses, so that when the shock of it is past there comes a new perception that is almost like a new birth, bringing with it a warmer and deeper understanding, a kindlier and quicker grasp of human suffering and of the inevitable working of the laws that govern life. No joy nor happiness can do so much, for in them the awful power of love is never so instantly nor so violently revealed. Never so sweetly as upon the close of grief does the gentle magic of the soul come stealing into minds and hearts that think they can endure no more, and never so musically does the soul tell of the wonder of creation and of the subtle thrill of the infancy of joy.

The more powerfully free is love, the more delicate, frail and exquisite is the joy it brings, a joy so pure that it can find no form and is

known to the mind only through the loveliness that never breaks but is, as it were, distilled from the smile that lingers in all beauty. Yet without the soul love is only the more desperately confined by the passions it has evoked, and jealousy is but the writhing of love that can find no outlet, and love that has been denied access to the soul by selfishness or folly, for love must burn and create, and if it cannot make freedom and deliverance then with, as furious a passion it will make captivity and damnation. Jealousy is like death in that it releases love from its medium the soul, and leaves it with nothing but a furious desire for a swift and direct flight back to the creative impulse whence it came. Jealousy and hate are as terrible as death and more devastating, because they have no release from flesh and blood. They are cold as death, as remorseless and as irresistible. Once they are set moving upon their quest of destruction they cannot stay until they have succeeded in destroy-

ing either the illusion in the brain that they have mastered or the brain itself. They deny the soul absolutely and raise their denial into a principle as strong as the principle of good. These principles are valid only in life; for the soul, or for love, or for God, they are non-existent, for all these are animated by a transcendent nonchalance something of which indeed is to be found in all fully developed human beings endowed with their proper complement of beauty of spirit.

The spirit of man is the faculty in him, a sublimation of all his faculties, keener, finer and greater than either his mind or his brain or his heart, by which he is able to affirm or to deny the soul, and he can do neither clearly without beauty of spirit, which beauty is exactly the same as that which is spilled from a flower, or a cloud on a summer day, or a winding river, or a mountain reared against the sky. It is so tense a thing that it could not endure or operate in this existence were it not



for its power of sudden relaxation and detachment from the object of its concentration, calling in aid the imagination. This power is the sense of humor, which is never laid aside but to the detriment of the spirit, bringing loss or atrophy of its rarest powers and those most akin to the divine. Without the sense of humor, indeed, the spirit of a man cannot operate freely in his affairs for it is continually betrayed by his mind or his brain or his heart which, without the sharpness and the acute selective powers of the imagination, are all confused and fall into wrangling among themselves as to which is the most apt for any given occasion. Indeed, when the imagination and the spirit of man are not engaged, human life is a gross farce, most diverting when it is most precious, a crude childish business in which love and death are not even seen, a buffoonery in which flesh and blood run riot, as, by the grace of God, they are perfectly entitled to do, and, by the grace of God, for those who

love humanity, there appears in this riot all the values of the spirit, all the attributes of the inner world in burlesque, so that, however human life may be degraded, there is always food for laughter in it, occasion for the sense of humor, which, whenever it is employed, cannot but set the spirit in motion. Yearning or weeping over humanity will never save the soul of so much as an idiot; love of humanity, desire, however passionate, that freedom should dwell among mankind, can only become active through laughter at and with the whole pack of adorable good-tempered fools who are at the mercy of their own blind energy, and for the most part live in a deep, bland and innocent astonishment that the whole world does not go to perdition every day in the week. The great mass of men and women have healthy instincts: they know that life as they live it is very funny and they do not want to take it seriously, except in moments when it is serious and is infused with a

sudden awe-inspiring dignity. If they never find such moments, then they will, quite properly, take nothing seriously and will good-naturedly laugh at the travesty, which is all that has been vouchsafed to them, and find compensation in eating and drinking and in the physical contact which is miscalled love—the wildest and most comical travesty of all.

He who cannot endure the travesty of life cannot endure its tragedy either. He is a forlorn and pathetic figure, separated from his fellow-men, not able to enjoy them even in imagination, clinging desperately to his mind, or his brain, or his heart, sentimentalizing, intellectualizing, or losing himself in thin and vaporized visions, looking to the past or the future and living out his own cold bitter existence anywhere but in the present. It is out of the travesty of life, which, after all, is full of warmth and color, that its tragedy, its true splendor has to be created by each man and woman according to his or her de-

sire, and access to humanity is as necessary to creation as access to the soul. Separation, for whatever cause, ends in impotence and in a silence so cold that it freezes every current of sympathy that would steal across it. Contact with humanity is established by a process which is again a kind of parody of the process of access to the soul, because the element of caprice is introduced. Nothing is direct; nothing powerful, nothing passionate; everything is fitful and changing, suddenly comic, as suddenly pitiful; no emotion moves steadily towards an object; every emotion causes laughter which suddenly changes to tears and then swings back again; and the deeper love plunges into humanity, the more human life is seen as a burlesque of a burlesque. The laughter that animates it all is abysmal. There is no fathoming it, though the imagination plunging down into it becomes aware at last of the soul, there too, smiling at the tragedy of it all, for the soul knows how love and

death are working even through the travesty and making havoc of men and women as they laugh and weep and are swept by their passions, come to grief, pick themselves up, laugh again, though this time a little ruefully, and go on working or swindling, as the case may be.

Human society is a swindle and, so long as the soul is denied access to it, cannot be anything else. The machinery of organization may evolve miraculously, but without the soul there can be no motive force to drive it but the strange pleasure that men and women have in swindling each other, even in love, even in the presence of death. That pleasure is not so strange either, for men and women must get some fun out of living and if they cannot procure it in the legitimate way by active co-operation they will take it in outwitting each other. Human beings are incurably romantic and if they cannot find the thrill of truth they will console themselves

with the glamor of a lie. The bed-rock facts of existence are few and rather dull through reiteration. If imagination cannot work on them invention can and does. The imagination only works at the bidding of the spirit: the invention is the slave and the flatterer of the brain and is a busy abettor of its rascality, distorting everything in the most diverting fashion. It is an old maxim that necessity is the mother of invention and another that necessity knows no law. Pushed to an extremity the champions of society plead necessity and declare that the soul is the concern of the individual, a proposition which requires very close examination.

