The Stratagem

The fellow-travellers climbed down on to the fiery sand of the platform. It was a junction, a junction of that kind where there is no town for miles, and where the resources of the railway and its neighbourhood compare unfavourably with those of the average quarantine station.

The first to descend was a man unmistakably English. He was complaining of the management even while he extracted his hand-baggage from the carriage with the assistance of his companion. "It is positively a disgrace to civilisation," he was saving, "that there should be no connection at such a station as this, an important station, sir, let me tell you, the pivot—if I may use the metaphor—of the branch which serves practically the whole of Muckshire south of the Tream. And we have certainly one hour to wait, and Heaven knows it's more likely to be two, and perhaps three. And, of course, there's not as much as a bar nearer than Fatloam; and if we got there we should positive and actual disgrace to the railway that allows it, to the country that tolerates it, to the civilisation that permits that such things should be. The same thing happened to me here last year, sir, though luckily on that occasion I had but half-an-hour to wait. But I wrote to *The Times* a strong half-column letter on the subject, and I'm damned if they didn't refuse to print it. Of course, our independent press, etc.; I might have known. I tell you, sir, this country is run by a ring, a dirty ring, a gang of Jews, Scotchmen, Irish, Welsh—where's the good old jolly True Blue Englishman? In the cart, sir, in the cart."

The train gave a convulsive backward jerk, and lumbered off in imitation of the solitary porter who, stationed opposite the guard's van, had witnessed without emotion the hurling forth of two trunks like rocks from a volcano, and after a moment's contemplation had, with

screwed mouth, mooched along the platform to his grub, which he would find in an isolated cottage some three hundred *yards* away.

In strong contrast to the Englishman, with his moustache afforesting a whitish face, marked with deep red rings on neck and forehead, his impending paunchiness and his full suit of armour, was the small, active man with the pointed beard whom fate had thrown first into the same compartment, and then into the same hour of exile from all their fellows.

His eyes were astonishingly black and fierce; his beard was grizzled and his face heavily lined and obviously burnt by tropical suns; but that face also expressed intelligence, strength, and resourcefulness in a degree which would have made him an ideal comrade in a forlorn hope, or the defence of a desperate village. Across the back of his left hand was a thick and heavy scar. In spite of all this, he was dressed with singular neatness and correctness; which circumstance, although his English was purer than that of his companion in distress, made the latter secretly incline to suspect him of being a Frenchman. In spite of the quietness of his dress and the self-possession of his demeanour, the sombre glitter of those black eyes, pin-points below shaggy eye-brows, inspired the large man with a certain uneasiness. Not at all a chap to quarrel with, was his thought. However, being himself a widely-travelled man—Boulogne, Dieppe, Paris, Switzerland, and even Venice—he had none of that insularity of which foreigners accuse some Englishmen, and he had endeavoured to make conversation during the journey. The small man had proved a poor companion, taciturn to a fault, sparing of words where a nod would satisfy the obligations of courtesy, and seemingly fonder of his pipe than of his fellow-man. A man with a secret, thought the Englishman.

The train had jolted out of the station and the porter had faded from the landscape. "A deserted spot," remarked the Englishman, whose name was Bevan, "espe-

cially in such fearful heat. Really, in the summer of 1911, it was hardly as bad. Do you know, I remember once at Boulogne" He broke off sharply, for the brown man, sticking the ferrule of his stick repeatedly in the sand, and knotting his brows came suddenly to a decision. "What do you know of heat?" he cried, fixing Bevan with the intensity of a demon. "What do you know of desolation?" Taken aback, as well he might be, Bevan was at a loss to reply. "Stay," cried the other. "What if I told you my story? There is no one here but ourselves." He glared menacingly at Bevan, seemed to seek to read his soul. "Are you a man to be trusted?" he barked, and broke off short.

At another time Bevan would most certainly have declined to become the confidant of a stranger; but here the solitude, the heat, not a little boredom induced by the previous manner of his companion, and even a certain mistrust of how he might take a refusal, combined to elicit a favourable reply.

Stately as an oak, Bevan answered, "I was born an English gentleman, and I trust that I have never done anything to derogate from that estate." "I am a Justice of the Peace," he added after a momentary pause.

"I knew it," cried the other excitedly. "The trained legal mind is that of all others which will appreciate my story. Swear, then," he went on with sudden gravity, "swear that you will never whisper to any living soul the smallest word of what I am about to tell you. Swear by the soul of your dead mother."

"My mother is alive," returned Bevan.

"I knew it," exclaimed his companion, a great and strange look of god-like pity illuminating his sunburnt face. It was such a look as one sees upon many statues of Buddha, a look of divine, of impersonal compassion.

"Then swear by the Lord Chancellor."

Bevan was more than ever persuaded that the stranger was a Frenchman. However, he readily gave the required promise.

"My name," said the other, "is Duguesclin. Does that tell you my story?" he asked impressively. "Does that convey anything to your mind?"

"Nothing at all."

"I knew it," said the man from the tropics. "Then I must tell you all. In my veins boils the fiery blood of the greatest of the French warriors, and my mother was the lineal descendant of the Maid of Saragossa."

Bevan was startled, and showed it.

"After the siege, sir, she was honourably married to a nobleman," snapped Duguesclin. "Do you think a man of my ancestry will permit a stranger to lift the shadow of an eyebrow against the memory of my great-grandmother?"

The Englishman protested that nothing had been further from his thoughts.

"I suppose so," proceeded the other more quietly. "And the more, perhaps, that I am a convicted murderer."

Bevan was now fairly alarmed.

"I am proud of it," continued Duguesclin. "At the age of twenty-five my blood was more fiery than it is today. I married. Four years later I found my wife in the embraces of a neighbour. I slew him. I slew her. I slew our three children, for vipers breed only vipers. I slew the servants; they were accomplices of the adultery, or if not, they should at any rate not witness their master's shame. I slew the gendarmes who came to take me—servile hirelings of a corrupt republic. I set my castle on fire, determined to perish in the ruins. Unfortunately, a piece of masonry, falling, struck me on the arm. My rifle dropped. The accident was seen, and I was rescued by the firemen. I determined to live; it was my duty to my ancestors to continue the family of which I was the sole direct scion. It is in search of a wife that I am travelling in England."

He paused, and gazed proudly on the scenery, with the air of a Selkirk. Bevan suppressed the obvious comment on the surprising termination of the Frenchman's

narrative. He only remarked, "Then you were not guillotined?"

"I was not, sir," retorted the other passionately. "At that time capital punishment was never inflicted in France, though not officially abrogated. I may say," he added, with the pride of a legislator, "that my action lent considerable strength to the agitation which led to its reintroduction.

"No, sir, I was not guillotined. I was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in Devil's Island." He shuddered. "Can you imagine that accursed Isle? Can your fancy paint one tithe of its horror? Can nightmare itself shadow that inferno, that limbo of the damned? My language is strong, sir; but no language can depict that hell. I will spare you the description. Sand, vermin, crocodiles, venomous snakes, miasma, mosquitoes, fever, filth, toil, jaundice, malaria, starvation, foul undergrowth, weedy swamps breathing out death, hideous and bloated trees of poison, themselves already poisoned by their earth, heat unendurable, insufferable, intolerable, unbearable (as the *Daily Telegraph* said at the time of the Dreyfus case), heat continuous and stifling, no breeze but the pestilential stench of the lagoon, heat that turned the skin into a raging sea of irritation to which the very stings of the mosquitoes and centipedes came as a relief, the interminable task of the day beneath the broiling sun, the lash on every slightest infraction of the harsh prison rules, or even of the laws of politeness toward our warders, men only one degree less damned than we ourselves—all this was nothing. The only amusement of the governors of such a place is cruelty; and their own discomfort makes them more ingenious than all the inquisitors of Spain, than Arabs in their religious frenzy, than Burmans and Kachens and Shans in their Buddhist hatred of all living men, than even the Chinese in their cold lust of cruelty. The governor was a profound psychologist; no corner of the mind that he did not fathom, so as to devise a means of twisting it to torture.

"I remember one of us who took pleasure in keeping his spade bright—it was the regulation that spades must be kept bright, a torture in itself in such a place, where mildew grows on everything as fast almost as snow falls in happier climates. Well, sir, the governor found out that this man took a pleasure in the glint of the sun on the steel, and he forbade that man to clean his spade. A trifle, indeed. What do you know of what prisoners think of trifles? The man went raving mad, and for no other reason. It seemed to him that such detailed refinement of cruelty was a final proof of the innate and inherent devilishness of the universe. Insanity is the logical consequence of such a faith. No, sir, I will spare you the description."

Bevan thought that there had already been too much description, and in his complacent English way surmised that Duguesclin was exaggerating, as he was aware that Frenchmen did. But he only remarked that it must have been terrible. He would have given a good deal, now, to have avoided the conversation. It was not altogether nice to be on a lonely platform with a self-confessed multiple murderer, who had presumably escaped only by a further and extended series of crimes.

"But you ask," pursued Duguesclin, "you ask how I escaped? That, sir, is the story I propose to tell you. My previous remarks have been but preliminary; they have no pertinence or interest, I am aware; but they were necessary, since you so kindly expressed interest in my personality, my family history—heroic (I may claim it) as is the one, and tragic (no one will deny it) as is the other."

Bevan again reflected that his interlocutor must be as bad a psychologist as the governor of Devil's Island was a good one; for he had neither expressed nor felt the slightest concern with either of these matters.

