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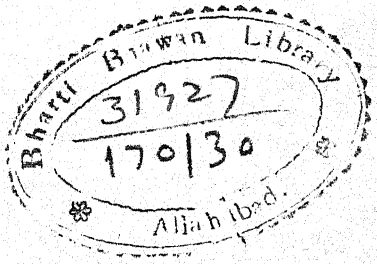


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170 1

THE ART OF LIVING



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THE ART OF LIVING

By

ANDRÉ MAUROIS

Translated from the French by James Whitall

With Engravings by
ROBERT GIBBINGS

Fifth Indian Edition



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PREFACE POUR L'EDITION ANGLAISE

CE livre a d'abord été écrit pour des lecteurs français. Peut-il intéresser des lecteurs anglais? L'art de vivre est-il le même en Angleterre qu'en France? Je le crois. Les sentiments ne s'expriment pas, dans les deux pays, par les mêmes phrases, ni par les mêmes actions, mais ce sont là des apparences superficielles plus que des réalités profondes. Un Anglais très épris cache peut-être son amour mieux que ne ferait un Français, mais cet amour a la même force et il fait naître les mêmes passions. Les qualités nécessaires à un chef, l'art de commander, sont les mêmes dans l'armée britannique et dans l'armée française. La sagesse de Shakespeare n'est pas loin de celle de Montaigne.

La France et l'Angleterre, ont maintenant, pour la seconde fois, uni leurs destinées. Elles savent fort bien, l'une et l'autre, qu'elles ne pourront désormais sauver leurs libertés et maintenir leur existence nationale qu'en restant unies. Elles ont plus besoin que jamais de se connaître. Si ce livre, en montrant à des lecteurs anglais ce qu'est l'idéal d'un grand nombre de Français, les aide à comprendre que les deux peuples, malgré des divergences de goûts et de coutumes, ont en commun tout ce qui est essentiel, peut-être alors aura-t-il apporté sa modeste contribution à l'art de vivre en Europe.

A.M.

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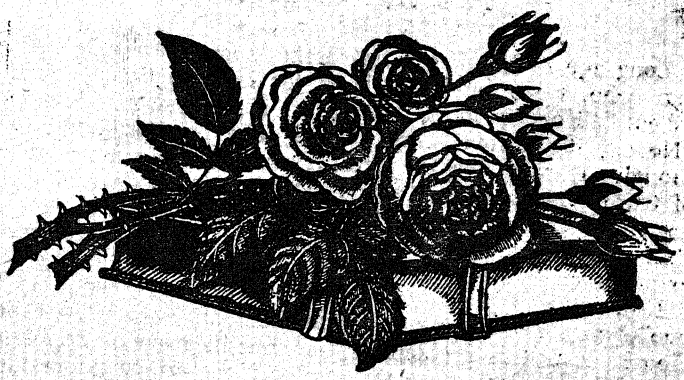
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CHAPTER I

THE ART OF LOVING

IS loving an art or merely an instinct? Before answering this question one must first ask another: What is an art? "Art," Bacon tells us, "is man added to nature," and by means of a few simple examples it is easy to prove that this definition is excellent. Nature provides the painter with the rough materials for a picture: trees, flowers, the sea, living figures, light; the painter simplifies and organises these in a manner to satisfy the demands of men's minds. Nature provides the elements of a drama: cries, passionate desires, unexplained murders; the poet seizes upon this confused material and fashions it into a smoothly flowing tragedy comprehensible and moving to the human spectator. The acceptance of this definition of art proclaims the existence of an art of loving. Nature, in love as in all other things, provides only the rough materials: she divides human beings into two sexes, creates the need to reproduce the species and sexual desire—an instinct which is useful in satisfying this need and in bringing the two sexes together. But if the human mind had not modelled and composed these materials through the ages, our loves would be as uninteresting and as simple as those of dogs or pigs. If we observe the loves of animals and then read a good love-letter, we can estimate how widely separated, in love, are nature and art.

Long ago in London, I heard the story of the old gentleman who, when buying a book for his daughter, timidly asked: "No sex in it, I hope?" The saleswoman replied: "No sir, it's a love story." This joke is a profound one, though naturally, like all jokes, it contains an over-statement of truth. In every love story there is a great deal concerning the sexual instinct. But the miracle of human love is that upon desire—a very simple instinct—it erects the most exquisitely complex emotional edifices.

Now desire is short-lived. How have men been able to evoke pure and lasting emotions from an instinct so capricious? It is this problem of the sanctification of desire (or its sublimation) that we must solve if we are to understand the art of loving. But it is first necessary to answer several preliminary questions.

Why, among the thousands of men and women we encounter, do we choose one rather than another upon whom to focus our thoughts? There are two theses which may be maintained, both containing a certain amount of truth.

The first one is that at certain periods of our life, particularly in adolescence, and also near the age of fifty, we are in the mood for love. A vague desire, as yet impersonal, produces a pleasant sense of anticipation. At such moments a young man will give himself up to the sylph-like figures of his fancy because he is without a real woman; young girls fall in love with the heroes of novels, famous actors, or their English professors. Youth is the most powerful of all love potions. "After quaffing that draught," says Goethe's Devil, "you will see Helen in every woman." With the body anxiously awaiting the arrival of the possible lover or mistress, the first agreeable person encountered may be the one to awaken love.

The circumstances of the meeting also play an important role. It often happens that shy people who would not ordinarily admit their feelings and desires, find themselves brought into forced intimacies. Prisons during the Revolution brought out unsuspected amorous qualities in women who under more peaceful conditions would have been contented with humdrum wifely existences. To feminine eyes a man's prestige, or his fame, envelops him in a luminous haze which obscures

his faults. The triumphs of an aviator, an actor, a football player, an orator are often responsible for the beginning of a love affair. Chance may also create the illusion of a mental or emotional affinity. Suddenly, on hearing a phrase uttered by a third person, two glances meet and reveal similar reactions. A motor goes over a bump, two hands touch, and remain unnecessarily in contact. That suffices. Events and not similarities of temperament, have brought two lovers together.

The other thesis is, contrariwise, that "the lightning flash," or love at first sight, indicates predestination. A Greek myth has it that human beings were originally composed of a man and a woman, that some god divided each being in two, and that these separated halves are continually searching for one another. When the two parts of a predestined couple meet, their kinship is made known to them by means of an impact which is both violent and delicious—"the lightning flash." We all carry within us "the original of our particular beauty whose copy we are searching for throughout the world," and if we find a real person possessing the charms with which we endowed the sylph-like figures of our adolescence we give ourselves up to ecstatic admiration. There are people who both enchant our senses with their beauty and seduce our minds with the grace and charm of their conversation. We love them effortlessly and unreservedly. Every moment spent near them makes us more certain of their perfection. We know that we would not wish to change them even though we possessed the power to do so; the sound of their voice is to us "the sweetest of harmonies" and their speech flows as smoothly as a finished poem. It is a great joy to admire someone without reserve; love which is founded upon admiration of the mind as well as the body of the chosen person undoubtedly affords the keenest delight.

Finally, there is a rather large group of men and women upon whom neither chance nor an irresistible impulse has thrust a life companion and who find themselves obliged to choose deliberately. Will the art of loving help them in their choice by providing a few general rules? It may be said that an even disposition, patience, and especially a sense

of humour are virtues of great value in the pursuit of happiness, and that they frequently, though not always, spring from mental and bodily health. The family of the chosen person must be carefully considered; happiness flourishes where there is happiness, and love withers quickly in an atmosphere of constraint and gloom.

Women apparently achieve happiness more easily with energetic and virile men, men achieve it more easily with women who are affectionate and willing to be led. Very young women declare that they want to marry men whom they can dominate, but I have never discovered a woman who was truly happy with a man she did not admire for his strength and courage, nor a normal man who was perfectly happy with an Amazon.

The fact is that the element of chance in these matters rarely allows a man or a woman to choose a life companion by an act of pure volition, and it is better so; instinct, despite its mistakes, is surer here than intelligence. The question Do I have to fall in love? should not be asked; one must feel the answer to it within oneself. The birth of love, like all other births, is the work of nature. The art of loving should be practised later, and we must now determine the exact moment at which the artist begins to model his rough materials.

Stendhal has admirably described, in his *De l'Amour*, the birth of this emotion. We must retain the essential points of his description and add to them what we have ourselves observed.

All love begins with an impact, produced either by admiration or by some accident which reveals a sympathy or arouses a desire. Lost in thought, Wronsky steps off the train: "Madame Karenina is very beautiful," he says to himself. . . . "What did she mean when she looked at me like that?" Charles Grandet comes into his cousin's life one evening in the romantic role of a sufferer. She loves him from that moment throughout her life.

Once the impact has fixed our attention upon a person, absence is very conducive to love. "Woman's great strength," says the philosopher Alain, "lies in being late or absent." Presence immediately reveals the weak points

of our beloved; when she is absent she becomes one of the sylph-like figures of our adolescence whom we endowed with perfection. Stendhal calls this process *crystallization*, the absent person being compared to a piece of wood which, if left for several days in the Salzburg salt-mines, becomes encrusted with bright crystals and takes on the appearance of a jewel.

After this crystallization, the loved one is a different and superior person, and that is why Proust said that love is subjective and that we do not love real people but only those whom we have created. "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder."

When the first crystallization has been accomplished, a second meeting may take place without danger to love, because our emotion is such that the actual person will never be seen again. He or she may stand before us, but we see only the crystallization. We do not hear the banal remarks, nor do we notice the lack of judgment and courage. The joy we experience cannot be interfered with, because its source is within ourselves.

While things are in this state, love brings nothing but happiness; but a fire cannot burn without fuel and the new-born flames will go out unless some breath of hope keeps them alight. The lover is not hard to please as far as signs of encouragement are concerned. A look, a pressure of hands, an enthusiastic reply are immediately effective.