## V

The latter half of the proposition is true. The soul is the concern of the individual, but the existence of society is only justified if it supports the individual in that concern. If society were destroyed, men and women would continue to make their living as morally and immorally as they do under society, which is therefore not justified by merely facilitating the earning of bread and butter. Indeed, society has grown rather to satisfy the individual's hunger of the spirit than the hunger of the belly. The hunger of the spirit is for something as precise and definite as that which satisfies the hunger of the belly and its pangs are deeper, more acute, more devastating and at the same time less easily stayed. The spirit is scrupulous as the belly is not: the spirit has

powers and an ascendancy over the whole being of a man which are not attributes of the belly. The spirit if thwarted will not abdicate but, laying aside the imagination, will take refuge with the sense of humor and will so tweak the life assigned to it with ridicule that in the end the man or woman will be no more dignified than a plucked fowl, for the spirit can be terrible and most sweetly malicious and, if society denies the right of the individual to the adventure of the soul, will destroy that individual's value to society. Nothing that is aware of the creative impulse can stand still. If it cannot create, it will destroy, to prepare the way for creation.

It is foolish of course to write of society as though it were actively and deliberately impeding the access of the spirit to the soul and as though the men who are highly placed in society knew what it was doing. No one is to blame. No one is ever to blame. There was a time when life was so hard that those



who did the rough muscular work of society could only live as slaves. The things of the spirit were then the privilege of the fortunate few who did the fine intelligent work of society, and, as usual, they regarded their privilege as their property. They took an immense pride in it, decorated it, adorned it with symbols and with rituals, called in to celebrate it the various arts and in course of time attempted to monopolize them. They built temples and churches and came to regard themselves as the custodians of a religion which was much too sacred to have anything to do with life. To preserve its sanctity they insisted more and more upon its separation until its moral implications crystallized out in a code of negatively stated laws which they pretended, no doubt sincerely, were the word of God, forgetting that the word of God is made manifest in the flesh. So long as the rough work of the world had to be done by slaves that was inevitable, but, directly it was

admitted that a slave also is a human being invested with a dignity that society violates at its peril, this arrangement, this unnatural separation of religion from life, lost its validity. The superstitions, symbols, ritual, privilege, property were all stripped away from religion and it was revealed as the expression of that which sustains life rather than of that which lies beyond it. However, it was through a respectable instinct that men sought to keep religion away from the travesty of human life, though that instinct was mistaken. Nothing in particular is sacred, because everything is sacred, even the travesty which is more than the human expression of the tragedy of life. Spiritual expression can only be achieved through the release of the soul.

Perception of the dignity of the human being is so recent that society is not yet perceptibly altered to meet it, though it has rid itself of formal religion as a social principle without finding or attempting to evolve a sub-

stitute. The great mass of men and women are still working as slaves; that is, there is still maintained an extraordinary and perfectly groundless differentiation between brain work and muscle work; but this ancient clear-cut division has gone. In the old world the slaves were a class of people who had not and could not hope to have any spiritual understanding of the universe, and were therefore incapable of any subtilization or refinement of life. So long as God was curiously confused with the head of a family or a tribe that conception was rational enough. The individual has not the energy by himself or through his immediate personal relationships to approach God and is dependent therefore upon the only available energy, that of the social group or unit to which he belongs. When the group or unit was as small as the family or tribe the individual could not get very far in his approach, and having roused expectations, resorted to travesty, humbug,

faith-healing, magic and miracles. No group indeed can provide sufficient energy for this tremendous undertaking of the release of the soul. That can only happen when the individual is able to tap the energy of the whole of humanity, and indeed of the entire universe. A few artists have done that, in their intense concentration shaking off the ties and limitations of their family or nation, but only a very few.

The world of the twentieth century is entitled to be called the new world because its sudden linking up of the social energy of the whole of humanity has for the first time placed that energy at the bidding of the individual who is honest enough to wish to do his duty to society by functioning according to the desire of his spirit, which is to admit the soul to his own existence and through himself to that of those who surround him. It was inevitable that the travesty of life should be too strong for this new energy so that its first

result should be the deflowering of a generation, but that result has revealed the tragedy always underlying the travesty and has set innumerable men and women off upon the quest of the soul only to discover that they know not how to set about it and that in a super-technical existence there is for the highest, indeed the primary function of human nature, no technique.

The social energy of this astonishing period is so tremendous that humanity as a mass, living as it is in the wildest travesty of existence ever known among these extraordinary beings, is more nearly aware of the soul than is any individual human being. The spirit of different groups takes control in the absence of any adequate government and strange and very wonderful unconscious mass movements decide affairs to the perturbation and ridiculous astonishment of the experts and professional politicians. Instinctively these groups throw up no leaders. They require none.

They have the soul to guide them, the soul that is glowing with love and knows its aim and how irresistibly to achieve it. Even the terrible nullity that industrial civilization has achieved is a beautiful joke to them because everything is suddenly beautiful with a strange veiled beauty. Presently, they know in their hearts, the veil will be torn away and they will laugh no more, but will be weeping and wailing on their knees in awe and worship. They can laugh, they must laugh at the nullity of industrial civilization, the civilization of millions and millions of good, quiet unobtrusive dull and stunted people who thought they were honest because they put their money out at interest and paid clever men to do their swindling for them. There is no terror nor cruelty beneath this carnagole, this carnival of laughter over nothing. There has been enough of killing, and laughter is more deadly than all the explosives of the munition factories. The soul smiles, and men

and women laugh coarsely, grossly, uproariously; they rush into each other's arms, explore every forbidden joy and pleasure and extravagance, because it is all so funny, so gloriously funny, so wonderful and so terribly beautiful; beautiful, the new tenderness and sympathy that are waking in men's hearts, beautiful; beautiful, the new tenderness and understand at last what men want of them, beautiful, the silent thrilling thankfulness as at last men and women fall in side by side in the procession of humanity wedded and united in comradeship, the endless, varied, vivid spectacle of men and women, men and women giving out in life the beauty that comes to them through love and death.