"Well, sir, to my story! Among the convicts there was one universal pleasure, a pleasure that could cease only with life or with the empire of the reason, a pleas-

ure that the governor might (and did) indeed restrict, but could not take away. I refer to hope—the hope of escape. Yes, sir, that spark (alone of all its ancient fires) burnt in this breast—and in that of my fellow-convicts. And in this I did not look so much to myself as to another. I am not endowed with any great intellect," he modestly pursued, "my grandmother was pure English, a Higginbotham, one of the Warwickshire Higginbothams" (what has that to do with his stupidity? thought Bevan) "and the majority of my companions were men not only devoid of intelligence, but of education. The one pinnacled exception was the great Dodu—ha! *you* start?" Bevan had not done anything of the sort; he had continued to exhibit the most stolid indifference to the story.

"Yes, you are not mistaken; it was indeed the world-famous philosopher, the discoverer of Dodium, rarest of known elements, supposed only to exist in the universe to the extent of the thirty-thousand and fifth part of a milligramme, and that in the star called y Pegasi; it was Dodu who has shattered the logical process of obversion, and reduced the quadrangle of oppositions to the condition of the British square at Abu-Klea. So much you know; but this perhaps you did not know, that, although a civilian, he was the greatest strategist of France. It was he who in his cabinet made the dispositions of the armies of the Ardennes; and the 1890 scheme of the fortifications of Luneville was due to his genius alone. For this reason the Government were loth to condemn him, though public opinion revolted bitterly against his crime. You remember that, having proved that women after the age of fifty were a useless burden to the State, he had demonstrated his belief by decapitating and devouring his widowed mother. It was consequently the intention of the Government to connive at his escape on the voyage, and to continue to employ him under an assumed name in a flat in an entirely different quarter of Paris. However, the Government fell

suddenly; a rival ousted him, and his sentence was carried out with as much severity as if he had been a common criminal.

"It was to such a man (naturally) that I looked to devise a plan for our escape. But rack my brains as I would—my grandmother was a Warwickshire Higginbotham—I could devise no means of getting into touch with him. He must, however, have divined my wishes; for, one day after he had been about a month upon the island (I had been there seven months myself) he stumbled and fell as if struck by the sun at a moment when I was close to him. And as he lay upon the ground he managed to pinch my ankle three times. I caught his glance—he hinted rather than gave me the sign of recognition of the fraternity of Freemasons. Are you a Mason?"

"I am Past Provincial Deputy Grand Sword-Bearer of this province," returned Bevan. "I founded Lodge 14,883, 'Boetic' and Lodge 17,212, 'Colenso'. And I am Past Grand Haggai in my Provincial Grand Chapter."

"I knew it!" exclaimed Duguesclin enthusiastically.

Bevan began to dislike this conversation exceedingly. Did this man—this criminal—know who he was? He knew he was a J.P., that his mother was alive, and now his Masonic dignities. He distrusted this Frenchman more and more. Was the story but a pretext for the demand of a loan? The stranger looked prosperous and had a first class ticket. More likely a blackmailer; perhaps he knew of other things—say that affair at Oxford—or the incident of the Edgware Road—or the matter of Esme Holland. He determined to be more than ever on his guard.

"You will understand with what joy," continued Duguesclin, innocent or careless of the sinister thoughts which occupied his companion, "I received and answered this unmistakable token of friendship. That day no further opportunity of intercourse occurred, but I narrowly watched him on the morrow, and saw that he was

dragging his feet in an irregular way. Ha! thought I, a drag for long, an ordinary pace for short. I imitated him eagerly, giving the Morse letter A. His alert mind grasped instantly my meaning; he altered his code (which had been of a different order) and replied with a Morse B on my own system. I answered C; he returned D. From that moment we could talk fluently and freely as if we were on the terrace of the Cafe de la Paix in our beloved Paris. However, conversation in such circumstances is a lengthy affair. During the whole march to our work he only managed to say, 'Escape soon—please God.' Before his crime he had been an atheist. I was indeed glad to find that punishment had brought repentance."

Bevan himself was relieved. He had carefully refrained from admitting the existence of a French Freemason; that one should have repented filled him with a sense of almost personal triumph. He began to like Dugueslin, and to believe in him. His wrong had been hideous; if his vengeance seemed excessive and even indiscriminate, was not he a Frenchman? Frenchmen do these things! And after all Frenchmen were men. Bevan felt a great glow of benevolence; he remembered that he was not only a man, but a Christian. He determined to set the stranger at his ease.

"Your story interests me intensely," said he. "I sympathise *deeply* with you in your wrongs and in your sufferings. I am heartily thankful that you have escaped, and I beg of you to proceed with the narration of your adventures."

Dugueslin needed no such encouragement. His attitude, from that of the listless weariness with which he had descended from the train, had become animated, sparkling, fiery; he was carried away by the excitement of his passionate memories.

"On the second day Dodu was able to explain his mind. 'If we escape, it must be by a stratagem,' he signalled. It was an obvious remark; but Dodu had no rea-

son to think highly of my intelligence. 'By a stratagem,' he repeated with emphasis.

" 'I have a plan,' he continued. 'It will take twenty-three days to communicate, if we are not interrupted; between three and four months to prepare; two hours and eight minutes to execute. It is theoretically possible to escape by air, by water, or by earth. But as we are watched day and night, it would be useless to try to drive a tunnel to the mainland; we have no aeroplanes or balloons, or means of making them. But if we could once reach the water's edge, which we must do in whatever direction we set out if we only keep in a straight line, and if we can find a boat unguarded, and if we can avoid arousing the alarm, then we have merely to cross the sea, and either find a land where we are unknown, or disguise ourselves and our boat and return to Devil's Island as shipwrecked mariners. The latter idea would be foolish. You will say that the Governor would know that Dodu would not be such a fool; but more, he would know also that Dodu would not be such a fool as to try to take advantage of that circumstance; and he would be right, curse him!'

"It implies the intensest depth of feeling to curse in the Morse code with one's feet—ah! how we hated him.

"Dodu explained to me that he was telling me these obvious things for several reasons: (1) to gauge my intelligence by my reception of them; (2) to make sure that if we failed it should be by my stupidity and not by his neglect to inform me of every detail; (3) because he had acquired the professorial habit as another man might have the gout.

"Briefly, however, this was his plan; to elude the guards, make for the coast, capture a boat, and put to sea. Do you understand? Do you get the idea?"

Bevan replied that it seemed to him the only possible plan.

"A man like Dodu," pursued Duguesclin, "takes nothing for granted. He leaves no precaution untaken; in his plans, if chance be an element, it is an element whose

value is calculated to twenty-eight places of decimals.

"But hardly had he laid down these bold outlines of his scheme when interruption came. On the fourth day of our intercourse he signalled only 'Wait. Watch me!' again and again.

"In the evening he manoeuvred to get to the rear of the line of convicts, and only then dragged out 'There is a traitor, a spy. Henceforth I must find a new means of communicating the details of my plan. I have thought it all out. I shall speak in a sort of rebus, which not even you will be able to understand unless you have all the pieces—and the key. Mind you engrave upon your memory every word I say.'

"The following day: 'Do you remember the taking of the old mill by the Prussians in '70? My difficulty is that I must give you the skeleton of the puzzle, which I can't do in words. But watch the line of my spade and my heelmarks, and take a copy.'

"I did this with the utmost minuteness of accuracy and obtained this figure. At my autopsy," said Dugues-clin, dramatically, "this should be found engraved upon my heart."

He drew a notebook from his pocket, and rapidly sketched the subjoined figure for the now interested Bevan.

"You will note that the figure has eight sides, and that twenty-seven crosses are disposed in groups of

three, while in one corner is a much larger and thicker cross and two smaller crosses not so symmetrical. This group represents the element of chance; and you will at least gain a hint of the truth if you reflect that eight is the cube of two, and twenty-seven of three."

Bevan looked intelligent.

"On the return march," continued Duguesclin, "Dodu said, 'The spy is on the watch. But count the letters in the name of Aristotle's favourite disciple.' I guessed (as he intended me to do) that he did not mean Aristotle. He wished to suggest Plato, and so Socrates; hence I counted A-L-C-I-B-I-A-D-E-S = 10, and thus completely baffled the spy for that day. The following day he rapped out 'Rahu' very emphatically, meaning that the next lunar eclipse would be the proper moment for our evasion, and spent the rest of the day in small talk, so as to lull the suspicions of the spy. For three days he had no opportunity of saying anything, being in the hospital with fever. On the fourth day: 'I have discovered that spy is a damned swine of an opium-smoking lieutenant from Toulon. We have him; he doesn't know Paris. Now then—draw a line from the Gare de l'Est to the Etoile; erect an equilateral triangle on that line. Think of the name of the world-famous man who lives at the apex.' (This was a touch of supergenius, as it forced me to use the English alphabet for the basis of the cipher, and the spy spoke no language but his own, except a little Swiss.) 'From this time I shall communicate in a cipher of the direct additive numerical order, and the key shall be his name.'

"It was only my incomparably strong constitution which enabled me to add the task of deciphering his conversation to that imposed by Government. To memorise perfectly a cipher communication of half-an-hour is no mean feat of mnemonics, especially when the deciphered message is itself couched in the obscurest symbolism. The spy must have thought his reason in danger if he succeeded in reading the hieroglyphs which

were the mere pieces of the puzzle of the master-thinker. For instance, I would get this message; owh-momdvvtxskzvgcqxzllhtrejrgscpxjrmsgausrgwhbdxzldabe, which, when deciphered (and the spy would gnash his teeth every time Dodu signalled a W), only meant: 'The peaches of 1761 are luminous in the gardens of Versailles.'

"Or again: 'Hunt; the imprisoned Pope; the Pompadour; the Stag and Cross. 'The men of the fourth of September; their leader divided by the letters of the Victim of the Eighth of Thermidor.' 'Crillon was unfortunate that day, though braver than ever.'

"Such were the indications from which I sought to piece together our plan of escape!