If these signs are clear and continuous, they can evoke mutual love, and there is no happiness more perfect, but it is also possible to destroy such an emotion with security. With many people, the beginnings of love are fed by doubts or, rather, by alternating coolness and encouragement. Frequently this alternating of signs has no actual relation to the loved one's affections. Shyness or modesty has been responsible for what seemed to spring from contempt. With that passion for detail possessed only by lovers and detectives, we take as an evil omen annoyance caused by a headache, an ill-fitting belt, or stocking with a ladder in it. A mere nothing is enough to worry a lover. He analyses looks, words, and gestures, finds hidden meanings, and tries to discover what faults he may have committed which can explain

the rough treatment he is receiving. The less he understands (for there is nothing to understand), the more he thinks of the woman he loves and the deeper his love sinks into his mind. Love born of anxiety resembles a thorn shaped so that efforts to pull it out of one's flesh merely cause it to penetrate more deeply therein.

From this it seems that coquetry—in other words, deliberate offering, withdrawing, and again offering the bait—is well calculated to awaken and sustain love. As a kitten leaps upon the ball of wool that is held out and then drawn back, so our human prey allows himself to be enticed by a coquettish woman. Pursuing what is withheld and refusing what is offered are natural impulses and easily explained.

But prolonged coquetry destroys love. Madame Récamier, a famous and for a long time invincible coquette, took it into her head to make Benjamin Constant fall in love with her, and she succeeded. "Try," she said to him, and the hope of success immediately made a child of this mature man. "She doesn't love me," he thought, "but she finds me pleasing." As soon as he discovered that she was playing with him and did not intend to bestow her favours he was very unhappy. "I've never known a coquette. What a pest!" A little later: "God, how I hate her!" Then came a decrystallization: "I'll give it up. She's caused me a terrible day; she has the brain of a bird and neither memory, judgment, nor taste." Thus a coquette may go too far. Célimène, in the fifth act of *Le Misanthrope*, is abandoned by all those who had at first been charmed by her wit and her beauty.

If, in the manner of a doctor alternately introducing gas and oxygen into the lungs of a person on the operating-table, the coquette leavens the severity with sufficient hope to keep her patient alive, he can scarcely resist her. Must this cruel game be played? I believe that the best of us are willing to renounce, either through love or kindness of heart, the almost certain advantages to be gained by coquetry. A generous person will say: "I know that in admitting my love I put myself in your power, but it pleases me to do so." If the other is worthy of this confidence, love in the best sense, shared and mutually trusting, can exist; but if

he is unworthy of it, he must occasionally be given homœopathic doses of coquetry.

The early stages of mutual love are rightly considered to be the more delightful: a double crystallization has occurred and it is proof against presence. Each in the eyes of the other has become the ideal being, and when such a state as this lasts, the result is an almost perfect life for two people. But it is rare, even in love like this, for two emotions to be of equal strength and permanently so. Most of us have to conquer and ceaselessly reconquer the person whom we desire. It is therefore necessary to arouse love in that person.

Is it possible deliberately to arouse love in someone? And is it necessary? If one's own love does not call forth an answering emotion, is it not easier to insist upon the enjoyment of pleasure? Such was the procedure in primitive or archaic civilizations; if a man desired a woman, he carried her off. The captive was at the mercy of the warrior and it often happened that she came to love him because he had chosen her and was her master, or simply because he was the sort of person she could love. In later times wealth and power played the role of physical strength. Jupiter, disguising himself as a shower of gold, had no difficulty with Danae.

But the love of slaves does not appeal to the exacting. We want to be chosen, not endured. Conquest brings no lasting happiness unless the person conquered was possessed of free will. Only then can there be doubt and anxiety and those continual victories over habit and boredom which produce the keenest pleasures of all. The comely inmates of the harem are rarely loved, for they are prisoners.

Inversely, the far too accessible ladies of present-day seaside resorts almost never inspire love, because they are emancipated. Where is love's victory when there is neither veil, modesty, nor self-respect to check its progress? Excessive freedom raises up the transparent walls of an invisible seraglio to surround these easily acquired ladies. Romantic love requires of women, not that they should be inaccessible, but that their lives should be lived within the rather narrow limits of religion and convention. These conditions, admir-

ably observed in the Middle Ages, produced the courtly love of that time. The honoured mistress of the Chateau remained within its walls while the knight set out for the Crusades and thought about his lady. In those days a man scarcely ever tried to arouse love in the object of his passion. He resigned himself to loving in silence, or at least without hope. Such frustrated passions are considered by some to be naive and unreal, but to certain sensitive souls this kind of remote admiration is extremely pleasurable, because, being quite subjective, it is better protected against deception and disillusion.

If an adolescent falls in love with an actress whom he has seen only on the stage, he endows her with exquisite qualities which her voice and her face seem to indicate that she possesses but which she undoubtedly does not. He sees her in some play by Marivaux or Musset and imagines her to be as poetically charming as the heroine she impersonates. He is unaware of her age and the wrinkles upon her face, because he has seen her only in the flattering glow of the footlights. He knows nothing of her bad temper or her vanity, because he has never lived with her. Byron says that it is easier to die for the woman one loves than to live with her. The girl who admires a novelist will generously allow him the manly grace of his heroes; she does not suspect his rheumatic joints, his dyspepsia, his laziness, or his irritability. It is easy to be admired when one remains inaccessible.

In order to safeguard love, is it then better not to try to inspire it—better to remain unknown? No, for these intellectual emotions cannot last. "The longer the road to love, the keener is the pleasure to be experienced by the sensitive lover." Yes, but nevertheless the road must, after much delightful winding, lead to the goal and not lose itself in the wilderness. Love would end by falling asleep and dying of inanition. Sooner or later the lover is conscious of an imperative desire to be loved.

What can the art of loving teach him? Recipes for love potions? Magic spells? Ancient poetry and fairy tales are full of enchantresses, and we know that to-day as in the times of Theocritus or Ovid, in countless sordid back rooms in Paris, London, and New York, the age-old anguished question is asked a hundred times a day of some horrible crone:

"What can I do to make him love me?" And human experience—also centuries old—answers, as it does to all questions, by suggesting rites and ceremonies.

The use of ceremonies, manoeuvres, and tricks by which lovers strive to ingratiate themselves is called courtship. Animals, like human beings, do their courting at the appointed seasons. Let us indicate the usual methods of seduction, from the simplest, which are common to all species, to the subtlest, which are used by man.

One of the most familiar methods of attracting attention is the use of adornment. Flowers, by the brilliance of their colour, summon insects to bring them the necessary pollen at the right moment; fireflies and glow-worms illuminate themselves at night in order to make it known to their kind that they are ready for love: similarly women put on beautiful gowns and gleaming jewels that they may be chosen by men. It is the right and duty of a young woman to please. All of them, or nearly all, make efforts to this end. Foolish virgins rely upon the more lasting allurement of mystery. Most of them follow the fashion, the sole object of which is to attract the attention of the opposite sex. Dress-makers, milliners, and jewellers get their living from this continual desire of women to catch the attention of men.

Some women, either from affectation or contempt, disregard the laws of fashion, but in a society where all women, from the worker to the duchess, comply simultaneously with similar forms, such rebellion becomes the greatest possible eccentricity. Thus the simplest becomes the least simple, the least coquettish the most coquettish of all, and no adornment is itself an adornment. In pre-Raphaelite days the young English-women who went to William Morris's house on Sundays wore plain dresses of blue serge and yellow amber beads, but they were very noticeable among the other women who remained faithful to the elaborate jewellery and dress ornamentation of the late Victorian period. The artist attracts attention with his wide-brimmed hat, the young leftist writer with his leather jacket, and the dandy of earlier days with his velvet waistcoats. The male of many animal species has recourse to adornment. The peacock is one of nature's triumphs over art. With humans, when the man prefers to

avoid economic responsibilities, the women must spend more care upon her adornment. It only requires a glance at the advertisements in American magazines to understand how strong and how continuous is woman's preoccupation with her conquest of man.

To do whatever it may be better than other people is another method of pleasing. Every lover strives to show his skill and his ways of so doing are infinitely varied. Certain birds dive into pools in order to bring up water-plants for their mates. When asked what he would search for in the Orient, Chateaubriand replied: "Fame, so that I will be loved," and from this plunge into the East he brought back some immortal phrases for Madame de Noailles. Novels have been written, such as Sainte Beuve's *Le Clou d'Or* for women who must have found therein emotions depicted especially to move them. Almost all composers have transformed their laments and their desires into harmonious phrases. But a tennis player will often ingratiate himself merely by the perfection of his backhand strokes, the motorist by his daring, and the dancer by the adroitness of her toes.

The reputation of a Don Juan gives to a man the most dangerous power. Wise virgins resist it, but foolish virgins frequently yield to the desire to take a celebrated lover from a rival—even from a friend. This emotion is a complex one, made up of vanity, respect for another woman's taste, and the need to establish self-assurance by winning a difficult victory. Don Juan chose his first mistresses; later he was chosen. Byron said that he had been raped oftener than anyone since the Trojan war.

The desire for security, very marked in women, draws the weaker among them to men who, by their strength or ability, seem to offer protection and support. In time of war they count a warrior's scalps; in time of peace they hunt for genius or wealth. To the man in love the giving of gifts is a way of asserting his power. The penguin and the banker offer pebbles of varying brilliance to their respective loved ones. The finch presents twigs and leaves to its mate as the young man presents woollen threads in the form of carpets and curtains to his fiancée. The swallow and the woman begin to think of the nest the moment they have

chosen their males.