For the rough hewing of the new society it is well that there are no leaders and that the soul can have its way unimpeded by any conceited theory, but this swift movement of the soul is not yet its release. For that, the soul must be sought. The springtime of the

hearts of men must have its blossom, and its fruit, its winter of re-invigoration, "If winter comes can spring be far behind?" Is there, dear Shelley, a greater joy than that of bracing to rough weather, to gain the strength to bear the ecstasy that is to come? Does not each new access of strength, each fiber tautened bring with it a dream more lovely than any actuality can be? It is so now. Wave upon wave of strength surges up in the hearts and minds of men and women, bringing with it dreams more wonderful than those of any art of the past, because they are the dreams of a race no longer childish, nor primitive, but trembling on the brink of a condition of simplicity that knows itself and, if it thinks of the past at all, wonders how life could ever have been so complicated as to darken faith. As their minds and hearts topple over at first in ones, then in tens, then in thousands, then in tens of thousands, they will acknowledge the captaincy of the spirit, whose swift intui-



tion and command of the imagination will develop the power needful, and the means right and proper for each individual to set about his search of the soul, which is no separate activity but one that goes on continually, the soul being inexhaustible beneath the activities of every day, touching them all, even the humblest and most monotonous, with joy, restoring to life its duality and breaking forever the monotony of an existence in which work has for too long been degraded into a drudging toil. To each man the work for which he is fitted; let no man undertake any task into which he cannot, according to his capacity, put the last ounce of himself; and if a man is so constituted that he must live by swindling, then let him be an honest swindler. When rogues are thorough rogues then honest men can come by their own, and those who are the ordinary men, a queer mixture of the two, can enjoy the diversity of their experience. In such a world as this is going to be

when there is mass energy enough to release the soul and admit it to society, there should be an end of pretence, except that delicious make-believe that is so necessary to the vanity of men and women and constitutes the charm and the comedy of human life. Good life! Good luck!

What form, what shape will this new society take? Who knows, except that it must follow in some sort the pattern of the process of the release of the soul and the passage of the spirit, borne by the soul, through God and out into life again. The old society was built up in a kind of pyramid to meet God, who was not there to accept the offering, for which reason, in course of time, it collapsed. Already the new system has taken some such shape. The work that men do in factories passes up in the shape of credit into a kind of God-like thing called a bank, which then proceeds to waste it on armies and navies and the acquisition by violence of territories producing raw

materials; no one knows why, except that that was how kings and priests acquired wealth, and it is usual in polite circles to follow polite precedent even if it does lead to the waste of a few thousand lives. Even tragedies can be discussed politely over breakfast: but this half-developed system begins to look ridiculous by contrast with the power that it is supposed to control. Banking is the least mystical of professions, though, by its attraction for the Jewish race it may be judged to have possibilities, and when men have begun to prefer contact with the soul to the accumulation of money in a bank, those possibilities will have to be considered. There is no immediate concern with them here where the problem is a deeper one than any question of social mechanics, namely, how, in a society so full of an unconscious joy that it will put up with any caricature of life, even the hotels, restaurants, stations, public buildings, movie-theatres, newspapers, of Paris, London, New York, Bom-

bay, Peking, Buenos Aires, Johannesburg, etc., and glory in them as a fit and proper expression of social existence, the soul can be admitted. The soul does not care. Men may make what they like of life. The critical faculty comes from men, as individuals, caring very much about the soul, so much, indeed, that they cannot but admit it to society, and herein lies the drama of modern life. A group of any kind, the family, tribe, nation, or industrial group, is intolerant of criticism and, therefore, of individuality, which implies detachment. To facilitate its activity, a group insists upon uniformity and suppresses variety and character, for which it has no use, and the individual, so long as he is alone, can offer no resistance and, indeed, desires none. His group gives him security, and he is not profoundly aware of other needs. So long as he is in that condition he will put up with just so much satisfaction of his appetites as the group allows and ask no more. His relationship to

his group is impersonal; the group is conscious and therefore he does not need to be so long as he has no desire for knowledge of the soul, or of love, or of God. Living by the group consciousness he can be content with the broad travesty of these things which prevails in ordinary existence. They appeal to his sense of humor, even to his sense of adventure and he may quite placidly pass through from childhood to the grave without knowing more, taking everything from the group and giving nothing to it, except his docile labor, never becoming an individual. Without that, however, his life is but half-lived. His relationship to the group is impersonal and remains so as long as his labor is drudgery. Directly, however, he brings his individuality to bear upon his work his relationship is shot with the light of personality, and his dignity is implicated in it. His relationship becomes more than himself. His connection with his group is vivified and elec-

tric as he begins to develop a consciousness of his own and is no longer sunk in that of his group. He insists that there are better and still better ways of living and working, that the group consciousness is wasteful, lethargic, too powerful for the small ends which without some guidance are all that it can perceive. So long as he is alone, related to his work, he has nothing but his intellect, his intelligence, his instinct of craftsmanship, and is helpless, for his group will pay no heed to him. Against its slow-moving and irresistible power his own force is not enough, though the awakened joy and love in him drive him on to detachment and apparent defiance, even perhaps to disobedience and open disregard of the code and the rules of his group, whose consciousness is untroubled by secret offenses against the code. The individual, however, once he has established a living relationship with his work and has learned that concentration which is the beginning of wisdom, can-

not rest and must establish other relationships. This he finds he can do with increasing ease; he becomes that which he really sees—gazing at a star he is linked with its life, so too with a flower, with all beautiful things—he has not yet learned the love of the evil and ugly; he lives and dies with the life and death of all that his new growing consciousness apprehends. Soon there comes a time when his appetites also demand a share in this new realm of wonder that he has found. They are no longer satisfied with the travesty of existence and demand life. His whole being must follow his imagination for without that he will be living a diverse and dual existence which cannot but end in fatality, his mind being distracted continually by images which have no correspondence in actuality, and painfully aware of the discrepancy between his perceptions and his actions. To remedy that, a cynical acceptance of the rude values which satisfy the group consciousness is impotent,

and yet his imagination by itself has not sufficient power. It must win the support of the soul and that can only be won by an active creative relationship which must come into being through intense experience, contact with either love or death or both. Without the use of the imagination that contact cannot be established and the imagination is only set in motion by concentration upon work until it emits its effluence of joy, which is lost if that concentration be relaxed.