"Perhaps rather by intuition than by reason, I gathered from some two hundred of such clues that the guards Bertrand, Rolland, and Monet, had been bribed, and also promised advancement, and (above all) removal from the hated Island, should they connive at our escape. It seemed that the Government had still use for its first strategist. The eclipse was due some ten weeks ahead, and needed neither bribe nor promise. The difficulty was to ensure the presence of Bertrand as sentinel in our corridor, Rolland at the ring-fence, and Monet at the outposts. The chances against such a combination at the eclipse were infinitesimal, 99,487,306,294,236,873,489 to 1.

"It would have been madness to trust to luck in so essential a matter. Dodu set to work to bribe the Governor himself. This was unfortunately impossible; for (a) no one could approach the governor even by means of the intermediary of the bribed guards; (b) the offence for which he had been promoted to the governorship was of a nature unpardonable by any Government. He was in reality more a prisoner than ourselves; (c) he was a man of immense wealth, assured career, and known probity.

"I cannot now enter into his history, which you no doubt know in any case. I will only say that it was of such a character that these facts (of so curiously contradictory appearance—on the face of it) apply absolutely. However the tone of confidence which thrilled in Dodu's messages, 'Pluck grapes in Burgundy; press vats in Cognac; ha!' 'The souffle with the nuts in it is ready for us by the Seine,' and the like, showed me that his giant brain had not only grappled with the problem, but solved it to his satisfaction. The plan was perfect; on the night of the eclipse those three guards would be on duty at such and such gates; Dodu would tear his clothes into strips, bind and gag Bertrand, come and release me. Together we should spring on Rolland, take his uniform and rifle, and leave him bound and gagged. We should then dash for the shore, do the same with Monet, and then, dressed in their uniforms, take the boat of an octopus-fisher, row to the harbour, and ask in the name of the governor for the use of his steam yacht to chase an escaped fugitive. We should then steam into the track of ships and set fire to the yacht, so as to be 'rescued' and conveyed to England, whence we could arrange with the French Government for rehabilitation.

"Such was the simple yet subtle plan of Dodu. Down to the last detail was it perfected—until one fatal day.

"The spy, stricken by yellow fever, dropped suddenly dead in the fields before noon 'Cease work' had sounded. Instantly, without a moment's hesitation, Dodu strode across to me and said, at the risk of the lash: 'The whole plan which I have explained to you in cipher these last four months is a blind. That spy knew all. His lips are sealed in death. I have another plan, the real plan, simpler and surer. I will tell it to you to-morrow.'

The whistle of an approaching engine interrupted this tragic episode of the adventures of Duguesclin.

" 'Yes,' said Dodu" (continued the narrator), " 'I have a better plan. I have a stratagem. I will tell it you tomorrow.'

The train which was to carry the narrator and his hearer to Mudchester came round the corner. "That morrow," glowered Duguesclin, "that morrow never came. The same sun that slew the spy broke the great brain of Dodu; that very afternoon, a gibbering maniac, they thrust him in the padded room, never again to emerge."

The train drew up at the platform of the little junction. He almost hissed in Bevan's face.

"It was not Dodu at all," he screamed, "it was a common criminal, an epileptic; he should never have been sent to Devil's Island at all. He had been mad for months. His messages had no sense at all; it was a cruel practical joke!"

"But how," said Bevan getting into his carriage and looking back, "how did you escape in the end?"

"By a stratagem," replied the Irishman, and jumped into another compartment.

HIS SECRET SIN

Inscribed admiringly to Alexander Coote.

THEODORE BUGG had made England what she is. The last forty-two years had elevated him from errand-boy to biggest retail grocer in the Midlands. Twenty-eight years of wedded happiness had left him with a clear conscience, a five-year old grave to keep in order "To the memory of my beloved relict," as he had written until the clerk suggested a trifling alteration, and a strapping daughter just turned twenty.

I wish I could stop here. But there is a rough side to every canvas, and Theodore Bugg had forgotten all about England, and what she is, and how he had made her. Or if the good work was going on, it was subconscious. He was standing by the gilded statue of Jeanne d'Arc, his mouth wide open, his Baedeker limp in his perspiring hand. "She's riding astride!" The molten madness throbbed in his brain. "She's got man's clothes on!"

The shocking truth must out: Theodore Bugg had come to Paris for Pleasure!

He had only been able to spare two days, the Sunday and Monday of Whitsuntide. He had travelled by the night boat on Saturday, arriving in Paris on Sunday morning—the first step downward! The air of Paris intoxicated him; the Grands Boulevards ate into his moral fibre like a dragon chewing butter; and though he had not actually 'been in' anywhere, he felt the atmosphere of the music-halls as Ulysses heard the Sirens. He was fortunately tied to the mast of his ignorance of French and his fear of asking anybody such a very peculiar question, or he would certainly have discovered and visited the Moulin Rouge.

As it was, Joan of Arc was very much more than was good for him. He stared, fascinated as by a basilisk, his eyes starting further and further from his head as his moral sense dragged his body backwards along the Rue

de Rivoli. By this means he cannoned into a worthy Frenchman (who refused to take him seriously) and so was shocked into himself.

He pulled out his watch. Only an hour and a half to catch his train. Just as he was beginning to enjoy himself, too. What a shame! He couldn't even send a telegram without letting somebody know where he was—and at home they supposed him to be visiting a business acquaintance in Shropshire.

I'll have a mementum, thought he, if I die for it. I'll—I don't care. I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb— I'll go the whole hog. I know there's shops about here.

So, turning, in his excitement and determination, he saw when you invoke the devil he is usually half-way to you—a shop window full of photographs of the pictures and sculptures of the Louvre. He looked up and down the street—the sight of a top hat might have saved him even at the eleventh hour. But no! nothing that looked in the least like an Englishman, even to his overheated fear of discovery. He peered and dodged about for a little like a man stalking dangerous game, and then, with sudden stealth, his back to the door, pushed down the lever and slid into the shop.

"Avvy-voo photography?" he said hurriedly, with averted face.

"Certainly, sir," replied the shopkeeper in perfect English. "What does Monsieur require? Photographs of Paris, of Fontainebleau, of the Louvre, of Versailles?"

But English would not serve the turn of Theodore Bugg. He nearly bolted from the shop. An English voice—it was almost Discovery!

"Kerker shows," he muttered doggedly enough, though his head hung lower than ever. "Kelker shows tray sho. Voo savvy?—tray tray sho—par propre!"

The shopman, not yet old enough to master his disgust at the familiar incident, brought forward several books of photographs.

"Perhaps Monsieur will find there what he requires," he said coldly.

Furtively and hurriedly, his glance divided between the forbidden book and the shop-door, his only safeguard from intrusion the thought that nobody who entered would be in a position to throw stones at a fellow-culprit, Theodore Bugg turned over the pages.

The book began mildly enough with the winged Victory and only entered the rapids with La Gioconda. Thence, Niagra-like, one plunge to the abyss—the Venus de Milo.

The blood flame to his face; his breath came hot and quick.

With fumbling fingers that trembled with excitement he withdrew the photograph from its leaf and half showed it to the proprietor with a whispered "Comby-ang?"

"Trente sous," said the shopman in his most rapid French. And in English, "We take English money here, sir; ten shillings, if you please. May I wrap it up for you?" But Bugg had thrust it into his inner pocket, and, pressing a sovereign into the man's hand, dashed without looking behind him from the shop, eager to put time and space between himself and his compromising position.

He hurried to his hotel, not without many a suspicious glance over his shoulder, and packed his bag. He had ten minutes to spare. He locked the door carefully, sat down with his back to the light, and pulling the photograph from his pocket, indulged in a long voluptuous gloat.

Then the boots knocked with the news of his cab, and Bugg, nobler than Lord Howard of Effingham, thrust his treasure into his pocket, unlocked the door and cried "Venny!"

II.

Theodore Bugg, a year later, was paying the price of his fall. He had allowed Gertrude to attend Art Classes, although he knew it to be wrong. But he had grown to fear his daughter, and—on such a point especially—he was incapable of fighting her.

For there were times when he tried to persuade himself that there was "nothing wrong in it." A brother church-warden had looked a little askance when the news of Gertrude's "advanced ideas" had come; but Theodore had stoutly and even a little sternly rebuked him with the original remark: "To the pure all things are pure." It was knowing when to be bold that had made Theodore the fine business man he was.

And very bold it was, for conscience makes cowards of us all. The secret shame of his orgies! Every week-night—once even on a Sunday!—after everyone had gone to bed, he opened the little safe in the wall at the head of his bed, and drew forth the obscene picture from its envelope marked "In case of my death or disability THIS PACKET is to be DESTROYED UNOPENED. T. Bugg." Then he would sit, and hold it in his hot hands, and gloat upon the evil thing, lifting it now and again to his mouth to cover it with greedy, slobbering kisses. And afterwards, when it was safely locked up again, he would undress with a certain unction. Once even he attempted—with the aid of a bath towel—to take the pose before the mirror. And he saw nothing ridiculous in that, just as he saw nothing beautiful in the photograph. Nakedness is lust: so ran his simple gospel of aesthetics.

Shame quickened him, too, to measures of expiation or precaution. He read family prayers twice a day instead of once, and he took the chair at the Annual Meeting of a Society for Sending Out Trousers to Converted Hindoos.

As everybody in the Midlands knows, "Hindoos" are Naked Savages.

And he discharged a groom for whistling on Sunday.

But if these expedients salved his conscience, they did nothing to quell Gertrude's incipient tendency to independence of thought and action. There had been a very unpleasant scene when he threw into the fire a book from Mudie's (I thought one could have trusted Mudie's!) called 'The Stolen Bacillus,' which he understood to be of a grossly immoral tendency. (Nasty filth about free love or something, isn't it?)