Praise is a kind of offering or gift. Almost all love-poems consist of praise and lament. The lament is affecting, but soon becomes tiresome. Praise is pleasing because almost all men and women, even the most arrogant, have some sort of inferiority complex. The loveliest woman has doubts as to her intelligence; the cleverest distrusts her physical charms. It is delightful to reveal the many lovable qualities of a person who is unaware of possessing them or regards them as unimportant. Certain shy and melancholy women blossom like flowers in the sun when they are admired, and there is no limit to a man's appetite for praise. Many plain women without charm have been loved all their lives because they knew how to praise. And it may be noted here that people are pleased when praised, not for their obvious qualities with which they are as familiar as you, but for those which they believe they lack. A general will not thank you for talking to him of his victories, but his gratitude will be unbounted if you mention his flashing eyes. The famous novelist cares little for praise of his books, but if you speak enthusiastically of some obscure essay which few appreciated, or of the vibrant quality of his voice, he will immediately become interested.

Women have their own methods of conquest. It has long been supposed that women await men's advances, but this is based merely upon appearances. Shaw says that a woman will wait for a man, but as the spider for the fly. The object of dancing has always been to overcome man's shyness and at the same time to compel him to control his desires. Modern dancing has a far mor sensual purpose than the ancient or village variety. It remains one of the most effective stratagems.

The art of conquest is often, for women, the art of providing diversion, encouragement, and moral support. Consider Madame de Maintenon's conquest of Louis XIV. Never did an undertaking seem so hopeless. Madame de Maintenon was no longer young; her only connection with the king was that of governess for the children he had had by Madame de Montespan—a very beautiful woman who exercised a powerful influence upon his mind. Madame de Maintenon not

only took Louis XIV from her dazzling rival, but she also succeeded in accomplishing what Madame de Montespan had not even dared to hope for; she persuaded the king to marry her.

What was the secret of her success? First of all she approached the king, then beginning to weary of his mistress's stormy disposition, as a messenger of peace. For a time men will endure scenes of anger and jealousy from the women they deeply love. Some prefer agitated love affairs as they prefer rough seas to calm ones, but most of them are definitely peace-loving. They are easily won by good temper, simplicity, and gentleness, especially if some mad woman has previously cured them of their taste for violence.

Madame de Maintenon also made it a rule to be present when the king did his work; his ministers were summoned to her apartments and she listened in silence to the official reports; but if the king questioned her, she showed by some pertinent comment that she had followed, understood, and considered them. It was exceedingly clever of her, because a man worthy of the name cares more than anything in the world for his work, even more than for the woman he loves. If that woman tries to distract him from his work and put herself too much in the foreground of his life, he will perhaps let her have her way for a time, but he will keenly resent her attitude, and before many days he will belong to another who has learned the secret of occupying herself with his profession.

Birds sing their own songs and do their own diving for water-plants; crabs accomplish their own amorous gymnastics in rocky pools; but men acquire skill and influence by proxy. Instead of composing a poem the lover will read Baudelaire to his mistress. The pianist plays Chopin in order to win his companion's love: the genius of the master uplifts his interpreters and his admirers. Music, filling two minds with its ordered beauty, and its unearthly delight, often inclines them to love. Beethoven, Mozart, and Wagner have brought more than one pair together. Many love affairs have their beginnings in picture-galleries. Fine novels can provide subjects for talk and patterns for behaviour. The best are lessons in love as it should be practised by those who are

worthy of its joys. Mutual culture makes love possible on a high level of ecstasy; it is also of assistance in passing difficult moments when "satiety evokes something of bitterness in the midst of delight." To acquire culture is to prepare oneself for love.

Religious faith, national or political faith, or faith in the necessity and beauty of a life-work, if shared, is a marvellous strengthening of love. It is, indeed, difficult for a passionate believer to experience a permanent emotion for the person who does not in any way share his beliefs, and in such a case infinite tact and respect are required of the unbeliever, or the hope of conversion must be present in the mind of the other—a conversion which frequently follows love—if such love is to persist. One may be assured of happiness by sharing without reserve the faith of the man or woman one loves. In this way our intellectual as well as our emotional force propels us in the chosen direction. All work done with love as a motive is delightful, but nothing in the world can equal the joy of a true mingling of work and love. Of this perfect mingling are sometimes produced those amazing pairs of scholars, artists, apostles, who are not couples but teams. Here courtship is useless; communion has taken its place.

After a courtship which may be long or short, subtle or naive, love comes into being. But love's infant mortality is high, and constant care is required for its proper nourishment. Novelty, the most potent of all attractions, is also the most perishable. At first, each has a thousand discoveries to make in the other; everyone has youthful memories, people to be described, songs to be sung, anecdotes, which, mingled with caresses, fill the early days with delight. But, alas, these reserves come to an end and the stories which seemed so amusing are now boring, threadbare. How many men and women are more amusing when separated from their habitual companions because they can talk without embarrassment of things already discussed too often. In restaurants the duration of silence between couples is too often proportionate to the length of their life together.

But this occurs only with people who have no aptitude for love, who have not the gift of maintaining a perpetual

freshness. He who loves truly delights in daily wanderings among the thoughts of his beloved, just as a village priest delights in his evening strolls in his garden. Some are always faithful, either because they regard love as a serious matter or because they are shy and home-loving. Certain happy households are founded upon a mutua distaste for the conflicts of the outside world, upon a wish to live a secluded life among familiar people and things: in short, upon the desire for security. But he who loves with more intensity than this learns, if necessary, to "renew" himself. One's ways of pleasing are used up day by day, but one must please and one does please. The efforts to do so may even be an unconscious one. If a person has charm he never loses it; and charm never fatigues. The words and acts of a person with charm are constant delights. Old age does not change one in this respect. A beautiful face ages gracefully and it is a joy to find beneath white hair the look and the smile that one loved long ago.

Is there an art of not tiring people? The great secret is to allow them to be natural. An unnatural attitude is difficult to maintain without a loss of attraction. Wise lovers strive to preserve their companions' natural propensities. There are men who hope to mould women, impose tastes and ideas. This is sheer folly. If we find a woman too different from our ideal, let us not love her; but if we have definitely chosen her, we must not hinder her development. In friendship, and also in love, we are happy to see those with whom it is possible to be ourselves without embarrassment or pretence.

Clever lovers are careful to arrange meetings in pleasant places; out of this preoccupation has grown the very judicious custom of the honeymoon. But is it not necessary that these journeys should be long ones. A woman in love knows instinctively how to arrange her own setting. Some know well how to make use of the bewitchments of nature and art. They know when their lovers desire seclusion and when a concert or a stroll will be acceptable. Women are always more deeply aware of the social aspects of life than men, and in their hands should be left the management of men's amours.

If a man is anxious not to weary a woman who brings him so much good-will and such touching affection, he must understand the importance of the part played by love in her life. Nothing is more stupid than the man who, from philosophic or doctrinary heights, is contemptuous of a woman's ideas. They differ from his, being simpler, wiser, and more concrete. If he is at odds with his mistress, he will never be able to persuade her by means of argument, but must employ affection, silence, and patience. He must not forget that she is far more a prey to nerves during a large part of her existence than he. If, in these difficult moments, he ascribes to bad temper what is merely the complaint of an ailing body, he risks, for nothing more than a passing state, the destruction of what has been and may be again a happy union. It is banal but fairly apt to compare the impulses of a woman's soul to the movements of the ocean. The wise husband never becomes exasperated. Like the mariner in a storm, he slackens sail, waits, hopes, and the storm does not prevent him from loving the sea.

There are several rules which should be followed by both sexes in learning the art of not tiring the loved one. The first is to show in the most intimate moments as much politeness as during the first encounter. Well-born people are courteous by nature. All things may be said graciously, and to imagine brutality to be the only satisfactory expression of frankness is a strange confusion. The second is to maintain a sense of humour under all conditions, to be able to make fun of oneself, to realize the puerility of most disagreements, and not to attach a tragic importance to accumulated grievances. It is useless to aggravate a present torment with memories of past quarrels. The third is to evoke jealousy within reasonable limits, that is to avoid indifference and distrust, which are both hurtful. The fourth is to allow fresh crystallizations by means of occasional separations; amorous or conjugal vacations are dangerous, but if they are short and broken by letters they can play a useful role. Two people will sometimes, through familiarity and indolence, lose the note of tenderness in their conversations, and this can be recovered by means of the written phrase. Finally, the last rule, and the least known, is to cling to romance: "Why,

when I have won her, do I continue to woo her? Because, though she belongs to me, she is not and never will be mine." An excellent point for the consideration of some women.

Not wearing one's beloved would be a rather futile art to practise, if one wearied of her. Is there also an art which can prevent the latter? Or must it be admitted that there are two kinds of men and women: the faithful and the unfaithful, the constant and the inconstant, and that if one belongs to one group it is quite useless to pretend that one is of the other category? My view is that in this as in all things nature provides material which must be regulated by the will. Men and women are not born inconstant; they are made so by their early amorous experiences. They may be amorous by temperament and encounter partners who are frigid. When this happens, if they are moral they will be faithful and unhappy, and if they are amoral they will be unfaithful and restless until they meet their complementary "halves" and are suddenly transformed. An adventurous existence may abruptly come to an end with the discovery of the proper companion.

So much for physical instability; but there is also psychic instability. Men are not always physically exacting, and women are often cold; their conquests thus provide them with pleasures of pride and imagination. The pride of men or women who lack self-confidence must be fed. Byron heard the first young woman he fell in love with say: "How can I interest myself in this cripple?" and he spent the rest of his life avenging himself. A woman will brutally disrupt the *ménages* with which she is acquainted because, as a girl, she was thought ugly; her self-respect needs strengthening and she must continually assert her power. A romantic, that is to say, an unreal, childhood will frequently produce an imagination that can never be satisfied. Chateaubriand went from one woman to another, because, in his youth, he was tormented by desire and deprived of women who could appease it; he set up an ideal for which he searched all his life. Mistress after mistress disappointed him until the day when age made him more indulgent and he believed he had discovered the embodiment of his ideal:

Juliette Récamier.