The nature of this joy has nowhere been more clearly expressed than by Burns in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, with its lovely picture of the holiness that fills the peasant's house at the end of his week's work, a pure, rich ecstasy of satisfaction that dominates and subdues the little group of the family to its end, and takes its energy for its fruition into consciousness of God. How deep, how sweet, how true is the richness of this life, fecund and strong to meet both love and death! No



poverty and misery can destroy it, for its power is too great, too sure of itself, too smilingly confident of its ability to survive even the bleakest tragedy, at the touch of which the excitement which is the only reward of the worthless swindling man shrivels, leaving him unable to endure without a narcotic of some kind, easily procured, to be sure, for, without love and the majestic power of the soul, life itself is a narcotic, a drowsy syrup creeping through the veins and sending nerves to sleep. Burns himself was kindled with this holiness alive and shining with it, found it in himself, magnified immeasurably in his own concentration upon words, that came quivering out of him clear as the dew and powerful as the earth and flaming with a love that had aroused passions stronger than flesh could bear. These passions insisted upon relationship on a level which those whom he encountered could not attain and so, one after another, they left him in the isolation which is most often the lot of

every strong individual who strives to give to human society more than it can possibly give him. Burns was aware that the family was no longer the social unit and that new groups were being formed and already releasing a more powerful energy. He did not think in these terms, but the passionate intuition of a poet knows already what the next few generations will bring forth and he projects his song as a voice to guide them towards beauty and creation, for, failing such guidance, the energy which society generates must be fatal to itself. The poet is no happy idler. He has the happiness of a child, it is true, but it is allied with and sustained by the tragic knowledge of generations. Knowing and loving the holiness that comes from the fulfillment of the worker's life, he cannot refrain from endeavoring to kindle it, to make it aware of the splendor of the earth and of the unimaginable forces that create beauty without end. He is not concerned at all with in-

tellectual conceptions: the simple common things of every day are symbols apt for worship. A coin, for instance, is the symbol that carries the efficacy of work, precisely the holiness that is its aim and its justification, from man to man. This is true in spite of all that groups of human beings do in denial and defiance of it. All communication between men and men is spiritual communication, whether or no it be acknowledged as such, and without acknowledgment all communication invariably ends in disaster, for the which reason the old saints and mystics withdrew into solitude to attempt to enter into undisturbed communion with the spirit, through the spirit with the soul, through the soul with love, and through love with God. They succeeded in attaining the peace of the soul, these moments of which Dostoevsky's *Idiot* speaks, but, having cut themselves off from human relationships could not proceed further except in so far as, like Blake, they stumbled into expression in Art.

Dante, through his relationship with Beatrice, abstracted as it was from all other relationships, deliberately confined in imagined beauty, was able to know the passage of love out of life into God, which is death, but not the singing return of love, pouring through the soul with an unfathomable passion out into life intent upon its re-creation. And yet for Dante, through his love for Beatrice, there was a New Life, and after him there was a New Life for all men, a reconception of love and with it a transvaluation of values, the slow evolution of larger groups with which to procure more social energy to bring to bear upon the problems of humanity, for without social energy nothing more than the ecstasy of contemplation can be attained and its discoveries cannot be brought into action and given form.

The conception of this ecstasy of contemplation leads direct to love which, in its first intimations, is a sharing of that ecstasy, the naive and simple form of that awareness of

the divine harmony into which it grows, under the pressure of social energy and through the reactions of the individual from that pressure, which is so great that it is only to be endured in alliance with another spîrit. The first stage beyond the joy of work is contemplation, the first slow yet subtle action of the imagination, the strange power of clairvoyance that is the product of concentrated nervous energy, which by its exercise it perpetually increases. In the mood of contemplation, when the senses are thrilled by beauty, there comes suddenly an intimation of oneness with it, of being bound to it in a swift access of strength that varies in degree with the power of the object to respond, and is greatest when that power is more nearly equal, as, for instance, in a person of the opposite sex.

In the travesty of existence the pleasures of sex are commonly enjoyed without sharing and the results are farcical and extremely diverting, though hardly worthy of consideration.

In that life which is opened up through the joy of work, the sharing of contemplation, the germ from which springs truth, beauty, and knowledge of the soul, is most keenly effected through sex, most delicately and subtly combining the essential experience of man and woman and rejecting everything that is absurd or that has been travestied out of all truth by contact with the workaday world. Hands clasp and the whole process of sex is consummated. Contact is established and there may be no need for more. Contemplation is shared, force is gained for further voyaging and in this ecstasy the whole being of man and woman is transfigured. There is a swift and profound physical change as the spirit is quickened and released for its quest of the soul. The creative energy of the body rushes out in mental and spiritual creation, ideas spring to life and fly together into a conception; a new life is born which may or may not need to be translated into terms of

flesh and blood. That depends upon the force of that new life and upon the intensity of the love that has begun to pour into it through the sudden contact with the soul which is ever ready to surround and permeate every true relationship. Hence the glee and the light-heartedness of this first sharing of contemplation which is as yet far removed from love, for love is terrible and allows neither childish glee nor the blitheness of the fancy ranging free, but only an intense inexorable concentration that cannot cease until those in whom it burns are utterly transfigured, absolutely free, sure of their relationship with each other, with society and with God, and strong enough to maintain that relationship whatever it may demand of them in endurance of the anguish into which joy inevitably breaks, or the clear ecstasy into which sorrow spills when suffering is at an end. Love demands the employment of every single faculty, the highest and the lowest, complete active knowledge of good

and evil, courage and that grace which flows when passion and imagination have been stretched to the limit of endurance. Love demands the destruction of every impediment in its way and the use of all that lives in its neighborhood and within its reach. Formidable as is the power of the social energy now at work in the world it is a trifle compared with the energy of love.