Theodore Bugg was not a sensitive man; excess of intuitive sympathy had not made his life a hell; but he felt that his domestic relations were strained. Especially since "that Mrs. Grahame" had evinced a liking for Gertrude. Her husband's colonelcy was the gilding of the pill; but the pill was a bitter one, for Mrs. Grahame went motoring and even golfing on Sunday instead of going to Church, and once or twice had taken Gertrude with her, to the scandal of the neighbourhood. Colonel Grahame, too, rather got on Bugg's nerves, in spite of the "honour of his acquaintance."

Such thoughts went dully through his mind as he waited in the garden for his daughter to come in to tea from the "Art Class." But when she arrived, portfolio in hand, her beauty and the splendour of her long easy swing determined him to be gracious.

Under such circumstances conversation is apt to be artificial; but Gertrude was gay and garrulous, and the tea went very pleasantly until her father's eye unluckily fell on the portfolio. "And what has my little fairy been doing lately?" he asked with elephantine lightness.

"Oh, sketches mostly, father. This week we're copying from old Greek masterpieces, though. Let me show you, father, dear." She opened the portfolio and turned over the leaves. "I'm getting on splendidly. Mr., Davis thinks I ought to go to Paris and study properly. Do let me."

How can you think of such a thing, Gertrude? A daughter of mine! Study properly!!! No indeed! A little

sketching is a nice accomplishment for a young lady, but—

His jaw dropped. A thin, graceful pencil sketch it was that he clutched in frenzied fingers; but he could not mistake the subject.

"Wretched girl," he shouted, "where did you get the—the—the—Damn it all, what d'ye call it?—the—ay! that's it!—the model for this vile, filthy, lewd, obscene, lustful thing? Damn it! you're as bad as Cousin Jenny! (Cousin Jenny was a blot on the scutcheon of the Buggs). You're a harlot, miss!" And then, with an awful change as the truth came home to him: "O my God! O my God! Damn it!" he screamed, "how did you get the keys of my little safe?"

The girl had frozen colder than the stone, but there was a new light in her eye, and if the curl of a lip could tread a worm into the dust, that lip was hers and that worm the author of her being. She had withdrawn as one who comes suddenly upon a toad, and the first flaming of her face had died instantly to deadlier ice.

Bugg saw his mistake, his masses of mistakes. There being but one more to make, he made it; and, finding himself in the frying-pan of discovery, leapt into the fire of things irrevocable and not to be forgotten. His fat, heavy-jowled, coarse face all twitching, he fell on his knees and clasped his hands together. "So you found me out? Don't, don't give away your poor old father, Gertie! My little Gertie!"

There was a silence. "Excuse me, father," said the girl at last, "but I've just had a glimpse of you for the first time in my life, and it's a bit of a shock. I must think."

And she stood motionless until her hapless father attracted her attention by backing into his wicker chair. "Don't touch holy things," she snapped suddenly, taking the sketch from his nerveless hand, and replacing it reverently in the portfolio.

The action seemed to decide her.

"I'll give you an address to send my things to," she said, and walked out of the garden.

Theodore Bugg sat stunned. "Holy things," she had said. She called that lustful French photograph holy! Was this Original Sin; or was it that strange new thing people were talking about—what was it? Ah! heredity. Heredity? His secret sin become her open infamy? Truly the sins of the fathers were visited on the children!

By this time he was upstairs and in his bedroom. He must destroy the accursed thing; he must destroy—Ah! yes. He had contaminated Gertrude by having such a thing in his house. He must be the Roman father, and—what would a Roman father do?

He had the match alight, but he could not put it to the edge of the packet. Then the silence of the house hit him; he knew that his daughter would never return, and in a fit of rage he trampled on the envelope like a wild beast mauling a corpse.

He thrust it into the empty grate, lit the paper frills, watched all blaze up. Then, gulping down a sob, he went to the drawer of a cabinet and pulled out the revolver which he had bought (and loaded, under the shopman's guidance) against burglars.

Yes, he must kill himself. He drew back the hammer. Cold sweat beaded his flabby face. He could not; and anyhow, how did one? He thought of many stories of people who had shot themselves ineffectively. He felt for his heart and failed to find it, wondered if it had stopped and he were dying, had a fit of fear paralysing all his will. He thought of himself lying dead.

"No, by God! I can't do it!" he cried, and flung the pistol back into the drawer. As luck would have it, the weapon exploded. The bullet broke his jaw, tore away four molars, smashed the cheek-bone, pulped the right eye, and, glancing from the frontal bone, found its billet in the ceiling. He lost consciousness and fell. His head struck the grate where yet smouldered the ashes of the photograph.

It was three months before he recovered, and then with only half a face to face the world with. He still thinks that Gertrude gave him away, for the street-boys have taken to calling him "old Venus." But he is wrong; the boys have their aesthetic reasons for the name.

Gertrude in any case is much too busy to bother her head about him; for, after a year in the Latin Quarter, if she has failed to surpass Degas and Manet and O'Conor, she has at least conquered the great pianist Wlodywewsky, and it takes her all her time to manage him and keep the baby out of mischief.

Theodore Bugg needs no help of hers in his moral sculpture of the destinies of England.

THE TESTAMENT OF MAGDALEN BLAIR

PART I

I

IN my third term at Newnham I was already Professor Blair's favourite pupil. Later, he wasted a great deal of time praising my slight figure and my piquant face, with its big round grey eyes and their long black lashes; but the first attraction was my singular gift. Few men, and, I believe, no other women, could approach me in one of the most priceless qualifications for scientific study, the faculty of apprehending minute differences. My memory was poor, extraordinarily so; I had the utmost trouble to enter Cambridge at all. But I could adjust a micrometer better than either students or professor, and read a vernier with an accuracy to which none of them could even aspire. To this I added a faculty of subconscious calculation which was really uncanny. If I were engaged in keeping a solution between (say) 70° and 80° I had no need to watch the thermometer. Automatically I became aware that the mercury was close to the limit, and would go over from my other work and adjust it without a thought.

More remarkable still, if any object were placed on my bench without my knowledge and then removed, I could, if asked within a few minutes, describe the object roughly, especially distinguishing the shape of its base and the degree of its opacity to heat and light. From these data I could make a pretty good guess at what the object was.

This faculty of mine was repeatedly tested, and always with success. Extreme sensitiveness to minute degrees of heat was its obvious cause.

I was also a singularly good thought-reader, even at this time. The other girls feared me absolutely. They

need not have done so; I had neither ambition nor energy to make use of any of my powers. Even now, when I bring to mankind this message of a doom so appalling that at the age of twenty-four I am a shrivelled, blasted, withered wreck, I am supremely weary, supremely indifferent.

I have the heart of a child and the consciousness of Satan, the lethargy of I know not what disease; and yet, thank—oh! there can be no God!—the resolution to warn mankind to follow my example, and then to explode a dynamite cartridge in my mouth.

II

In my third year at Newnham I spend four hours of every day at Professor Blair's house. All other work was neglected, gone through mechanically, if at all. This came about gradually, as the result of an accident.

The chemical laboratory has two rooms, one small and capable of being darkened. On this occasion (the May term of my second year) this room was in use. It was the first week of June, and extremely fine. The door was shut. Within was a girl, alone, experimenting with the galvanometer.

I was absorbed in my own work. Quite without warning I looked up. "Quick!" said I, "Gladys is going to faint." Every one in the room stared at me. I took a dozen steps towards the door, when the fall of a heavy body sent the laboratory into hysterics.

It was only the heat and confined atmosphere, and Gladys should not have come to work that day at all, but she was easily revived, and then the demonstrator acquiesced in the anarchy that followed. "How did she know?" was the universal query; for that I knew was evident. Ada Brown (*Athanasia contra mundum*) poohpoohed the whole affair; Margaret Letchmere thought I must have heard something, perhaps a cry inaudible to

the others, owing to their occupied attention; Doris Leslie spoke of second sight, and Amy Gore of "Sympathy." All the theories, taken together, went round the clock of conjecture. Professor Blair came in at the most excited part of the discussion, calmed the room in two minutes, elicited the facts in five, and took me off to dine with him. "I believe it's this human thermopile affair of yours," he said. "Do you mind if we try a few parlour tricks after dinner?" His aunt, who kept house for him, protested in vain, and was appointed Grand Superintendent in Ordinary of my five senses.

My hearing was first tested, and found normal, or thereabouts. I was then blindfolded, and the aunt (by excess of precaution) stationed between me and the Professor. I found that I could describe even small movements that he made, so long as he was between me and the western window, not at all when he moved round to the other quarters. This is in conformity with the "Thermopile" theory; it was contradicted completely on other occasions. The results (in short) were very remarkable and very puzzling; we wasted two precious hours in futile theorizing. In the event the aunt (cowed by a formidable frown) invited me to spend the Long Vacation in Cornwall.

During these months the Professor and I assiduously worked to discover exactly the nature and limit of my powers. The result, in a sense, was nil.

For one thing, these powers kept on "breaking out in a new place." I seemed to do all I did by perception of minute differences; but then it seemed as if I had all sorts of different apparatus. "One down, t'other come on," said Professor Blair.

Those who have never made scientific experiments cannot conceive how numerous and subtle are the sources of error, even in the simplest matters. In so obscure and novel a field of research no result is trustworthy until it has been verified a thousand times. In our field we discovered no constants, all variables.

Although we had hundreds of facts any one of which seemed capable of overthrowing all accepted theories of the means of communication between mind and mind, we had nothing, absolutely nothing, which we could use as the basis of a new theory.

It is naturally impossible to give even an outline of the course of our research. Twenty-eight closely written notebooks referring to this first period are at the disposal of my executors.