True holiness lies more in humility, sweetness, and charity, than in religious ecstasies and mortifications. Similarly, true love may be recognized, not by the violent assaults of passionate desire, but by the perfect and lasting harmony of daily life. There is a story of a young nun who once asked Saint Teresa to teach her what holiness was. She expected to be told of visions, but the saint simply took her to a convent she had just founded, where, for several months, the nun encountered nothing but inconvenience, difficulty, disappointment, defeat and work. At last the young woman dared to ask when she was to be shown what holiness was. "Holiness?" said Saint Teresa. "It is nothing more than the endurance each day with love and patience of the life we have lived in this convent."

The marvellous feasts of passion which fall to the lot of fortunate lovers resemble summer days when the warmth of the sun fills us with blissful languor, when the sky is so clear that we cannot imagine it tarnished by clouds, and when the humblest village of the plain becomes a mirage of magical beauty in the golden light. Days like that, with their enchanted memories and the hope they bring of others to come, provide us with the necessary strength and courage to endure dark months of storm. And because neither summer nor desire can outlast its natural term we must learn to love grey days, autumn mists, and long winter evenings. "The sincerest love," says Abel Bonnard, "is like a rich festal robe made of flowered silk and lined with another which has no design, but is of such a rare and delicate shade that one almost prefers it to the flowered silk."

What is this soberer and gentler happiness which comes in the early moments of love to take its place by the side of desire, at first shyly but soon with a calm authority? Of what is this love made which is born of desire and outlives it? Of confidence, habit, and admiration. Almost all of our fellow-beings deceive us, but a few of us have known the joy of meeting a woman or a man whose sincerity and frankness were genuine, who in almost every situation has behaved according to our wishes, and who in our most difficult moments has not forsaken us. Those few are familiar with

that marvellous feeling: confidence. With at least one person they are able for a little while each day to lift the heavy visor of their helmets, breathe freely and show their faces and their hearts without fear.

Confidence is such a precious thing that, like physical desire, it lends charm to the most insignificant acts. In their young days a man and a woman sought moments of solitude that they might embrace; now they seek them in order to confide in one another. Their walks together have become as important to them as their former amorous assignations. They both feel themselves to be perfectly understood; they think the same things at the same time; each one suffers physically when the other is in mental distress; each would renounce life itself for the other, and the other knows it. No doubt a perfect friendship can also produce such emotions, but friendships without reserve are infinitely rare, while a great love can endow the simplest person with discernment, abnegation and self-assurance.

How shall the life of a happy couple in the autumn of their love be described? How can it be shown that the god is still a god, though he may have acquired a mortal visage? The symphony of happiness, orchestrated by a composer of genius, could be sublime; a mediocre musician can do better with stormy themes. The pure rising notes of the prelude to *Parsifal*, lifting the listener's soul to unaccustomed heights, the *Beatitudes* of Franck, and the *Requiem* of Fauré evoke better than words the natural and powerful crescendo of an indestructible harmony.

I have cited a Requiem Mass, but the idea of death is the only dissonance in this almost too perfect love music. An admirable poem by Coventry Patmore expresses the despair of a man who, after a long life of happiness, is suddenly confronted by the dead body of the woman who has been the whole world to him. Sorrowfully, plaintively, and tenderly he reproaches her for having abandoned him:

It was not like your great and gracious ways!
Do you, that have naught other to lament,
Never, my Love, repent
Of how, that July afternoon,

You went
With sudden unintelligible phrase,
And frightened eye,
Upon your journey of so many days
Without a single kiss, or a good-bye?

* * * *

'Twas-all unlike your great and gracious ways.

There is danger and nobility in staking everything upon the existence of one fragile human being.

But death itself is powerless to destroy the greatest love. Once in Spain I came across an old peasant woman of extraordinary dignity. "Oh," she said to me, "I have no cause to complain. Of course there's been trouble in my life; when I was twenty I fell in love with a young man; he loved me and we were married. . . .He died in a few weeks, but just the same I had my share of happiness. For fifty years now I've lived thinking about him." What a consolation through years of sadness and loneliness always to be able to evoke at least one flawless memory! By means of perfect love like this, which fills our thoughts and dreams with luminous images, as does a work of art or a religious faith, we share in something beyond our understanding. From the quick impact of our instincts a divine spark has been struck.

The last word concerning the art of loving comes, not from Stendhal, but, as Stendhal himself has often said, from Mozart. Go to a concert; listen to those pure notes and those enchanting harmonies, and if your love then seems confused, harsh, and discordant, you are still unversed in the art of loving. But if, in your emotion, you are aware of this gradual acquisition of beauty, this marvellous understanding, this sublime reconciliation of conflicting and hostile themes beyond all dissonance, then you are embarked upon one of the few adventures in life that are worth having: a great love.



CHAPTER II — *THE ART OF MARRIAGE*

IF the art of loving is that of transforming a fugitive desire into a lasting emotion, we must consider the case of a man experiencing this desire to whom the law says: "Stop! You cannot yield to your natural instincts unless you sign a contract legally binding you to the woman you desire and to the children who may be born of your union with her."

This bond is more or less difficult to break, depending on times and customs. The Mussulman can repudiate his wife by repeating a simple formula. The practising Catholic cannot do this and remarry unless the Church grants him an annulment—a difficult and frequently unsuccessful process.

Between these two extremes there are many compromises. Sometimes the legal bond is strictly enforced and the severity of the union mitigated by secret or tolerated infidelity. Sometimes, as in America, the legal tie is rather easily broken and remarriage indulged in—a procedure considered by some to be more moral.

Whether the tie be rigid or flexible, ceremonies and marriage contracts are almost universally required of men and women. I believe this is as it should be, and shall try to show why. But the opponents of marriage must first be allowed to speak.

The first and most serious objection to marriage has been best expressed by Shelley, who says that love dies when it is put under restraint, and that the undisciplined impulses of passion cannot be governed by law. But why, if love is truly incompatible with the legal bond, has this bond been imposed? "Ah," reply the opponents (who, it must be noted, are all men), "because it is to the advantage of women to capture forever the men who are rash enough to love them." Bernard Shaw, for example, in *Man and Superman*, contends that marriage is unwillingly endured by men but passionately desired by women:

> "When I was on earth, and made those proposals to ladies [says his Don Juan] which, though universally condemned, have made me so interesting a hero of legend, I was not infrequently met in some such way as this. The lady would say that she would countenance my advances, provided they were honourable. On inquiring what that proviso meant, I found that it meant that I proposed to get possession of her property if she had any, or to undertake her support for life if she had not; that I desired her continual companionship, counsel and conversation to the end of my days, and would bind myself under penalties to be always enraptured by them; and, above all, that I would turn my back on all other women for ever for her sake. I did not object to these conditions because they were exorbitant and inhuman; it was their extraordinary irrelevance that prostrated me. I invariably replied with perfect frankness that I had

never dreamt of any of these things; that unless the lady's character and intellect were equal or superior to my own, her conversation must degrade and her counsel mislead me; that her constant companionship might, for all I knew, become intolerably tedious to me; that I could not answer for my feelings for a week in advance, much less to the end of my life; that to cut me off from all natural and unconstrained relations with the rest of my fellow creatures would narrow and warp me if I submitted to it, and if not, would bring me under the curse of clandestinity; that, finally, my proposals to her were wholly unconnected with any of these matters, and were the outcome of a perfectly simple impulse of my manhood towards her womanhood."

Clearly, the central argument of the opponents to marriage is that it is an institution whose purpose is to stabilize something that cannot be stabilized, to make something last that will not last. All are agreed that physical love is as natural an instinct as hunger or thirst, but the permanence of love is not instinctive. If, as is the case with so many men, physical love must have change, then why the promise of a life's devotion?

Marriage, say its opponents, diminishes man's courage and mental energy. "A married man," writes Romain Rolland, "is no more than half a man." Kipling tells how Captain Gadsby of the Pink Hussars made himself a good husband and thereby become a mediocre officer. Wishing to save himself for his wife and baby, he no longer rode with the same courage and fire. The great statesman Briand held that a politician should never marry. "Look at the facts," he said; "how have I been able, throughout a long and difficult career, to maintain my serenity? Because, in the evenings after the day's struggle, I was able to forget.... I had no ambitious and jealous wife always ready to remind me of my colleagues' success or to tell me the unpleasant things that were being said of me....It is the strength of those who live alone." Marriage makes a man more vulnerable by doubling the expanse of sail exposed to the tempests of social life.

Has not the Catholic Church, while preferring marriage to concubinage, asserted the superior dignity of celibacy by requiring it of her priests? Have not moralists declared a hundred times that nothing is more absurd than a married philosopher? Though he may have rid himself of his weaknesses, he cannot rid his companion of hers; and this is equally true if the woman of the couple has the final spiritual worth. "The life of a couple," say the opponents of marriage, "is lived on the mental level of the more mediocre of the two beings who compose it."

A man and a woman who, in their young days, agree to have done with sentimental life thereby renounce the search for adventure, the intoxication of new encounters, and the amazing refreshment produced by falling in love again. Their most vital source of energy is cut off; they are doomed to premature insensibility. Their life, scarcely begun, is finished. Nothing can break the monotony of an existence made up of burdens and duties. No further hope, no surprises, no conquests. Their one love will soon be tainted by the cares of house-keeping and the children's education. They will reach old age without ever having known the joys of youth. Marriage destroys romantic love which alone could justify it.

Such is the attack, and it is far from weak: but actually, the institution of marriage has survived political, religious, and economic turmoil for several thousand years. Far from disappearing, it has gained ground. Let us try to understand the profound social reasons for its lasting.

Human beings are naturally egoists. This is not a crime; they must be so in order to survive. They possess the instinct of self-preservation which drives them, as Spinoza said, "to persevere in their being," and consequently to obtain security, food, and shelter though it be at the expense of their fellows. If this were their only instinct, it would be impossible to establish and certainly impossible to maintain human society; a man would be to his fellows a savage and dangerous animal. In primitive civilizations the instinct of self-preservation yields to another equally powerful instinct; that of the tribe. Primitive men, like wolves or baboons, live in tribes because they cannot defend themselves alone.