Between these two there is an apparent conflict which increases the power of both, so that the individual, torn between them, desiring both, and yet, for lack of knowledge, unable to combine them, is lost. Love knows nothing of jealousy, which it can burn away as easily as it can burn away all unworthy and evil things, but every group of human beings, in the uneasiness of its ragged consciousness, is riddled with jealousy, and, in its egoism, is terrified of everything that is outside and beyond itself. Hence its attempt to bind the individual and to force him to limit his con-



scious experience to those elements of being of which it is aware. But the individual, once he is delivered by the discovery of the joy of his work, cannot remain limited, but must seek the means by which to extend his capacity for creative living, although, dependent as he is upon the energy of his group, he retains close contact with it and is full of its jealousy and fearful of losing his place in it. Continual conflict rages in him too, and is only intensified the further he proceeds in his inevitable sublimation. Alone or with the beloved—woman, idea, vision, art, whatever it may be—he can proceed only toward tragedy, often in itself desirable enough as a new starting point and a means of purging himself and his little circle of life of all their poison. To triumph he must never for a moment lose his social consciousness, that is, his identity with all humanity through whom alone and for whom alone he exists. Whether the force of humanity is making for destruction or crea-

tion he must accept it or be forever unable to accept the force of love without which his being is unfulfilled. It is nothing whether by that force he be driven through misery and degradation, or through triumph and delight. It is his sole function in alliance and utter union with his beloved to pass through whatever may befall him, stumbling by the way, failing in perception, in sympathy, in understanding, yet growing more and more full, as his superficial faculties betray him, of the sure knowledge and subtly permeating comprehension of the soul, until at last, when he is returned to life, illuminated, quickened, free, he finds all that he has lost, all that seemed to be gone forever returned to him a thousandfold. Nothing is asked of him save that he shall never for a moment relinquish the beloved in whom he lives and creates, whom he impregnates and by whom he is impregnated. There is nothing else, no other way, if a man is to give more than his dull and

unconsidered labor and his children, produced therefore in sluggishness, to human society, which has no other leaven, nor any other source of illumination, and must continue to exist in its time-honored pathetic attempts to maintain conceptions, religions, pomps and vanities whose validity its own increasing energy has destroyed. Nothing can or ever will issue from mere imagination of spiritual things and processes. The imagination, once become active, must be followed into more and more intense experiences, for only experience is real, only experience is saluted and permeated by the soul and through the soul by love. There is no easy way, no artificial access to the miracle—none. The soul immediately withdraws upon the first sign of falsification or of bad faith, or of loss of courage, or of self-indulgence. The soul is immediately and electrically aware of a lie, directly it creeps in, long, long before the human consciousness can possibly apprehend it, and the

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soul, for all its mercy and tenderness, is ruthless, because it is concerned with God and the well-being of God's universe and not at all with men and women. Neither the height of their glory nor the depth of their folly is of the smallest interest to the soul, except in so far as they seek it through brave contact with love and death, which is but the deliverance of love.

## VI

**Society has been made by work. It should be animated by religion, commanded and directed by art. These three, Work, Religion, Art, are the source of the conception of the Trinity in which most mystical conceptions are crystallized. The anthropomorphic conception of God attributed them directly to Him, and, identifying God with the Father, produced the notion of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Now these three, work, religion, art, are the elements of which human life is composed. God is one and indivisible, while human life consists precisely of this Trinity, the three planes to which by human effort the soul is admitted, breaking from one to another through joy and from the sequence of all three in a sublime ecstasy in**

which the human spirit is privileged to share, and that ecstasy is the only authority that can dominate human society, the only test it has of the validity of its operations. Human society cannot injure the soul by denial of this authority, but it can thereby become a terrible danger to itself. It can so degrade human beings as to make them incapable of the joy of work from which they can find no relief save in a feeble and listless relaxation, leaving only a few individuals here and there who are strong enough to move on from the plane of work to that of religion and from that to the plane of art and so to the ecstasy in which the soul is delivered of its burden. In a world dominated by anthropomorphic conceptions it was impossible even for the greatest artists to proceed beyond the plane of art. They could perceive the burning heat of the ecstasy of the soul and be kindled by it, but they could not enter into it or pass through it. They could watch the flight of the soul but they

could not share it. They could return to tell in beauty of the wonders they had seen, but they could not kindle with their transfiguration through intense experience the lives of common men. The great religious teachers could reach the point of still and peaceful contemplation of the ecstasy of the soul's release, but they could imagine nothing beyond that stillness and that peace. They could not, for all their most holy powers, perceive the intensification of that stillness and that peace into a heat so white, so unimaginably fierce that it abolished heat and cold and all opposites and broke anew into a torrent of love moving outward again towards the universe; work, religion, art, all in one, fused into love, that, meeting God's creative impulse, was itself transfigured; love, the power of transfiguration itself transfigured: and given such a sweetness, such a delicacy, such a fierce and curious subtlety that it could pass out again into life and touch the love in every living

thing to make it glow with wisdom and smile with understanding. Only a great impulse of humanity could give force enough to perceive this—only a great impulse, or the inverted energy of the most tragic, devastating need and physical hunger. The people are so driven by their own linked energy that they must find vision or perish. They cannot perish, for the soul needs them and therefore, out of their anguish, grows a new power, a new consciousness from which there emanates a force, kindling the sensitive, the simple and the brave, so that they are borne towards a vision that gives new meaning to truth, new wonder to beauty, and new attributes to love. The vision once seen becomes a part of human consciousness. There is hardly any need to articulate it, none to express it, except for its beauty, for a vision is not seen with the eyes, neither with the mind, nor indeed with the spirit, for these things are but the tools of a man, who in the moment of his trans-



figuration, in his sharing in the flight of the soul, perceives truth to the extent of his capacity, not for himself alone but for humanity and for God, whose servant here on earth he is. He becomes more human by being more divine, and, like God, rejects nothing, neither of good nor of evil, but accepts all as the material for creation.

Once the vision is perceived it can be seen in every manifestation of life. The heart that has once loved can never cease to love even though it be without passion or ecstasy. Those pathetic ideals to which the imagination clings in its vanity, that delightful, absurd protective vanity that dwells in every human faculty, are thin and futile compared with vision. As the young Goethe wrote to Lavater: "All your ideals will not lead me astray from being true and good and evil like Nature." Ideals are only the rough sketches which the imagination makes during its disciplinary period when it is preparing for its work of guiding

the spirit and throwing a light upon its path as it moves, a kind of map-making to be amended in the light of experience. No two minds can have exactly the same vision, for, after all, a vision is but a kind of illuminated question, and, as Goethe's worshipper, Rahel Varnhagen, declared: "The whole difference between people's minds lies only in their questioning; they must all answer in the same way." That is true; the answer is the same whether it be given negatively or positively. The answer to the great holy riddle is that of the Italian: *Eppur si muove*. It moves. The spirit of men must move towards its freedom in God, or towards its captivity in corruption, and that movement, either way, is increased by the continual development of social energy. From the purely contemplative point of view there is a great deal to be said for man in his comic capacity, as a forked radish, or a plucked fowl, or a perambulating stomach, but there comes a stage in contemplation when

it becomes action, a response to the urgency of the soul, and then comic Man, however dear he may have become, is a pestiferous nuisance, and only Man, the hero of tragedy, can be considered, Man the lover, Man the wonder who can call to his aid all the power and magic of the universe and conquer everything, even himself, and give back to God's creative impulse its own joy, its own love, acknowledged and intensified.