III

In the middle of the day, in my third year, my father was dangerously ill. I bicycled over to Peterborough at once, never thinking of my work. (My father is a canon of Peterborough Cathedral.) On the third day I received a telegram from Professor Blair, "Will you be my wife?" I had never realized myself as a woman, or him as a man, till that moment, and in that moment I knew that I loved him and had always loved him. It was a case of what one might call "Love at first absence." My father recovered rapidly; I returned to Cambridge; we were married during the May week, and went immediately to Switzerland. I beg to be spared any recital of so sacred a period of my life: but I must record one fact.

We were sitting in a garden by Lago Maggiore after a delightful tramp from Chamounix over the Col du Geant to Courmayeur, and thence to Aosta, and so by degrees to Pallanza. Arthur rose, apparently struck by some idea, and began to walk up and down the terrace. *I was quite suddenly impelled to turn my head to assure myself of his presence.*

This may seem nothing to you who read, unless you have true imagination. But think of yourself talking to a friend in full light, and suddenly leaning forward to touch him. "Arthur!" I cried, "Arthur!"

The distress in my tone brought him running to my

side. "What is it, Magdalen?" he cried, anxiety in every word.

I closed my eyes. "Make gestures!" said I. (He was directly between me and the sun.)

He obeyed, wondering.

"You are——you are"——I stammered——"no! I don't know what you are doing. I am blind!"

He sawed his arm up and down. Useless; I had become absolutely insensitive. We repeated a dozen experiments that night. All failed.

We concealed our disappointment, and it did not cloud our love. The sympathy between us grew even subtler and stronger, but only as it grows between all men and women who love with their whole hearts, and love unselfishly.

IV

We returned to Cambridge in October, and Arthur threw himself vigorously into the new year's work. Then I fell ill, and the hope we had indulged was disappointed. Worse, the course of the illness revealed a condition which demanded the most complete series of operations which a woman can endure. Not only the past hope, but all future hope, was annihilated.

It was during my convalescence that the most remarkable incident of my life took place.

I was in great pain one afternoon, and wished to see the doctor. The nurse went to the study to telephone for him.

"Nurse!" I said, as she returned, "don't lie to me. He's not gone to Royston; he's got cancer, and is too upset to come."

"Whatever next?" said the nurse. "It's right he can't come, and I was going to tell you he had gone to Royston; but I never heard nothing about no cancer."

This was true; she had not been told. But the next morning we heard that my "intuition" was correct.

As soon as I was well enough, we began our experiments again. My powers had returned, and in triple force.

Arthur explained my "intuition" as follows: "The doctor (when you last saw him) did not know consciously that he had cancer; but subconsciously Nature gave warning. You read this subconsciously, and it sprang into your consciousness when you read on the nurse's face that he was ill."

This, farfetched as it may seem, at least avoids the shallow theories about "telepathy."

From this time my powers constantly increased. I could read my husband's thoughts from imperceptible movements of his face as easily as a trained deaf-mute can sometimes read the speech of a distant man from the movements of his lips.

Gradually as we worked, day by day, I found my grasp of detail ever fuller. It is not only that I could read emotions; I could tell whether he was thinking 3465822 or 3456822. In the year following my illness we made 436 experiments of this kind, each extending over several hours; in all 9363, with only 122 failures, and these all, without exception, partial.

The year following, our experiments were extended to a reading of his dreams. In this I proved equally successful. My practice was to leave the room before he woke, write down the dream that he had dreamt, and await him at the breakfast-table, where he would compare his record with mine.

Invariably they were identical, with this exception, that my record was always much fuller than his. He would nearly always, however, purport to remember the details supplied by me; but this detail has (I think) no real scientific value.

But what does it all matter, when I think of the horror impending?

V

That my only means of discovering Arthur's thought was by muscle-reading became more than doubtful during the third year of our marriage. We practised "telepathy" unashamed. We excluded the "muscle-reader" and the "superauditor" and the "human thermopile" by elaborate precautions; yet still I was able to read every thought of his mind. On our holiday in North Wales at Easter one year we separated for a week, at the end of that week he to be on the leeward, I on the windward side of Tryfan, at an appointed hour, he there to open and read to himself a sealed packet given him by "some stranger met at Pen-y-Pass during the week." The experiment was entirely successful; I reproduced every word of the document. If the "telepathy" is to be vitiated, it is on the theory that I had previously met the "stranger" and read from him what he would write in such circumstances! Surely direct communication of mind with mind is an easier theory!

Had I known in what all this was to culminate, I suppose I should have gone mad. Thrice fortunate that I can warn humanity of what awaits each one. The greatest benefactor of his race will be he who discovers and explosive indefinitely swifter and more devastating than dynamite. If I could only trust myself to prepare Chloride of Nitrogen in sufficient quantity. . . .

VI

Arthur became listless and indifferent. The perfection of love that had been our marriage failed without warning, and yet by imperceptible gradations.

My awakening to the fact was, however, altogether sudden. It was one summer evening; we were paddling on the Cam. One of Arthur's pupils, also in a Canadian canoe, challenged us to race. At Magdalen Bridge we

were a length ahead—suddenly I heard my husband's thought. It was the most hideous and horrible laugh that it is possible to conceive. No devil could laugh so. I screamed, and dropped my paddle. Both the men thought me ill. I assured myself that it was not the laugh of some townee on the bridge, distorted by my over-sensitive organization. I said no more; Arthur looked grave. At night he asked abruptly after a long period of brooding, "Was that my thought?" I could only stammer that I did not know. Incidentally he complained of fatigue, and the listlessness, which before had seemed nothing to me, assumed a ghastly shape. There was something in him that was not he! The indifference had appeared transitory; I now became aware of it as constant and increasing. I was at this time twenty-three years old. You wonder that I write with such serious attitude of mind. I sometimes think that I have never had any thoughts of my own; that I have always been reading the thoughts of another, or perhaps of Nature. I seem only to have been a woman in those first few months of marriage.

VII

The six months following held for me nothing out of the ordinary, save that six or seven times I had dreams, vivid and terrible. Arthur had no share in these; yet I knew, I cannot say how, that they were his dreams and not mine; or rather that they were in his subconscious waking self, for one occurred in the afternoon, when he was out shooting, and not in the least asleep.

The last of them occurred towards the end of the October term. He was lecturing as usual, I was at home, lethargic after a too heavy breakfast following a wakeful night. I saw suddenly a picture of the lecture-room, enormously greater than in reality, so that it filled all space; and in the rostrum, bulging over it in all direc-

tions, was a vast, deadly pale devil with a face which was a blasphemy on Arthur's. The evil joy of it was indescribable. So wan and bloated, its lips so loose and bloodless; fold after fold of its belly flopping over the rostrum and pushing the students out of the hall, it leered unspeakably. Then dribbled from its mouth these words: "Ladies and gentlemen, the course is finished. You may go home." I cannot hope even to suggest the wickedness and filth of these simple expressions. Then, raising its voice to a grating scream, it yelled: "White of egg! White of egg! White of egg!" again and again for twenty minutes.

The effect on me was shocking. It was as if I had a vision of Hell.

Arthur found me in a very hysterical condition, but soon soothed me. "Do you know," he said at dinner, "I believe I have got a devilish bad chill?"

It was the first time I had known him to complain of his health. In six years he had not had as much as a headache.

I told him my "dream" when we were in bed, and he seemed unusually grave, as if he understood where I had failed in its interpretation. In the morning he was feverish; I made him stay in bed and sent for the doctor. The same afternoon I learnt that Arthur was seriously ill, had been ill, indeed, for months. The doctor called it Bright's disease.

VIII

I said "the last of the dreams." For the next year we travelled, and tried various treatments. My powers remained excellent, but I received none of the subconscious horrors. With few fluctuations, he grew steadily worse; daily he became more listless, more indifferent, more depressed. Our experiments were necessarily curtailed. Only one problem exercised him, the problem of

his personality. He began to wonder "who he was." I do not mean that he suffered from delusions. I mean that the problem of the true Ego took hold of his imagination. One perfect summer night at Contrexéville he was feeling much better; the symptoms had (temporarily) disappeared almost entirely under the treatment of a very skilful doctor at that Spa, a Dr. Barbezieux, a most kind and thoughtful man.

"I am going to try," said Arthur, "to penetrate myself. Am I an animal, and is the world without a purpose? Or am I a soul in a body? Or am I, one and indivisible in some incredible sense, a spark of the infinite light of God? I am going to think inwards: I shall possibly go into some form of trance, unintelligible to myself. You may be able to interpret it."

The experiment had lasted about half an hour when he sat up gasping with effort.

"I have seen nothing, heard nothing," I said. "Not one thought has passed from you to me."

But at that very moment what had been in his mind flashed into mine.

"It is a blind abyss," I told him, "and there hangs in it a vulture vaster than the whole starry system."

"Yes," he said, "that was it. But that was not all. I could not get beyond it. I shall try again."

He tried. Again I was cut off from his thought, although his face was twitching so that one might have said that any one might read his mind.

"I have been looking in the wrong place," said he suddenly, but very quietly and without moving. "The thing I want lies at the base of the spine."

This time I saw. In a blue heaven was coiled an infinite snake of gold and green, with four eyes of fire, black fire and red, that darted rays in every direction; held within its coils was a great multitude of laughing children. And even as I looked, all this was blotted out. Crawling rivers of blood spread over the heaven, of blood purulent with nameless forms—mangy dogs with

their bowels dragging behind them; creatures half elephant, half beetle; things that were but a ghastly bloodshot eye, set about with leathery tentacles; women whose skins heaved and bubbled like boiling sulphur, giving off clouds that condensed into a thousand other shapes, more hideous than their mother; these were the least of the denizens of these hateful rivers. The most were things impossible to name or to describe.

I was brought back from the vision by the stertorous and strangling breath of Arthur, who had been seized with a convulsion.