The tribe requires and obtains the instinctive devotion of the individual to the common safety; the wolf and the man will sacrifice their lives for it, and there is something of the instinct of self-preservation here, for if the tribe is conquered, each of its members is himself destroyed.

But when life loses some of its perils, when civilization makes the getting of food less precarious and savage animals stay in their jungles, when frontiers are more or less respected, this herd instinct gives place to egoism. Egoism must nevertheless be kept down, or human society would become impossible. There would be no sharing of property, force would be pitilessly used, and the weak would become slaves. How can this egoism be controlled ? By bringing the instinct of self-preservation into conflict with other equally strong instincts; there are only two of these: the sexual and the maternal.

Even with wild animals brute force turns to fondling at the time of love-making and maternity, but this truce to egoism is very brief; it lasts no longer than is absolutely necessary. As soon as the sexual instinct is satisfied and the young have grown, the little domestic group is immediately broken up. Its members revert to brutality, and fighting is resumed.

The miracle of drawing savagely egoistic human beings together into powerful and lasting social communities has, on the contrary, been performed. How? The process, when successful, is one of forming a community of little social cells, or families, in which unselfishness is more easily achieved because it comes naturally with sexual desire and maternity.

How is one to build a lasting social cell upon sexual desire when the latter so frequently changes its object? How is one to turn an instinct into an institution? The wandering human tribes existing before stabilized marriage had the amazing intuition to force men to make vows binding them at the moment when physical desire rendered it easier to do so. And we know quite well that this early form of marriage was not like ours, that there were matriarchal, polygamous, and polyandrous communities. Time kept evolving these primitive forms towards some sort of contract which would

assure the duration of the bond, the defence of the woman against other men, the lives of the children and the old men, and finally, the formation of that social tissue of which the couple is the principal cell.

Here Shaw's Don Juan would further protest that he cared nothing for the social tissue, that life for him was the incessant renewing of desire and pleasure without chains. But is it true that freedom to change is either indispensable or even favourable to happiness? Do we find that those who live this kind of life are happier or freer than other men? By no means. The problems which make marriage difficult (quarrels, jealousy, monotony, difference in tastes) are similar in all liaisons. Free love is not free. Consider Liszt and Madame d'Agoult; re-read, in *Anna Karenina*, the passage telling of the flight of Anna and Wronsky. Wronsky feels himself more securely bound than a man setting forth upon his wedding journey, because his mistress is afraid of losing him. Words, acts, and gestures which, to a married couple, would be of no great significance are very upsetting to two people who are not legally bound together, because the dreaded question "Is it over?" is thus raised in their minds. Only absolute cruelty could save Wronsky, or Byron. But poor Byron was not really cruel. He was obliged much against his will, to go and fight the Turks in order to avoid wounding his mistress's feelings. Painful though the difficulties of his marriage may have been, Byron wanted to make his peace with society in renewing the bond. It can certainly happen, especially in countries where divorce does not exist, that a man and woman are compelled by circumstances to get on without the legal formula, but in rare cases do such a couple avoid consequent suffering.

Thus Don Juan frequently discovers (and his mistress too) that marriage still offers man and woman the best chance of achieving a satisfactory relationship. The social tie does not interfere with love; it strengthens it. At the beginning of every love affair, physical desire makes the man and woman more able to appreciate and to understand one another; if they are not married their first disagreements may bring disaster. If separation is made too easy, the slightest discussion can cause it. The serious illness of one of the lovers

may fatigue the other and thus break up the affair. On the other hand, with a married couple, illness may be the occasion for faithful and loving care which strengthens the tie. Old age, which few illegitimate affairs can survive, frequently brings to marriage an almost invulnerable solidity. Marriage is the only bond which time can strengthen.

It is also the form of relationship best calculated to foster sympathy and understanding between the two sexes. Owing to his extensive knowledge of one woman and to the familiarity he has gained from her with women in general, the happily married man has a fuller and more reasonable outlook on life than Don Juan, to whom women are, as it were, opponents. The bachelor is an anti-social being; his freedom is anarchical. Old unmarried men and women are dangerously preoccupied with themselves and may lose their mental balance. Celibates who are great artists (Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust) may be perfectly sane, but celibacy is unquestionably detrimental to the average man. Disregard the artist, who is exceptional, and, during a large part of his life, not governed by the laws of the actual world because of his escapes into imaginary ones, and consider what are the possible solutions for average unmarried people.

Small groups of men and women have attempted to achieve happiness by means of promiscuous indulgence. Aldous Huxley and Ernest Hemingway have written of such groups, and the striking thing about them is the appalling melancholy and boredom of the lives they lead. Can one imagine two women more unhappy than Lady Brett in *The Sun Also Rises* and Lucy Tantamount in *Point Counter Point*? The libertine refuses to make his physical desire the pretext for deep and lasting emotions. The mechanical repetition of sexual indulgence may help him momentarily to forget his despair, as does opium or whisky, but he cuts himself off from all vivid sensations, except perhaps the horror of life and approaching death which so often goes with loose living. The libertines of the eighteenth century were so bored by their feast of sensuality that they made the sentimental *Héloise* their favourite reading.

Successive love affairs increase the difficulties of the problem; it is not easy to live with a husband and it is no

easier to live with a lover. Such affairs leave the man or the woman to face old age alone, and they are scarcely conducive to the happiness of the children. Civilizations founded upon polygamy have always given way to those founded upon monogamy. Polygamy weakens men and diminishes the charm of the community in which it is practised; and in any case it is foreign to the tastes and requirements of our modern women.

Study the evolution of social customs in Russia over the past few years. At the beginning of the revolution many men and women wished to suppress marriage or make it so unstable that it would persist only in name. Today it seems that, particularly owing to the efforts of women, the durable form of marriage has been revived. In a book on Russian youth I read of a group of young people who tried to get along without marriage. One of the young women writes to her lover: "I want a little happiness of my own, not elaborate, but legitimate. I dream of some quiet corner where I can be alone with you. Can't the community understand that this is a human necessity?"

The truth seems to be that monogamous marriage, mitigated in certain countries by divorce and in certain others by tolerance of infidelity, persists in our Western civilization as the solution which entails the least suffering for the greatest number of people.

It frequently happens that love's free choice and love itself are at the root of marriage. But it is not always thus. Many ancient and almost all oriental civilizations impose marriages which are against the desires of one or both of those concerned. In nineteenth century France most marriages were "arranged," sometimes by priests, sometimes by professional matchmakers, sometimes by notaries, but most often by the two families involved. Many of these marriages were happy and sometimes happier than most love matches, which is easy to understand. Passionate love produces distorted visions of actual people. Men who are too much in love expect such extraordinary happiness from marriage that they are frequently disappointed. There are more love marriages in the United States than in any other country, but Americans are also given to quick and frequent

divorces.

Roussy de Sales, a Frenchman who lives in America and knows it well, has shown that many American youths expect to find perfect love when they marry. They have spent much of their time at the cinema and have learned there that love consists of taking exquisite young women, exquisitely dressed, on trips through perpetually beautiful country; they have also noticed that every lover's quarrel ends in a long kiss. No one has told them that trips are costly and tiring, beautiful country rather hard to find, travelling companions moody and nervous. No one has disclosed the fact that the ladies of Hollywood are beautiful only because they are attended by an army of hair-dressers, make-up men, and masseurs; no one has warned them that in the course of their married life they will have to look many times at a woman in her dressing-gown, with untidy hair and a bad temper. No one has told the young wife that men are egotists, often worn out by their work, exacting, impatient, and irritable.

What is the result? Very soon both are disappointed. Instead of saying to themselves that nothing in this world is perfect, not even love, they think they have made a bad choice, that perfection will surely be found in another; then they get a divorce in order to continue their search. Of course the new relationship brings them no nearer to this undiscoverable perfection. They continue to get divorces until old age and the experience now acquired lead them to accept the conjugal compromise which they should have accepted in the case of their first love.

In many American universities today a few of the psychological principles of conjugal life are taught; it seems no less important that there should be instruction in the psychology of conjugal compromise, for a successful marriage is founded upon compromise.

It is unusual to find a husband and wife with the same habits of sleeping, the same ideas about reading in bed, the number of blankets, the temperature of the room, and what sort of meals to have. These matters can be adjusted only if both have great politeness, a sense of humour, and the ability to make difficult sacrifices. To make allowances for

the other's family and friends who at first inspire distrust and sometimes hostility requires a great effort of the will and much good temper; only thus can two distinct groups be brought together. Sensual compromise is the most difficult of all. There are occasionally cases where a successful physical relationship between two passionate temperaments is immediate and exquisite. Much more frequently, however, the woman gives pleasure without experiencing it herself, and she suffers all the more because she has read novels and poems full of enchanting misrepresentation. Patient adaptability, mutual tolerance, much intelligent understanding, and sometimes complete resignation will be necessary before physical equilibrium can be achieved; and this applies as much to love-marriages as to those of suitability.

Balzac's description, in *Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées*, of the two types of marriage remains exact today for those who can make the necessary changes in vocabulary and manners. One of his two heroines, Renée de l'Estorade, represents good judgment: "Marriage," she writes to her friend, "offers life, while love offers merely physical enjoyment. Marriage can subsist when physical pleasure is over and gives place to interests far more valuable. Therefore, perhaps, a happy marriage can be founded on this friendship, which, due to its special quality, glosses over much human weakness." On the other hand, her friend, Louise de Chaulieu, makes a love-marriage, spoils it with her excessive jealousy, is responsible for the death of her husband and then for her own ruin. Balzac's thesis is that if health, intelligence, identity of origin, tastes, and social status are combined, love can be achieved by a young and healthy couple.