There was once a poet so sensitive to beauty that he could hardly live, and he sought retirement and isolation from the confusion of the world. In a quiet place he came upon a cherry tree in blossom, and, trembling with delight, he took a house on a hill opposite the field in which it grew. For ten years he lived opposite the cherry tree, and every spring when its white blossom was flung out against the blue sky he cried within himself: "How beautiful!" But no poem came of his reaction to its beauty and at last he wearied of it

and of himself, for his spirit was sick with the sickness of the world in which he lived. He journeyed then to a far country and there he met a lady who had suffered much, so that there was a rare beauty in her, and this too he loved, to the lady's amusement, for she had loved and knew the ways of God and man. Yet to the love that was in her she could not admit him until a great grief came upon her and this to its very depths she showed him. Suffering with her suffering, hurt with her hurt, losing with her loss, he lay like one stunned and longed for the peace of his old isolation, whereat, remembering the cherry-tree, he began to tremble. Its beauty lived in him and at last, his spirit, like the cherry-tree, burst into blossom, into white blossom against the blue sky, and at last into love, and into that poetry which is the music of love.

It is impossible to argue over religion. It is futile to attempt to crystallize any mystical vision into a system. The poignancy of belief

can only be expressed in the telling of stories, which is all that art amounts to; only, the soul must be allowed to tell its own story which for no other is worth the writing or the reading. The soul can tell of God and love and ecstasy, of the human spirit, of the mind, of the imagination, of the whimsical impertinence of the brain, of the strange accidents of the body and its appetites—for the soul, and only the soul, can measure the value of relationship, the power that comes from them and the comic conclusion of reaction in which so much of the force of understanding is lost, apparently forever, only apparently, for all the force, all the understanding, all the clear mystical beauty that bewildered human beings waste are gathered in by the soul and preserved for those who in their courage seek its power, undeterred by their own failure and by the failure of those who have gone before them. The number of these increases with the increase of social energy, which is

due entirely to the release of the soul by the artists, the mystics, the great lovers of every generation, and the greater and more powerful the social group, the more it is permeated with mystical perception, so that the more nearly humanity is gathered into one group, and is forced into unity of perception by such tragedy as that of the war, the more intense grows the urge of the individual towards the soul, and the greater is the need, until the soul shall tell its own story of stories about the soul. Into such stories the soul enters with sweet glee, so that he who writes and they who read become as little children who shall inherit the kingdom of Heaven.

It is not strange then that, as social groups grow larger and more powerful, social processes more and more nearly approximate to the process of the release of the soul. Although in the modern industrial community the element of joy is left out of account altogether in favor of the nefarious pleasure of

swindling, yet the medieval structure of building a pyramid up towards God, as typified in the monarchs, is forever discarded. God is conceived, vaguely it is true, as a central energy, and, without any joy or any consciousness in the task, work is gathered into the only image of God that is perceptible in human life, a central pool of credit which is controlled by medieval conceptions and wasted, as monarchical power was wasted, upon wars, quarrels, intrigues and the robbing of Naboth's vineyard. There exist neither religion nor art, because religion can only emerge from the joy in work, and art can only issue from religion. Joy in work then cannot be so long as work is wasted, as it is, by the diversion of credit to purposes which are hopelessly antiquated, military adventures and the construction of mines, railways and ports in different lands without the slightest consideration for the rights of the inhabitants of those lands, who no doubt need the social energy

of the modern industrial community, but only for this one purpose, the release of the soul which primitive groups could never accomplish, having only the energy which would enable them to perceive the soul and to worship its faint and whispered intimations of God and immortality.

Could we but release it, we have made it possible for the soul at last to speak clearly and in a loud voice so that its beauty should not be lost in the awe of mankind, in which prayer and worship become rather a condition than an act. It is possible now for the soul to sweep into every human activity good and evil. All that is necessary is a little imagination, only a little, because imagination grows by its exercise. No child is born without imagination; men and women lose it because they have not the courage of it, that is all. Your fine ladies and gentlemen, your rare artists, have no monopoly of insight. We are all human beings, whatever our manners, and



your muscular worker, resting after a hard day, has often a deeper knowledge of the world and its ways than your intellectual specialist who from long confinement has lost all sense of his limitations. Above all, there is forever working in society the vague, unemployed intuition of women, always, in their love, verging on the mystical, knowing, all of them, even the basest and greediest, that, in human love and mating, it is the spirit that is first of all kindled and expresses its fiery divination through the flesh, whose appetites, no matter what pitch of excitement they reach, can never attain the spirit except they learn the sweetness of the soul.

Modern love is mystical. Here again the Trinity is found: work, religion, art; the love of love, the love of the beloved, the love of being loved. Until the soul is released there can be no more than the love of love, which sinks into the excitement of the flesh, is burned away and lost. That is the comedy of every day; it

is the condition in which the older forms of religion strove to confine the great mass of men and women, because the fortunate of the earth regarded the privilege of more delicate, if not more intense experience as divinely ordained. That is at an end. The mystics, artists and great lovers have always been rebels, but they need be so no longer, for at the present pitch of the ascending effort of humanity there must be intense experience for all or none. No compromise is possible. There must be a breeding of imagination or complete disintegration of society. The one is necessary, the other impossible. Imagination is being bred by its very denial. The arts, literature and religious exercises designed for the dull and the comfortable are doomed as those were which before the French Revolution were designed for the aristocracy and for the monopolized religion of the priesthood. The feeble story-telling of the flatterers of bourgeois democracy falters and stumbles into

a kind of dotage and a new art is emerging in which there appears the subtle deep rhythm of the soul bringing enchantment for the simple and the passionate, and in this art is glad tidings—that work may grow into religion, religion into art, the love of love into the love of the beloved and the love of the beloved into the love of being loved. With those tidings ringing in the ears of men, the terrors, the trials, the strain of the tragedy of existence can be lightly borne, for the release of the soul can be seen everywhere, in the unfolding of flowers, in the moonlight falling on the wind-rippled waters, in the laughter of men and women, and in those tears that will not be denied when joy is so great that the heart can neither laugh nor weep but must break or burst into illumination.