From this he never really rallied. The dim sight grew dimmer, the speech slower and thicker, the headaches more persistent and acute.

Torpor succeeded to his old splendid energy and activity; his days became continual lethargy ever deepening towards coma. Convulsions now and then alarmed me for his immediate danger.

Sometimes his breath came hard and hissing like a snake in anger; towards the end it assumed the Cheyne-Stokes type in bursts of ever-increasing duration and severity.

In all this, however, he was still himself; the horror that was and yet was not himself did not peer from behind the veil

"So long as I am consciously myself," he said in one of his rare fits of brightness, "I can communicate to you what I am consciously thinking; as soon as this conscious ego is absorbed, you get the subconscious thought which I fear—oh how I fear!—is the greater and truer part of me. You have brought unguessed explanations from the world of sleep; you are the one woman in the world—perhaps there may never be another—who has such an opportunity to study the phenomena of death."

He charged me earnestly to suppress my grief, to concentrate wholly on the thoughts that passed through his mind when he could no longer express them, and

also on those of his subconsciousness when coma inhibited consciousness.

It is this experiment that I now force myself to narrate. The prologue has been long; it has been necessary to put the facts before mankind in a simple way so that they may seize the opportunity of the proper kind of suicide. I beg my readers most earnestly not to doubt my statements: the notes of our experiments, left in my will to the greatest thinker now living, Professor von Buhle, will make clear the truth of my relation, and the great and terrible necessity of immediate, drastic, action.

PART II

I

THE stunning physical fact of my husband's illness was the immense prostration. So strong a body, as too often the convulsions gave proof; such inertia with it! He would lie all day like a log; then without warning or apparent cause the convulsions would begin. Arthur's steady scientific brain stood it well; it was only two days before his death that delirium began. I was not with him; worn out as I was, and yet utterly unable to sleep, the doctor had insisted on my taking a long motor drive. In the fresh air I slumbered. I awoke to hear an unfamiliar voice saying in my ear, "Now for the fun of the fair!" There was no one there. Quick on its heels followed my husband's voice as I had long since known and loved it, clear, strong, resonant, measured: "Get this down right; it is very important. I am passing into the power of the subconsciousness. I may not be able to speak to you again. But I am here; I am not to be touched by all that I may suffer; I can always think; you can always read my——" The voice broke off sharply to inquire, "But will it ever end?" as if some one had spoken to it. And then I heard the laugh. The laugh that I had heard by Magda-

len Bridge was heavenly music beside that! The face of Calvin (even) as he gloated over the burning of Servetus would have turned pitiful had he heard it, so perfectly did it express quintessence of damnation.

Now then my husband's thought seemed to have changed places with the other. It was below, within, withdrawn. said to myself, "He is dead!" Then came Arthur's thought, "I had better pretend to be mad. It will save her, perhaps; and it will be a change. I shall pretend I have killed her with an axe. Damn it! I hope she is not listening." I was now thoroughly awake, and told the driver to get home quickly. "I hope she is killed in the motor; I hope she is smashed into a million pieces. O God! hear my one prayer! let an Anarchist throw a bomb and smash Magdalen into a million pieces! especially the brain! and the brain first. O God! my first and last prayer: smash Magdalen into a million pieces!"

The horror of this thought was my conviction—then and now—that it represented perfect sanity and coherence of thought. For I dreaded utterly to think what such words might imply.

At the door of the sick-room I was met by the male nurse, who asked me not to enter. Uncontrollably, I asked, "Is he dead?" and though Arthur lay absolutely senseless on the bed I read the answering thought "Dead!" silently pronounced in such tones of mockery, horror, cynicism and despair as I never thought to hear. There was a something or somebody who suffered infinitely, and yet who gloated infinitely upon that very suffering. And that something was a veil between me and Arthur.

The hissing breath recommenced; Arthur seem to be trying to express himself—the self I knew. He managed to articulate feebly, "Is that the police? Let me get out of the house! The police are coming for me. I killed Magdalen with an axe." The symptoms of delirium began to appear. "I killed Magdalen" he muttered a dozen times, than changing to "Magdalen with" again and again; the

voice low, slow, thick, yet reiterated. Then suddenly, quite clear and loud, attempting to rise in the bed: "I smashed Magdalen into a million pieces with an axe." After a moment's pause: "a million is not very many now-a-days." From this—which I now see to have been the speech of a sane Arthur—he dropped again into delirium. "A million pieces," "a cool million," "a million million million million million million" and so on: then abruptly: "Fanny's dog's dead."

I cannot explain the last sentence to my readers; I may, however, remark that it meant everything to me. I burst into tears. At that moment I caught Arthur's thought, "You ought to be busy with the note-book, not crying." I resolutely dried my eyes, took courage, and began to write.

II

The doctor came in at this moment and begged me to go and rest. "You are only distressing yourself, Mrs. Blair," he said; "and needlessly, for he is absolutely unconscious and suffers nothing." A pause. "My God! why do you look at me like that?" he exclaimed, frightened out of his wits. I think my face had caught something of that devil's, something of that sneer, that loathing, that mire of contempt and stark despair.

I sank back into myself, ashamed already that mere knowledge—and such mean vile knowledge—should so puff one up with hideous pride. No wonder Satan fell! I began to understand all the old legends, and far more—

I told Doctor Kershaw that I was carrying out Arthur's last wishes. He raised no further opposition; but I saw him sign to the male nurse to keep an eye on me.

The sick man's finger beckoned us. He could not speak; he traced circles on the counterpane. The doctor (with characteristic intelligence) having counted the circles, nodded; and said: "Yes, it is nearly seven o'clock.

Time for your medicine, eh?"

"No," I explained, "he means that he is in the seventh circle of Dante's Hell."

At that instant he entered on a period of noisy delirium. Wild and prolonged howls burst from his throat; he was being chewed unceasingly by "Dis"; each howl signalled the meeting of the monster's teeth. I explained this to the doctor. "No," said he, "he is perfectly unconscious."

"Well," said I, "he will howl about eighty times more."

Doctor Kershaw looked at me curiously, but began to count.

My calculation was correct.

He turned to me, "Are you a woman?"

"No," said I, "I am my husband's colleague."

"I think it is suggestion. You have hypnotized him?"

"Never: but I can read his thoughts."

"Yes, I remember now; I read a very remarkable paper in *Mind* two years ago."

"That was child's play. But let me go on with my work."

He gave some final instructions to the nurse, and went out.

The suffering of Arthur was at this time unspeakable. Chewed as he was into mere pulp that passed over the tongue of "Dis," each bleeding fragment kept its own identity and his. The papillae of the tongue were serpents, and each one gnashed its poisoned teeth upon that fodder.

And yet, though the sensorium of Arthur was absolutely unimpaired, indeed hyperaesthetic, his consciousness of pain seemed to depend upon the opening of the mouth. As it closed in mastication, oblivion fell upon him like a thunderbolt. A merciful oblivion? Oh! what a master stroke of cruelty! Again and again he woke from nothing to a hell of agony, of pure ecstasy of agony, until he understood that this would continue for all his

life; the alternation was but systole and diastole, the throb of his envenomed pulse, the reflection in consciousness of his blood-beat. I became conscious of his intense longing for death to end the torture.

The blood circulated ever slower and more painfully; I could feel him hoping for the end.

This dreadful rose-dawn suddenly greyed and sickened with doubt. Hope sank to its nadir; fear rose like a dragon, with leaden wings. Suppose, thought he, that after all death does not end me!

I cannot express this conception. It is not that the heart sank, it had nowhither to sink; it knew itself immortal, and immortal in a realm of unimagined pain and terror, unlighted by one glimpse of any other light than that pale glare of hate and of pestilence. This thought took shape in these words:

I AM THAT I AM.

One cannot say that the blasphemy added to the horror; rather it was the essence of the horror. It was the gnashing of the teeth of a damned soul.

III

The demon-shape, which I now clearly recognized as that which had figured in my last "dream" at Cambridge, seemed to gulp. At that instant a convulsion shook the dying man and a coughing eructation took the "demon." Instantly the whole theory dawned on me, that this "demon" was an imaginary personification of the disease. Now at once I understood demonology, from Bodin and Weirus to the moderns, without a flaw. But was it imaginary or was it real? Real enough to swallow up the "sane" thought!

At that instant the old Arthur reappeared. "I am not the monster! I am Arthur Blair, of Fettes and Trinity. I have passed through a paroxysm."

The sick man stirred feebly. A portion of his brain had shaken off the poison for the moment, and was working furiously against time.

"I am going to die.

"The consolation of death is Religion.

"There is no use for Religion in life.

"How many atheists have I not known sign the articles the sake of fellowships and livings! Religion in life is either an amusement and a soporific or a sham and a swindle.

"I was brought up a Presbyterian

"How easily I drifted into the English Church!

"And now where is God?

"Where is the Lamb of God?

"Where is the Saviour?

"Where is the Comforter?

"Why was I not saved from that devil?

"Is he going to eat me again? To absorb me into him? O fate inconceivably hideous! It is quite clear to me—I hope you've got it down, Magdalen!—that the demon is made of all those that have died of Bright's disease. There must be different ones for each disease. I thought I once caught sight of a coughing bog of bloody slime.

"Let me pray."

A frenzied appeal to the Creator followed. Sincere as it was, it would read like irreverence in print.

And then there came the cold-drawn horror of stark blasphemy against this God—who would not answer.

Followed the bleak black agony of the conviction—the absolute certitude—"There is no God!" combined with a wave of frenzied wrath against the people who had so glibly assured him that there was, an almost maniac hope that they would suffer more than he, if it were possible.

(Poor Arthur! He had not yet brushed the bloom off Suffering's grape; he was to drink its fiercest distillation to the dregs.)

"No!" thought he, "perhaps I lack their 'faith.'