Actually, since the war of 1914, marriage by arrangement, such as Balzac and the two generations following his were familiar with, is tending to disappear in France, as it has already done in other countries; and the free choice of two people meeting by chance is taking its place. Why this evolution? Because the building up and preserving of fortunes has become the most naive and fanciful of ideas. There have been so many rapid changes, so many unexpected financial failures, that middle-class prudence is completely baffled.

When the means of foreseeing have gone, it is useless to be prudent. Add to this the fact that young people lead freer lives than formerly and that opportunities for meeting arise more easily. Social rank and the marriage portion have given place to good looks, agreeable temperament, similar taste in sport, and physical or intellectual attraction.

Nevertheless, a mutual attraction which is both physical and intellectual is not enough to make a happy marriage; whether the marriage be one of love or of suitability, the essential requirement is that there should be a sincere desire on the part of the contracting parties at the time of the betrothal to form a permanent relationship. If the money-marriage of the French middle-class in the nineteenth century was rarely a real marriage, it was because the man who had married a dowry said to himself on the day of the engagement: "If she bores me, I'll be unfaithful to her with other women." The marriage based upon physical desire can be just as unsuccessful if the couple regards it merely as an experiment and if the woman says to herself when she is betrothed: "If he turns out to be unpleasant, I'll get a divorce."

An unspoken vow must be made by each if capricious and varying attractions are to be controlled, dammed up. It is a formidable decision to make when one says: "I bind myself for life; I have chosen; from now on my aim will be, not to search for someone who may please me, but to please the one I have chosen." Yet this decision can alone produce a successful marriage, and if the vow is not sincere the couple's chances for happiness are very slim, for it will run the risk of disruption when the first obstacles and the inevitable difficulties of life in common are encountered.

The difficulties of life in common are far beyond the power of the two people concerned to overcome. The principal cause of these difficulties is the natural divergence between the ways of living and thinking of the two sexes. To-day we are too apt to regard this divergence as unimportant. The education of women is very similar to that of men; they perform men's jobs very efficiently; in many countries they have the vote, which is fair. But this equality should not cause men to forget that women are still women. Auguste

Comte defines the feminine sex as the affective or emotional sex, and the male sex as the effective or active sex. This must be understood as meaning that with women there is a much closer connection between mind and body. Woman's thoughts are less abstract than man's.

Men like to devise schemes, to imagine the world other than it is, to recreate it in their thoughts and, if the chance arises, in their actions. Women have much less time for action, being absorbed, consciously or unconsciously, by their preoccupation with love and maternity. The female of certain species is alone important, the male playing a part only at the moment of impregnation. The bees kill their drones when this moment of usefulness has passed. Man's humour varies with the failure or success of his attempts to conquer the exterior world. A woman's humour varies with her psychological impulses and she seems, to a young man who is blundering and ignorant, not only capricious but incoherent and obstinate. Balzac says that many young husbands are so ignorant of women that they make him think of orang-outangs trying to play the violin.

A woman does not altogether understand a man's need for action. His proper functions are active: building, engineering, hunting, fighting. In the first weeks of marriage he thinks, because he is in love, that love will replace everything. He refuses to admit that he is bored and complains of having married an invalid who is obliged to rest continually and who doesn't know what she wants. The woman is ill at ease with her new companion who nervously paces the hotel bedroom—the classic behaviour of a couple on their honeymoon. In the majority of cases this sort of situation is unimportant and can be handled easily with a little affection and a sense of humour. The will to preserve the marriage must be constantly active and the vow ceaselessly renewed.

Even during the longest and happiest marriage these profound differences in temperament will persist. They will be submitted to, and even appreciated, but they will never disappear. The man must have some exterior difficulty to surmount; the woman must love and be loved. The man is happy when he can invent some device with which to trans-

form the universe; the woman is happy when she can devote herself, in the tranquillity of her own house, to some simple task. Everything the man constructs bears the mark of exterior necessity; the slope of his roof is determined by the rain and the snow and the lines of his motor and his boat are drawn for him by the wind and the water. On the contrary, everything a woman works at has some connection with the human body. The sofa cushions receive and preserve its form; the dressing-table mirrors reflect it. These are simple and clear indications of two types of mind.

Man invents doctrines and theories. He is a mathematician, a philosopher. Woman, completely absorbed in reality, cares little for abstract theories, unless they are those of a man who attracts her, or unless she is in despair because this man neglects her. Being philosophical is frequently, in a woman, the discreet mourning for a lost affection. The conversation of the most womanly woman is all anecdotes, analysis of personalities, subtle gossip about people's doings, or practical facts and recipes. The most masculine men fly from anecdotes and concern themselves with ideas.

There is nothing so important for the integration of a truly masculine man as the companionship of a truly feminine woman, either wife, mistress, or friend. Through her he can keep in permanent touch with the profound conception of the human species, of which men who do not care for women are ignorant. Man's thoughts travel by aeroplane; they fly above space and time. They discover wide but unsubstantial landscapes; they mistake "the straw of words for the grain of things." Woman's thoughts usually go on foot.

Should women abstain from politics because they do not like abstract ideas? On the contrary, I believe that they can render men the service of ridding politics of abstract ideas. Why confuse practical politics, which are so close to the art of housekeeping, with the very useless, very foggy, and often dangerous doctrinary sort? For women, politics represent good sense and hygiene. Men are faithful to ideas; women are faithful to human beings. If food prices rise or a war threatens because of party politics, a man will defend the party, but a woman will defend peace and her home,

though she be obliged to change parties.

But how, one will ask, can you still speak of a masculine and a feminine mind when women take the same courses of study as men without effort and beat them so easily in examinations? We are not living in the days when one could write: "A learned woman is regarded as a beautiful weapon—a museum-piece and of no practical use." When a woman intern at a hospital talks with her doctor husband in what do their minds differ? Simply in that one is masculine and the other feminine. A young girl can, if necessary, share the intellectual life of a young man. Virgins enjoy study and conflict. The Valkyrie is invincible before she falls in love, but what of the Valkyrie after Siegfried? Disarmed and a different woman. A girl studying medicine (a conquered Valkyrie) once said to me: "If one of the men here is unhappy because a love affair has gone wrong he visits his patients and cares for them as usual, but if I am too miserable I can only lie on my bed and weep." Women cannot be happy unless they live in an emotional world, but it is nevertheless an excellent thing for them to learn masculine discipline from the sciences. The great human problem is to reconcile mystical theology with science; it is also that of conjugal life.

Women can direct great business enterprises, and some do with astonishing skill, but the role does not suit them. One of the most successful of these made the following admission: "Do you know that I've always wanted to find a man who could take over my job? Then I would be his assistant, and what a marvellous assistant I could be if I loved him!" It must be recognized that women are excellent assistants rather than original creators. Woman's real creation is her child.

And what of women who have no children? There is something of maternity in all great love. A true woman loves a strong man because she knows his weaknesses. She protects as much as she is protected. We all know women who overwhelm the men they have chosen with jealous and frightening affection. Even those who are forced by circumstances to play men's roles play them as women. Queen Victoria was not a great king, but a great queen acting the

king. Disraeli and Rosebery were her Ministers, but they were also to some extent her admirers and her children. To her, the affairs of the nation were like those of her household, and international conflicts like family quarrels. She told Rosebery that, being the daughter of an officer, she had a sentimental feeling for the army, and once, on receiving a letter from the Emperor of Germany, she asked him whether a grandson should use such language in writing to his grandmother.

I do not in any way contend that one sex is superior to the other. I believe that communities which lack the feminine influence are apt to fall into abstraction and the madness of systems which, being false, require violence to put into practice. We have, alas, seen too many examples of this. A masculine civilization like that of ancient Greece perishes through politics, metaphysics, and vanity. Women alone can give these doctrinary drones a sense of the real and simple values of the hive. No true civilization is possible without the collaboration of the two sexes, but there can be no real collaboration unless the differences between the sexes are accepted and a mutual respect established.

One of the errors most frequently made by the psychiatrists and novelists of to-day is to give too great importance to sexual life. In France, as in England and even in the United States, the literature of the past thirty years has been with a few exceptions one of large cities, of easily won prosperity, and it has been addressed to women rather than to men. In this literature the male is depicted as forgetting his true role, which is to struggle with other men, towards the creation of a world, "not a world for you, my beloved," but a world that may be beautiful in itself, an amazing world that will permit him to feel that his mission is to sacrifice everything, even his love, even his life. The cinema also has given too much importance to love and too little to action.

There are many ways of settling the inevitable conflict between the feminine nature, completely orientated by love, and the masculine, which is occupied by the exterior world. The first is the egoistic domination of man, the creator. "It is not woman," writes D. H. Lawrence, "who claims the

highest in man. It is a man's own religious soul that drives him on beyond woman, to his supreme activity. For his highest, man is responsible to God alone. . . .Hence Jesus, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' Every man that lives has to say it again to his wife or mother, once he has any work or mission in hand that comes from his soul."

That explains, and perhaps excuses, the revolt of a man of action or an artist against the tyranny of the home. Tolstoy's flight was pitiable because he waited for old age and the approach of death before performing this act of useless courage; but his mental escape took place long before that. There was no remedy for the discrepancy between his doctrines and the mode of life imposed by his domestic routine. Gauguin abandoned wife, children, and fortune for a solitary existence in Tahiti, and finally discovered his true self. But in both these cases escape was a sign of weakness. The true creator would have insisted upon the respect of those who surrounded him. No woman ruled in Goethe's house; whenever one of them seemed to be interfering with the accomplishment of his true mission, which was to be himself, he changed her into a statue; by which I mean that he put her into a novel or a poem and withdrew from her.