The art of these great times will be the drama, for no other form of story-telling is sufficiently powerful. There, in the theatre, human relationships are revealed as nowhere

else. One man upon a platform can cajole, caress, flatter, tease, excite, rouse and stir his audience, but he can lead them to no perception, because their group consciousness is too strong for him. He may tell them the profoundest truth but he can never carry conviction because there is no confirmation. Between an individual and a group there can be no direct relationship. A man and a musical instrument can do more, but then, truly, only because he establishes a relationship between himself and the composer, which, gaining the support of the group-energy of the audience can bring about the miracle of the entry of the soul in that place. Infinitely more powerful, however, is the more obvious mechanism of the theatre in which the object is not, as the servile artists of aristocracy or of bourgeois democracy intended, to create an illusion, but to reveal the truth, that is, to create an intensity of vicarious experience so great that the soul can enter into it as gladly as if

it were actual experience, the more powerfully indeed, as, once the soul is summoned, it cannot but enter into the real exercise of every member of the audience, and of the company of players, who are, or should be, sensitive mediumistic people for whom this mystical exercise is of all experiences the most intense. The great actors and actresses have always been such people, but neither they nor any one else has understood either their powers, for which they have been worshipped, or their function in society, which they have been denied. The Greeks had some understanding of the theatre; Aristophanes more than any other dramatist; the French aristocrats of the court of Louis XIV had a fine but limited perception of it: the bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century were afraid of it, and, in their last gasp, which still continues, attempted to limit it to buffoonery or to the insincere solemnity of the lecture hall.

With the dawn of a new age a greater drama

is in process of gestation, a drama that is at once a religious experience and an art: a process indeed in which, as nowhere else, work, religion and art are combined. In this process the audience is an active agency. The dramatist, by the manipulation of the figures on his stage, establishes their essential relationships, and, by so doing, whips into a thrilling activity the group consciousness of his audience which he draws into the action, going forward in the mimic life he presents to supply the energy by which the deepest truth of the passions of his characters shall be forced out in situation after situation until at last that truth shall become so terrible, either comically or tragically, that without the support of the soul it is not to be endured, and when at last the soul comes, there is in all a kindling of spirit which soothes away the exhaustion of laughter and tears, turns them into a life-giving relief, and at last brings a silence throbbing with knowledge, joy, love

and an ecstasy which breaks finally into a glad acceptance of life, that is so, and will remain so, and develops only in the intensity of experience which the soul affords to those of good courage.

Drama breeds not only imagination but courage. The veriest coward, caught in the activity of an audience, surely and deliberately handled by a dramatist, cannot but be swept out of his fears, though it be only for the space of an hour or two, from which he may afterwards suffer a terrible reaction. The memory of it will endure, and he will come back to the theatre for more of the succor it has given him.

Such a drama, of course, cannot live in a theatre designed to flatter and amuse audiences of the dull and over-comfortable, though it is not the audiences that are at fault but those who prey upon them. Any audience is a good audience, if it be rightly handled; and even dull and comfortable people are human

beings, though they may not know it. There is no such thing as an audience that cannot be moved by the spectacle of human beings loving, hating, weeping, laughing, lying, intriguing, swindling, in terms of a life which is just enough beyond their existence to necessitate an effort of the imagination, difficult perhaps for the individual, but easy enough for the group. The imagination is forward-looking. It can understand the past but without any very passionate interest. The true dramatist senses life as it is becoming. As he is more conscious than the people of his time, so will his characters be just a little more conscious than himself. There were no Portias, Beatrices, Imogens in Shakespeare's day though there have been plenty since, as there have been Hamlets, Lears, Macbeths and Benedicks enough and to spare. There has been a leap in consciousness and the drama of Shakespeare lives only for its occasional characters and for its unsurpassed poetic beauty. Its purely dra-



matic content is without dynamic power in the modern audience. There can only be a fitful evocation of the group-consciousness of the audience, which can extract an extreme delight from the performance of the plays but cannot find in them any more intense experience than the sudden jet of ecstasy which is thrown up by the aesthetic emotion, that keen sentinel which warns the emotions, passions, intellect and spirit of a human being of the approach of the soul. A certain refined type, more critical than creative, often indeed cold with sterility, asks no more of a work of art than that it should evoke this thrilling warming of the aesthetic emotion, but such a type is of all human beings the only one that cannot participate in the group-consciousness of an audience. It has its function in dramatic criticism. It can record the warming, but not the presence of the soul, to which indeed it is blind, while the robust, ordinary working, and life-loving human being may miss

the warning, but, sharing in the group-consciousness, is swept away in the delirium of the soul's presence, which, as it were, brushes aside dramatist, actors, artists of the theatre, and, with so much more, so illimitably more than art, tells its story that presently fills the very stones of the theatre with the wonder of love, and the miraculous adventures of the soul as it passes from God to life and back again, and through everything in life, rejecting nothing, sustaining all, appearing in inexhaustible power wherever love and death are seen, neither denying nor affirming, simply breathing sweetness into every living thing that is so much alive as to be unable to endure its life alone. So powerful a mechanism is the theatre, indeed, that even when it is mishandled and abused there come moments when by some chance a right relationship is established, words are truly spoken, gestures are rightly and inevitably made, and the soul appears, only, in spite of the responsive thrill

of the audience, to be rebuffed as the action of the stage relapses into the trite or the mechanical or the inane.