"Perhaps if I could really persuade myself of God and Christ——Perhaps if I could deceive myself, could make believe——"

Such a thought is to surrender one's honesty, to abdicate one's reason. It marked the final futile struggle of his will. The demon caught and crunched him, and the noisy delirium began anew.

My flesh and blood rebelled. Taken with a deathly vomit, I rushed from the room, and resolutely, for a whole hour, diverted my sensorium from thought. I had always found that the slightest trace of tobacco smoke in a room greatly disturbed my power. On this occasion I puffed cigarette after cigarette with excellent effect. I knew nothing of what had been going on.

IV

Arthur, stung by the venomous chyle, was tossing in that vast arched belly, which resembled the dome of hell, churned in its bubbling slime. I felt that he was not only disintegrated mechanically, but chemically, that his being was loosened more and more into its parts, that these were being absorbed into new and hateful things, but that (worst of all) Arthur stood immune from all, behind it, unimpaired, memory and reason ever more acute as ever new and ghastlier experience informed them. It seemed to me as if some mystic state were super-added to the torment; for while he was not, emphatically not, this tortured mass of consciousness, yet that was he. There are always at least two of us! The one who feels and the one who knows are not radically one person. This double personality is enormously accentuated at death.

Another point was that the time-sense, which with men is usually so reliable—especially in my own case—was decidedly deranged, if not abrogated altogether.

We all judge of the lapse of time in relation to our daily habits or some similar standard. The conviction of immortality must naturally destroy all values for this sense. If I am immortal, what is the difference between a long time and a short time? A thousand years and a day are obviously the same thing from the point of view of "for ever."

There is a subconscious clock in us, a clock wound up by the experience of the race to go for seventy years or so. Five minutes is a very long time to us if we are waiting for an omnibus, an age if we are waiting for a lover, nothing at all if we are pleasantly engaged or sleeping.[1]

We think of seven years as a long time in connection with penal servitude; as a negligibly small period in dealing with geology.

But, given immortality, the age of the stellar system itself is nothing.

This conviction had not fully impregnated the consciousness of Arthur; it hung over him like a threat, while the intensification of that consciousness, its liberation from the sense of time natural to life, caused each act of the demon to appear of vast duration, although the intervals between the howls of the body on the bed were very short. Each pang of torture or suspense was born, rose to its crest, and died to be reborn again through what seemed countless aeons.

Still more was this the case in the process of his assimilation by the "demon." The coma of the dying man was a phenomenon altogether out of Time. The conditions of "digestion" were new to Arthur, he had no reason to suppose, no data from which to calculate the distance of, an end.

It is impossible to do more than sketch this process; as he was absorbed, so did his consciousness expand into that of the "demon"; he became one with all its hunger and corruption. Yet always did he suffer as himself in his own person the tearing asunder of his finest

molecules; and this was confirmed by a most filthy humiliation of that part of him that was rejected.

I shall not attempt to describe the final process; suffice it that the demoniac consciousness drew away; he was but the excrement of the demon, and as that excrement he was flung filthily further into the abyss of blackness and of night whose name is death.

I rose with ashen cheeks. I stammered: "He is dead." The male nurse bent over the body. "Yes!" he echoed, "he is dead." And it seemed as if the whole Universe gathered itself into one ghastly laugh of hate and horror, "Dead!"

V

I resumed my seat. I felt that I must know that all was well, that death had ended all. Woe to humanity! The consciousness of Arthur was more alive than ever. It was the black fear of falling, a dumb ecstasy of changeless fear. There were no waves upon that sea of shame, no troubling of those accursed waters by any thought. There was no hope of any ground to that abyss, no thought that it might stop. So tireless was that fall that even acceleration was absent; it was constant and level as the fall of a star. There was not even a feeling of pace; infinitely fast as it must be, judging from the peculiar dread which it inspired, it was yet infinitely slow, having regard to the infinitude of the abyss.

I took measures not to be disturbed by the duties that men—oh how foolishly!—pay to the dead: and I took refuge in a cigarette.

It was now for the first time, strangely enough, that I began to consider the possibility of helping him.

I analysed the position. It must be his thought, or I could not read it. I had no reason to conjecture that any other thoughts could reach me. He must be alive in the true sense of the word; it was he and not another that

was the prey of this fear ineffable. Of this fear it was evident that there must be a physical basis in the constitution of his brain and body. All the other phenomena had been shown to correspond exactly with a physical condition; it was the reflection in a consciousness from which human limitation had fallen away of things actually taking place in the body.

It was a false interpretation perhaps; but it was his interpretation; and it was that which caused suffering so beyond all that poets have ever dreamt of the infernal.

I am ashamed to say that my first thought was of the Catholic Church and its masses for the repose of the dead. I went to the Cathedral, revolving as I went all that had ever been said—the superstitions of a hundred savage tribes. At bottom I could find no difference between their barbarous rites and those of Christianity.

However that might be, I was baffled. The priests refused to pray for the soul of a heretic.

I hurried back to the house, resumed my vigil. There was no change, except a deepening of the fear, an intensification of the loneliness, a more utter absorption in the shame. I could but hope that in the ultimate stagnation of all vital forces, death would become final, hell merged into annihilation.

This started a train of thought which ended in a determination to hasten the process. I thought of blowing out the brains, remembered that I had no means of doing so. I thought of freezing the body, imagined a story for the nurse, reflected that no cold could excite in his soul aught icier than that illimitable void of black.

I thought of telling the doctor that he had wished to bequeath his body to the surgeons, that he had been afraid of being buried alive, anything that might induce him to remove the brain. At that moment I looked into the mirror, I saw that I must not speak. My hair was white, my face drawn, my eyes wild and bloodshot.

In utter helplessness and misery I flung myself on the couch in the study, and puffed greedily at cigarettes.

The relief was so immense that my sense of loyalty and duty had a hard fight to get me to resume the task. The mingling of horror, curiosity, and excitement must have aided.

I threw away my fifth cigarette, and returned to the death chamber.

VI

Before I had sat at the table ten minutes a change burst out with startling suddenness. At one point in the void the blackness gathered, concentrated, sprang into an evil flame that gushed aimlessly forth from nowhere to nowhere.

This was accompanied by the most noxious stench.

It was gone before I could realize it. As lightning precedes thunder, it was followed by a hideous clamour that I can only describe as the cry of a machine in pain.

This recurred constantly for an hour and five minutes, then ceased as suddenly as it began. Arthur still fell.

It was succeeded after the lapse of five hours by another paroxysm of the same kind, but fiercer and more continuous. Another silence followed, age upon age of fear and loneliness and shame.

About midnight there appeared a grey ocean of bowels below the falling soul. This ocean seemed to be limitless. It fell headlong into it, and the splash awakened it to a new consciousness of things.

This sea, though infinitely cold, was boiling like tubercles. Itself a more or less homogeneous slime, the stench of which is beyond all human conception (human language is singularly deficient in words that describe smell and taste; we always refer our sensations to things generally known)[2] it constantly budded into greenish boils with angry red craters, whose jagged edges were of a livid white; and from these issued pus formed of all

things known of man—each one distorted, degraded, blasphemed.

Things innocent, things happy, things holy! every one unspeakably defiled, loathsome, sickening! During the vigil of the day following I recognized one group. I saw Italy. First the Italy of the map, a booted leg. But this leg changed rapidly through myriad phases. It was in turn the leg of every beast and bird, and in every case each leg was suffering with all diseases from leprosy and elephantiasis to scrofula and syphilis. There was also the consciousness that this was inalienably and for ever part of Arthur.

Then Italy itself, in every detail foul. Then I myself, seen as every woman that has ever been, each one with every disease and torture that Nature and man have plotted in their hellish brains, each ended with a death, a death like Arthur's, whose infinite pangs were added to his own, recognized and accepted as his own.

The same with our child that never was. All children of all nations, incredibly aborted, deformed, tortured, torn in pieces, abused by every foulness that the imagination of an arch-devil could devise.

And so for every thought. I realized that the putrefactive changes in the dead man's brain were setting in motion every memory of his, and smearing them with hell's own paint.

I timed one thought: despite its myriad million details, each one clear, vivid and prolonged, it occupied but three seconds of earthly time.

I considered the incalculable array of the thoughts in his well-furnished mind; I saw that thousands of years would not exhaust them.

But, perhaps, when the brain was destroyed beyond recognition of its component parts——

We have always casually assumed that consciousness depends upon a proper flow of blood in the vessels of the brain; we have never stopped to think whether the records might not be excited in some other manner.

And yet we know how tumour of the brain begets hallucinations. Consciousness works strangely; the least disturbance of the blood supply, and it goes out like a candle, or else takes monstrous forms.

Here was the overwhelming truth; *in death man lives again, and lives for ever*. Yet we might have thought of it; the phantasmagoria of life which throng the mind of a drowning man might have suggested something of the sort to any man with a sympathetic and active imagination.

Worse even than the thoughts themselves was the apprehension of the thoughts ere they arose. Carbuncles, boils, ulcers, cancers, there is no equivalent for these pustules of the bowels of hell, into whose seething convolutions Arthur sank deeper, ever deeper.

The magnitude of this experience is not to be apprehended by the human mind as we know it. I was convinced that an end must come, for me, with the cremation of the body. I was infinitely glad that he had directed this to be done. But for him, end and beginning seemed to have no meaning. Through it all I seemed to hear the real Arthur's thought. "Though all this is I, yet it is only an accident of me; I stand behind it all, immune, eternal."