When it becomes necessary to choose between love and work (or love and duty), the woman suffers and offers what resistance she can. We have all known sailors and soldiers who have sacrificed their careers for reasons of sentiment. Arnold Bennett once wrote a curious play in which, after many difficulties, a famous aviator married the woman he loved. She was an extraordinary individual, possessing beauty, intelligence, charm, and imagination; she made up her mind from the first to cast an irresistible spell. They went to a hotel in the mountains and were divinely happy. Then the husband learned that his most precious record had been or was about to be broken by one of his rivals, and he was at once possessed by the desire to compete with one of his fellow-men. His wife spoke to him of her love, and he listened, but was thinking all the while about tuning up his motor. When she was finally convinced that he really wanted to go, she asked him sadly whether he did not understand that those few days had been just as important to her career,

her woman's job, as his flying was to his man's career. But he did not understand and no doubt he was right not to.

Man ceases to be a man if passion encroaches upon his life's purpose. There was Samson, and Hercules at the feet of Omphale. All the ancient poets have sung of the love-lorn hero's slavery. Paris was a poor soldier; Carmen corrupted her lover, Manon led hers from crime to crime. A wife is equally to be feared when she wishes to control her husband's life in all respects. When a man loses his sense of the importance of creative activity, he feels lost and actually is lost. When his wife, or his wife and child, become the centre of his existence there is despair in store for him. It is always a bad sign when a man of action is never happy out of woman's society. It quite often proves that he dreads actual conflict. Truly virile men love the clash of minds as the heroes of antiquity loved the clash of swords.

Nevertheless, the woman has her role and her hour in the life of a happy couple. "But again," says Lawrence, "no man is a blooming marvel for twenty-four hours a day. Jesus or Napoleon or any other of them ought to have been man enough to be able to come home at tea-time and put his slippers on and sit under the spell of his wife. For there you are, the woman has her world, her positivity: the world of love, of emotion, of sympathy. And it behoves every man in his hour to take off his shoes and relax and give himself up to this woman and her world." It is well for the man to be out of the house in the daytime with other men, and to return in the evening to a totally different atmosphere. The true woman is not jealous of her husband's business activities, his political or his intellectual life; she suffers now and then, but conceals the fact and offers encouragement. Andromache hid her tears at the moment of Hector's departure; she understood what was required of a woman.

It is particularly important to remember that no matter how deeply a marriage may have been desired, it will always be rather difficult for a man and a woman to find their equilibrium. No matter how deeply in love and how intelligent they may be, they will find themselves, at least during the first days, each in the presence of a stranger who is going to be infinitely surprising.

However, the first weeks of a marriage have for a long time been called the honeymoon; and actually, if a close union is formed, every difficulty will be forgotten in the intoxication of the first nights; the man will give up his friends and the woman her personal tastes. In *Jean-Christopher* there is a very true description of a woman who, in the early days of her marriage, "took an effortless pleasure in reading an abstruse book which she would scarcely have been able to follow at any other time. It seemed to her that love had lifted her above the earth. Like a sleep-walker, she set her feet on the roofs of the house; she went gravely and saw nothing, smiling in her dream. Then she began to see the roofs, and that did not disturb her, but she wondered what she was doing up there and went back to her own house."

Many women go back thus to their own houses after a few months or a few years of marriage. They have tried not to be themselves and the effort has wearied them.

"I wanted to go along with him", they say, "but I was wrong, I was not made for it."

The man, for his part, feels saturated, worn out with affection, and he dreams of his former activities. It is then that the honeymoon yields to what Byron called "the treacle-moon": a period of cynicism and discouragement after an excess of enthusiasm; and during it are laid foundations of misfit marriages. Sometimes they are only partly so, but there is no more mutual understanding; the two endure one another with distant affection. An American once explained this state to me: "I like my husband very much," she said, "but we live on two separate islands, and since neither of us can swim we shall never meet again."

"It is amazing," writes Gide, "to what extent a married couple, living, after all, the same life, can remain strangers to one another."

Occasionally it is more serious; lack of understanding engenders aversion. Have you ever seen a silently hostile couple looking at one another with critical eye? They are unhappily married. Can you imagine the secret grudges, impossible to mention because a common language is lacking, the bed where two strangers lie, two stone effigies separated by a sword, mute, eyes wide open, the man listening to the

woman's sobbing, tears falling one by one in the darkness?

The solution can only be a compromise. Whether it be the marriage of two people or the government of a nation, it must be realized that perfection can never be achieved and that, if it could be by some miracle of love, it would not last. We can only try patiently and continually to approximate perfection. It is quite useless to marry as one buys a lottery ticket, saying to oneself "Who knows? Perhaps I'll be happy." Much better to do it as an artist undertakes the creation of a work of art. "This is a novel," the husband and wife should both say, "which I am going to live, not write. I know that I must take into account the peculiarities of the two characters who are already drawn, but I want to succeed, and I will succeed."

If this desire does not exist at the beginning of a marriage, it is merely a legalized love affair, and not a true marriage. The Catholic Church teaches that the marriage sacrament is based on an undertaking by both parties, and not merely on the priest's blessing, and this is an excellent way to put it. If a man or a woman says to you: "I'm getting married; naturally I'll try to make it go, but it it's a failure, there are the usual consolations, or divorce," you must unhesitatingly advise against it, for such a proceeding is not a marriage. Of course, with the best will in the world, enthusiasm, and care, no one can be sure of success in anything, especially if more than one person is involved; but if faith is lacking at the start, failure is certain.

Marriage is not something that can be accomplished all at once; it has to be constantly reaccomplished. A couple must never indulge in idle tranquillity with the remark: "The game is won; let's relax." The game is never won. The chances of life are such that anything is possible. Remember how many households, which seemed proof against all accidents, were broken up during the war of 1914. Remember what the dangers are for both sexes in middle age. A successful marriage is an edifice that must be rebuilt every day.

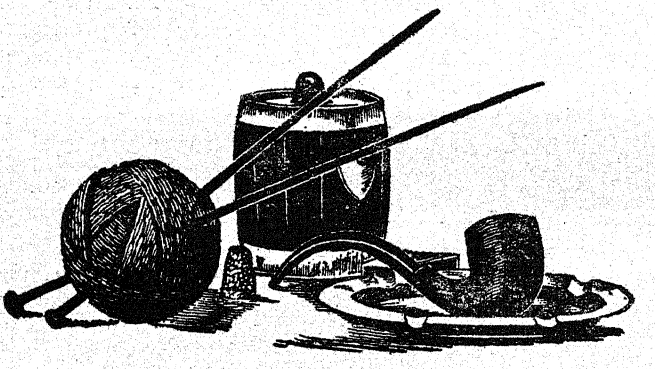
Naturally this rebuilding must not be accompanied by explanations, analyses, and confession. Meredith has spoken profoundly of the serious dangers of a too searching mutual criticism. The process must be simpler and more secretive.

The true woman feels instinctively these threatening indications, this boredom that increases almost imperceptibly. Her instinct suggests remedies to her. The man himself knows that sometimes a look or a smile is better than an explanation. But, whatever the method, there must be constant reconstruction. Nothing in our daily life will last if neglected; houses, stuffs, friendships, pleasures. Roofs fall in, love comes to an end. A tile needs refastening, a joint must be repaired, a misunderstanding cleared up. Otherwise bitterness is created; feelings deep down in the soul become centres of infection, and one day, during a quarrel, the abscess breaks, and each is horrified by the picture of himself or herself discovered in the other's mind.

No marriage can be a happy one unless tastes are mutually respected. Once again it is absurd to imagine that two people can have the same thoughts, the same opinions, and the same wishes. The thing is impossible, and it is also undesirable. During the honeymoon, as we have said, the two lovers want to believe that they are alike in all ways. Inevitably the moment arrives when strong characters resume their rights. "If one wants marriage to be a refuge," says Alain, "friendship must gradually replace love." Replace it? No—the matter is more complex. In a truly happy marriage there must be a mingling of friendship and love, and here the closeness of friendship takes on an indescribable quality of indulgence and affection. Two people recognize that they are morally and intellectually unlike, but they joyfully accept the differences in their temperaments, discovering therein an opportunity for spiritual development. A man who is trying sincerely to disentangle the web of human affairs is greatly helped by the nearness of a woman's mind, vigilant, clever, discreet, lucid, which lights up that shadowy half of his world: women's thoughts. Often there is scarcely any further question of physical love in such cases, though it may have been important at the beginning; in such relationships, elementary needs have been sublimated. The mind makes physical pleasure the occasion for something infinitely more important to come into being. The loss of youth is no longer a misfortune to a truly united couple; the pleasure of growing old together banishes the affliction of growing old.

Rochefoucauld's phrase is classic: "There are good marriages, but no exquisite ones." I hope I have shown that there can be exquisite ones; but these are not by any means the easiest. How could the life of two people together ever be easy when both are subject to fits of bad temper, mistakes, and illnesses which spoil their dispositions? A marriage without conflicts is almost as inconceivable as a nation without crises. But when love has pleaded its first cases and affection has changed indignation into tender and amused indulgence, perhaps the crises will be fairly easily dealt with.

Thus marriage is not at all what romantic lovers imagine it to be; it is an institution founded upon an instinct; to be successful, it requires not only physical attraction, but will-power, patience, and the always difficult acceptance of "the other"; finally, if these conditions are fulfilled, a beautiful and lasting affection can be established—a unique and, to those who have never known it, incomprehensible mingling of love, friendship, sensuality, and respect, without which there is no true marriage.



CHAPTER III THE ART OF FAMILY LIFE

IF I had to preach a sermon on the family I would take for my text this phrase of Paul Valéry's: "In every family there is concealed a specific interior boredom which causes its members to escape and live their own lives.

There is also in every family an ancient and powerful force which manifests itself when the group is gathered in the dining-room for its evening meal, when its members feel free to be completely themselves."