No theory can explain how the art of the theatre is brought into being. The artist does not know how he achieves the combinations that the soul loves. All he has to work with is his love of his medium, fortified by his love of humanity and nature. He has, more than any other worker, the power of concentration on his work. He, more than any other worker, knows that beyond a certain pitch of concentration there comes into him a power which can perform miracles of fineness without his being in the least exhausted, but, on the contrary, enriched both in skill and in zest to use it. Of all artists the dramatist has the greatest power of concentration because his is the most directly concerned with human life, and only with intellectual or natural or spiritual or metaphysical or mystical beauty through the beauty of human nature. He has to work

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in terms of human life as it is, without the slightest idealization. He can reject nothing nor can he accept any limitation of morals, or conventions, or laws or customs, though allowing all these things their place and their value in social economy. His concern is entirely with the passionate relations of men and women, those sudden combinations of their forces which compel them to reveal either the glory or the shame of what they have made of their lives.

This concentration of the dramatist upon human nature gives him a capacity for drawing upon humanity in a release, which, in its operation, is very like that of the soul, though it takes place upon a different plane, that of the normal human consciousness, so that the dramatist, even before there is any movement of the soul, seeks and finds the collaboration of the spirit of humanity, so that when he confronts his audience with his work, he has to offer them an energy immensely greater than

either his own or theirs, an energy, moreover, whose whole force comes from that hunger for the soul, of which the longing of the lover for his beloved is a comparatively feeble manifestation. This mighty hunger of humanity lives in every human being. In the theatre the slightest hint of its satisfaction, and every true relationship is a potential satisfaction, brings a thrilling activity rushing into the minds and hearts of every man and woman in the audience. They forget themselves, they are electrified into a condition of impersonal emotion which sets free their more delicate faculties, which will only operate disinterestedly, and so there creeps through them into consciousness that strange unity of apprehension that lives in every group, traditional or fortuitous.

Here in the theatre there is intensified the process by which human society is sustained. Here is an instrument that was used in ancient days for the revelation of those gods

whom men conceived as being superior to and separate from themselves, when free men might have souls—as though the soul could be possessed—while slaves were part of the surrounding scenery, an unpleasant necessity. And now, when humanity is aching in its hunger for the soul, not to possess but to be possessed by it, to learn the process by which every minute, every hour, every day may be devoted to its release, there is no other instrument, no other means by which the veil of consciousness can be stripped away from the beauty that quivers through it. Speech is so debased that the written word can carry but half its meaning; the poets mutter of new things but they cannot sing them; the scientists are inarticulate; the engineers without guidance use the fearful powers at their disposal to lay waste both the earth and human life, while the mass of the people labor and stumble beneath the weight of the questions accumulating in their unilluminated hearts and minds.

The journalists lie to them, the novelists lie to them, the politicians lie, the clergy lie, and the people know that their questions are not answered. The social energy that is in the world absorbs their energy and gives them nothing in return, destroys their traditions, their beliefs, the naive relationships that used to be their only hope, so long as there was something left of their inheritance from their primitive ancestors for whom reverence and worship were as instinctive as breathing, a condition which recurred sufficiently often to make life deep and rich and sweet. For the primitives, knowledge of the soul was a condition, an abstraction from life rather than an intensification of it. That is gone forever, swept away by human mastery of the elements and by increase of contact both between individuals and between groups. Knowledge of the soul for the primitive meant that the soul entered into him and stayed blessing his senses and making his whole being gently radiant.

He feared the destruction of that radiance by the fierceness of the love lurking in the soul. That fear remains. It is almost all that is left of our inheritance. It glows with a curious intensity that means surely a sublimation into courage. That can only be left to whatever forces are at work in society, but the dual pressure of those forces and that fear are slowly but irresistibly urging out into men's minds an awareness that knowledge of the soul can no longer be a condition, but must be an act. The soul must be sought and that soon, if the terrible, devastating, exasperated hunger gnawing at the vitals of humanity is to be appeased. To nothing else is due the pathetic attempts being made everywhere to establish communication with the dead. It is surely time to establish communication with the living, time to remove the ancient reproach that men in society can do everything but live. To live is to love; but love is terrible, contact with love is ruinous without the support of



the soul, that alone knows enough of life to be able to tell its story so sweetly and with such magic art as to enchant those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand into a condition of unflinching courage. In that condition, the loves both great and small of man or woman pierce through the beauty of the beloved to the spirit which joins the spirit of the lover in a marriage that, entering into a peace that penetrates all life, bursts then into flower, into flame, into wingless flight, in which ecstasy the soul is released, bringing into human love the Love which is all that men may know of God.

No mind that is even faintly tinged with mysticism, the only faculty through which men can attain their full stature, will fail to understand this juxtaposition of words as a verbal indication of the movement of creative impulse:

Life, the soul, love, God, love, the soul, life. There is a perpetual movement of God's impulse into and out of form which takes life,

the soul, love, these three through God's essential creativeness or creative essence, and projects them again transfigured and saturated with creativeness. Man, who alone has achieved sufficient consciousness to explore the mystery of his being, has restated this process in his own terms, and his statement runs:

Work, religion, art, humanity, art, religion, work. His statement is perfectly valid so long as it is frankly regarded as an attempt to express the invisible in terms of the visible, which he has a perfect right to do. Unfortunately, however, human vanity and the preposterous obstinacy of the human intellect has led to an almost hopeless confusion between the two. God's creativeness is inexhaustible; man's is dependent upon God's, and, without a clear and joyous acknowledgment of that through the salute and welcome of the soul, which asks nothing better than to pour through life into man's handiwork, man's creativeness cannot but end in his undoing. Refusal to

admit this pitiful confusion is the sole source of that barren misery which is the creeping shame of human life and is the wretched substitute at which man, by endeavoring to oust God's creative impulse with his own, arrives in his craven desire to avoid the fruitful and rich suffering that comes to him through the fundamental changes to which he must submit once his work has forced through life a passage for the Soul. The formula of Work, Religion, Art in relation to humanity is a very admirable working hypothesis which man has ludicrously attempted not only to substitute for but to impose upon the terrible reality whose loveliness is so far beyond expression that it can only be dreamed of in a silence reinforced by the soul, bringing to the eager patient spirit both the boundless love of God and the sweet and gentle power of humanity, even at its worst, to sustain and to survive its tragedies.

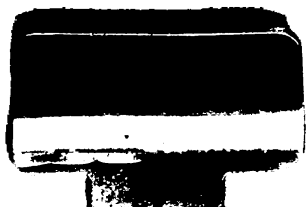
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