It must not be supposed that this in any way detracted from the intensity of the suffering. Rather it added to it. To be loathsome is less than to be linked to loathsomeness. To plunge into impurity is to become deadened to disgust. But to do so and yet to remain pure—every vileness adds a pang. Think of Madonna imprisoned in the body of a prostitute, and compelled to acknowledge "This is I," while never losing her abhorrence. Not only immured in hell, but compelled to partake of its sacraments; not only high priest at its agapae, but begetter and manifestor of its cult; a Christ nauseated at the kiss of Judas, and yet aware that the treachery was his own.

VII

As the putrefaction of the brain advanced, the bursting of the pustules occasionally overlapped, with the result that the confusion and exaggeration of madness with all its poignancy was superadded to the simpler hell. One might have thought that any confusion would have been a welcome relief to a lucidity so appalling; but this was not so. The torture was infused with a shattering sense of alarm.

The images rose up threatening, disappeared only by blasting themselves into the pultaceous coprolite which was, as it were, the main body of the army which composed Arthur. Deeper and deeper as he dropped the phenomena grew constantly in every sense. Now they were a jungle in which the obscurity and terror of the whole gradually overshadowed even the abhorrence due to every part.

The madness of the living is a thing so abominable and fearful as to chill every human heart with horror; it is less than nothing in comparison with the madness of the dead!

A further complication now arose in the destruction irrevocable and complete of that compensating mechanism of the brain, which is the basis of the sense of time. Hideously distorted and deformed as it had been in the derangement of the brain, like a shapeless jelly shooting out, of a sudden, vast, unsuspected tentacles, the destruction of it cut a thousandfold deeper. The sense of consecution itself was destroyed; things sequent appeared as things superposed or concurrent spatially; a new dimension unfolded; a new destruction of all limitation exposed a new and unfathomable abyss.

To all the rest was added the bewilderment and fear which earthly agoraphobia faintly shadows forth; and at the same time the close immurement weighed upon him, since from infinitude there can be no escape.

Add to this the hopelessness of the monotony of the

situation. Infinitely as the phenomena were varied, they were yet recognized as essentially the same. All human tasks are lightened by the certainty that they must end. Even our joys would be intolerable were we convinced that they must endure, through irksomeness and disgust, through weariness and satiety, even for ever and for evermore. In this inhuman, this praeterdiabolic inferno was a wearisome repetition, a harping on the same hateful discord, a continuous nagging whose intervals afforded no relief, only a suspense brimming with the anticipation of some fresh terror.

For hours which were to him eternities this stage continued as each cell that held the record of a memory underwent the degenerative changes which awoke it into hyperbromic purulence.

VIII

The minute bacterial corruption now assumed a gross chemistry. The gases of putrefaction forming in the brain and interpenetrating it were represented in his consciousness by the denizens of the pustules becoming formless and impersonal—Arthur had not yet fathomed the abyss.

Creeping, winding, embracing, the Universe enfolded him, violated him with a nameless and intimate contamination, involved his being in a more suffocating terror.

Now and again it drowned that consciousness in a gulf which his thought could not express to me; and indeed the first and least of his torments is utterly beyond human expression.

It was a woe ever expanded, ever intensified, by each vial of wrath. Memory increased, and understanding grew; the imagination had equally got rid of limit.

What this means who can tell? The human mind cannot really appreciate numbers beyond a score or so;

it can deal with numbers by ratiocination, it cannot apprehend them by direct impression. It requires a highly trained intelligence to distinguish between fifteen and sixteen matches on a plate without counting them. In death this limitation is entirely removed. Of the infinite content of the Universe every item was separately realized. The brain of Arthur had become equal in power to that attributed by theologians to the Creator; yet of executive power there was no seed. The impotence of man before circumstance was in him magnified indefinitely, yet without loss of detail or of mass. He understood that The Many was The One without losing or fusing the conception of either. He was God, but a God irretrievably damned: a being infinite, yet limited by the nature of things, and that nature solely compact of loathliness.

IX

I have little doubt that the cremation of my husband's body cut short a process which in the normally buried man continues until no trace of organic substance remains.

The first kiss of the furnace awoke an activity so violent and so vivid that all the past paled in its lurid light.

The quenchless agony of the pang is not to be described; if alleviation there were, it was but the exultation of feeling that this was final.

Not only time, but all expansions of time, all monsters of time's womb were to be annihilated; even the ego might hope some end.

The ego is the "worm that dieth not," and existence the "fire that is not quenched." Yet in this universal pyre, in this barathrum of liquid lava, jetted from the volcanoes of the infinite, this "lake of fire that is reserved for the devil and his angels," might not one at last touch bottom? Ah! but time was no more, neither any eidolon thereof!

The shell was consumed; the gases of the body, combined and recombined, flamed off, free from organic form.

Where was Arthur?

His brain, his individuality, his life, were utterly destroyed. As separate things, yes: Arthur had entered the universal consciousness.

And I heard this utterance: or rather this is my translation into English of a single thought whose synthesis is "Woe."

Substance is called spirit or matter.

Spirit and matter are one, indivisible, eternal, indestructible.

Infinite and eternal change!

Infinite and eternal pain!

No absolute: no truth, no beauty, no idea, nothing but the whirlwinds of form, unresting, unappeasable.

Eternal hunger! Eternal war! Change and pain infinite and unceasing.

There is no individuality but in illusion. And the illusion is change and pain, and its destruction is change and pain, and its new segregation from the infinite and eternal is change and pain; and substance infinite and eternal is change and pain unspeakable.

Beyond thought, which is change and pain, lies being, which is change and pain.

These were the last words intelligible; they lapsed into the eternal moan, Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! in unceasing monotony that rings always in my ears if I let my thought fall from the height of activity, listen to the voice of my sensorium.

In my sleep I am partially protected, and I keep a lamp constantly alight to burn tobacco in the room: but yet too often my dreams throb with that reiterated Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe!

X

The final stage is clearly enough inevitable, unless we believe the Buddhist theories, which I am somewhat inclined to do, as their theory of the Universe is precisely confirmed in every detail by the facts here set down. But it is one thing to recognize a disease, another to discover a remedy. Frankly, my whole being revolts from their methods, and I had rather acquiesce in the ultimate destiny and achieve it as quickly as may be. My earnest preoccupation is to avoid the preliminary tortures, and I am convinced that the explosion of a dynamite cartridge in the mouth is the most practicable method of effecting this. There is just the possibility that if all thinking minds, all "spiritual beings," were thus destroyed, and especially if all organic life could be annihilated, that the Universe might cease to be, since (as Bishop Berkeley has shown) it can only exist in some thinking mind. And there is really no evidence (in spite of Berkeley) for the existence of any extra-human consciousness. Matter in itself may think, in a sense, but its monotony of woe is less awful than its abomination, the building up of high and holy things only to drag them through infamy and terror to the old abyss.

I shall consequently cause this record to be widely distributed. The note-books of my work with Arthur (Vols, I CCXIV) will be edited by Professor von Buehle, whose marvellous mind may perhaps discover some escape from the destiny which menaces mankind. Everything is in order in these note-books; and I am free to die, for I can endure no more, and above all things I dread the onset of illness, and the possibility of natural or accidental death.

NOTE

I am glad to have the opportunity of publishing, in a journal so widely read by the profession, the MS. of the

widow of the late Professor Blair.

Her mind undoubtedly became unhinged through grief at her husband's death; the medical man who attended him in his last illness grew alarmed at her condition, and had her watched. She tried (fruitlessly) to purchase dynamite at several shops, but on her going to the laboratory of her late husband, and attempting to manufacture Chloride of Nitrogen, obviously for the purpose of suicide, she was seized, certified insane, and placed in my care.

The case is most unusual in several respects.

(1) I have never known her inaccurate in any statement of veritable fact.

(2) She can undoubtedly read thoughts in an astonishing manner. In particular, she is actually useful to me by her ability to foretell attacks of acute insanity in my patients. Some hours before they occur she can predict them to a minute. On an early occasion my disbelief in her power led to the dangerous wounding of one of my attendants.

(3) She combines a fixed determination of suicide (in the extraordinary manner described by her) with an intense fear of death. She smokes uninterruptedly, and I am obliged to allow her to fumigate her room at night with the same drug.

(4) She is certainly only twenty-four years old, and any competent judge would with equal certainty declare her sixty.

(5) Professor von Buehle, to whom the note-books were sent, addressed to me a long and urgent telegram, begging her release on condition that she would promise not to commit suicide, but go to work with him in Bonn. I have yet to learn, however, that German professors, however eminent, have any voice in the management of a private asylum in England, and I am certain that the Lunacy Commissioners will uphold me in my refusal to consider the question.

It will then be clearly understood that this document

is published with all reserve as the lucubration of a very peculiar, perhaps unique, type of insanity.

V. ENGLISH, M.D.

NOTES:

1. It is one of the greatest cruelties of nature that all painful or depressing emotions seem to lengthen time; pleasant thoughts and exalted moods make time fly. Thus, in summing up a life from an outside standpoint, it would seem that, supposing pleasure and pain to have occupied equal periods, the impression would be that pain was enormously greater than pleasure. This may be controverted. Virgil writes: "Fortisan haec olim meminisse juvabit," and there is at least one modern writer thoroughly conversant with pessimism who is very optimistic. But the new facts which I here submit overthrown the whole argument; they cast a sword of infinite weight on that petty trembling scale.

2. This is my general complaint, and that of all research students on the one hand and imaginative writers on the other. We can only express a new idea by combining two or more old ideas, or by the use of metaphor; just so any number can be formed from two others. James Hinton had undoubtedly a perfectly crisp, simple, and concise idea of the "fourth dimension of space"; he found the utmost difficulty in conveying it to others, even when they were advanced matematicians. It is (I believe) the greatest factor that militates against human progress that great men assume they will be understood by others.

Even such a master of lucid English as the late Professor Huxley has been so vitally misunderstood that he

has been attacked repeatedly for affirming a proposition which he specifically denied in the clearest language.