I like this text because it evokes both the nobility and the wretchedness of family life. An interior boredom and a deep sense of communion—yes, in almost every family we find these two feelings. Who among us cannot connect Valéry's two conflicting statements when recalling some family reunion? Who among us has not at some time been afflicted by life and sought shelter in the atmosphere of a peaceful family home in the country? A friend loves you for your intelligence, a mistress for your charm, but your family's love is unreasoning; you were born into it and are of it flesh and blood. Nevertheless it can irritate you more than any group of people in the world. What man has not said at some period in his youth; "I am suffocated here; I cannot live with my family any longer; they do not undertsand me and I cannot understand them"? Yet, what man, on finding himself surrounded by strangers, scorned or merely neglected, has not longed to be back among those for whom he was the centre of the universe? Katherine Mansfield, at eighteen, declared in her journal that it was her duty to desert her family because her mind could not develop properly. Later, away from them and ill among strangers, she recalled in the same journal how, when she was a child, her grandmother had brought a bowl of hot milk and some bread to her bedside and had said in her soft, pretty voice, "Here you are, darling...." In her distress, the thought of suddenly finding herself again with the family she had once scorned seemed to her an incredibly happy one.

The truth is that the family, like marriage is one of those institutions whose very importance renders them complex. Abstract ideas are the only simple ones, because they have little to do with life. The family is not the arbitrary creation of a legislator; it is a natural consequence of the division of the species into two sexes, of the human child's protracted helplessness, or maternal love which ministers to this helplessness, of paternal love which is far more artificial and recent in human history and composed just as much of love for the

mother as of that for the child.

We may say of the family what we said of the married couple: family ties are strong because they have the support of natural instincts. A family is a natural or instinctive group transformed into a lasting group by receiving the support of laws and conventions. Parents' duties to their children, children's duties to their parents, the legalizing of inheritance—all this has grown up round a natural feeling so natural that it has been found to exist in many animal species; the maternal instinct.

The feeling which a mother has for her infant is absolutely pure and beautiful. No conflict there. A mother is an angel to her infant; she is all-powerful. If she nurses it she is the source of all joy, all life. If she merely cares for it, she is still the person who takes away pain and gives pleasure; she is the supreme refuge; she brings warmth, comfort, patience, and love. A mother's infant is her god, and it is to the great credit of Christianity that it has realized this.

With maternity as with love, devotion and affection are easy because they are varieties of egoism. A mother willingly sacrifices herself for her infant because her infant is a part of herself, her own flesh. Savages had to learn to love before any human society was possible; thanks to sexual love and then to maternal love, the lesson was learned.

Sexual love is founded upon physical desire; maternal love is founded upon abnegation, and it is the purest form of instinctive love. Women's love for men is itself tinged with maternal love. Did George Sand love Musset? Did she love Chopin? Yes, but her love was more maternal than physical. And her case was not exceptional. When the young Rousseau fell in love with Madame de Warens he called her Maman, and though she was his mistress she treated him with maternal care and watchfulness. The situation was precisely the same between Madame de Berny and the young Balzac. Relationships may thus be established between young men and mature women which amount to love on the part of the former and curious uncertain mixture of physical and maternal love on the part of the latter, certain of whom cannot love unless they have a sense of protecting someone weaker than themselves who rouses their deepest instincts. A woman

of this sort becomes attached to a strong man only in appearance; if she does love him, it is for his weaknesses. (Read Shaw's *Candida* and his *Arms and the Man.*)

And the infant? If it is fortunate enough to possess a mother who is really a mother, it learns from her early in life what complete and unselfish love can be like. Maternal love shows an infant that the world is not altogether hostile, that kindness and affection are always to be found, that there are people who may be absolutely and naively trusted and who give everything without asking anything in return. It is a great thing to have begun life in this kind of atmosphere; optimists who always keep faith in life, despite unhappiness and misfortune, are often the children of a loving and prudent mother. On the other hand, a foolish blundering, unjust mother can be a tragic influence. She makes pessimists and neurotics of her children. I have known young girls who, in adolescence, were continually in conflict with their mothers. Observing their development, I discovered that many of them remained bitter, defiant, convinced that all women were hostile to them, incapable of love because as children they had been shocked by the love affairs, either glimpsed or guessed at, of a mother whom they could not admire.

Inversely, a mother who is too affectionate and too sentimental may be a bad influence for her son by awakening in him emotions that are too passionate for his years. Nothing can be more dangerous for a boy than to introduce into the respect owed to his mother the kind of affection that is sensual without his knowing it. This amounts to a kind of spiritual incest. D. H. Lawrence, who was himself a prey to it, has admirably described this situation in his novel, *Sons and Lovers*, where he shows that a young man can be rendered incapable of loving because of a perplexed childhood.

The cases we have mentioned are extreme and somewhat abnormal. Normally, family life offers an apprenticeship to love, and it is because of this that, despite our grievances, we experience a strange happiness in returning to it. But this remembered apprenticeship is not the only cause of the trustful feelings with which we return. The family hearth is also the place where, as Valéry says, we can be ourselves.

Is this such a great and unusual advantage? Can we not be ourselves wherever we please? Certainly not. In life we must play a role; we have chosen an attitude; we have been assigned a character. We have official capacities to fill; social life makes demands upon us. For a large part of their lives, bishops, professors, and business-men amongst many others have no right to be themselves.

In a united family the social role is reduced to a minimum for its members. They gather at home in the evenings. The father sits in his easy-chair reading the newspaper or dozing; the mother knits and discusses with her eldest daughter the three or four subjects that trouble every housekeeper; one of the sons hums while reading a detective story; another is mending an electric switch; still another is aimlessly turning the radio button. All this is rather upsetting to peace and quiet. The radio disturbs the father's reading and dozing; the father's silence distresses the mother; the mother's and daughter's talking exasperates the boys. These feelings are not concealed, for there is very little politeness in a family group. Each one of its members believes in his heart that the others are crazy and not to be endured, but he tolerates them and knows that he may expect a similar grumbling or surely tolerance from them.

These people do not find intoxicating pleasure in family life, but, as we have said, they can be themselves, they are accepted, and they can find rest there. They know that they are among people who are used to one another and if necessary will share one another's troubles. If one of the actors on the stage we are describing were to complain suddenly of a headache and fever, the others would be anxious at once. The sister would occupy herself with getting a bed ready; the mother would be attentive to the patient; one of the brothers would go to the chemist. The threatened one would not be alone. Without a family, man, alone in the world, trembles with the cold. In countries where family life, for various reasons, is less intensified, men feel the need to draw closer to their fellows and think with the crowd, in order to compensate for the loss of that warm and friendly little group.

Solidarity may extend outside the family group formed by parents and children. Among the Roman "people" it

brought together into a sort of tribe not only actual relatives, but also those related by marriage, dependants, and slaves. In our modern world, the "people" are more unstable owing to the wider scattering of families, but they are still vigorous. In every French family will be found obscure cousins and maiden aunts who devote their lives to the family. There are great political and university families who gather in jobs, decorations, and profits for the members of their clans unto the third and fourth generation.

We all know old ladies, who have no interest in any one outside "the family" and who are interested in all its members even if they have never seen them. In this way the family degenerates into a sort of collective egoism which is not love but a defensive alliance against the outside world. Naturally this family egoism may become a social danger if carried too far, but it is none the less true that in some of the early stages of civilization social life was founded upon the maternal, and much later upon the paternal instinct.

It is evident that serious dangers exist in family life: witness the rebellious impulses that fill the minds of so many adolescents. The family is not all love; it can produce hatreds which are all the more violent because conflicting interests nourish them and no amount of politeness can appease them.

I have described a family evening of mental and physical relaxation, during which each member acts with perfect naturalness. A reposeful evening? Yes, but where does this freedom lead? Like all unlimited freedom, it sometimes leads to the kind of confusion that makes life very difficult. Alain has written of families who tacitly agree that what is unpleasant to one member is forbidden to the others, and whose conversation is nothing but grumbling:

> "One is bothered by the smell of flowers, another by loud voices; one must have silence in the morning, another in the evening; one cannot bear religious discussion; another grits his teeth when the talk turns on politics. The right of veto is mutually recognized, and this right is arrogantly exercised. One says: 'My head will ache all day on account of your flowers.' Another: "I never closed my eyes last night because you slammed the door about eleven o'clock.'

"At meal-times they sit in a sort of parliament and make their complaints. All are familiar with the complicated chart and the children's education is concerned with little else."

In such families it is the most mediocre members who settle the daily routine, as the slowest walkers set the pace for a family promenade. Self-denial? Yes, but also debasement and a lowering of the level of intellectual life. This is proved by the fact that the level rises whenever a clever guest appears at the family table. Why, on such an occasion, should people who ordinarily sit in silence or talk platitudes become almost brilliant? Because they make an effort for the outsider which they would never make for the family.

For this reason it is a bad thing for a family to keep too much to itself; fresh currents should flow into it as into a bay wide open to the sea. The outsider may be invisible, his actual presence is not necessary. He may be a great musician or a great poet. Daily reading of the Bible moulds the minds of numerous Protestant families. Many of the best English writers owed their style to this continual reading of a great book, and if there are a number of women in England today who have a natural gift for writing, it is perhaps because they have been sheltered by this religious reading from too much family small talk and made familiar at an early age with a noble style. Madame de Sévigné and Madame de la Fayette and other French ladies of the seventeenth century were similarly trained by their studies of Latin. Some families fall into the dangerous habit of never finishing their sentences; they understand one another easily with few words and make no effort whatever. To combat this evil the intellectual level should be raised by continual familiarity with the best things humanity has produced. With sincere religious convictions, a love of the arts (especially music), a common political faith, and some sort of shared work, a family may be lifted above itself.

Another danger is that a family always has difficulty in taking one of its members seriously. This is neither hostility nor jealousy; it is merely that the family is accustomed to regarding him in a different light. Read the lives of the

Bronte sisters. They were not novelists in their father's estimation. What was to them their work and their art seemed to Mr. Bronte merely a game, the importance of which he was far from realizing. Tolstoy's wife recognized his genius; his children admired him and tried to understand him. But in spite of their efforts, wife and children saw in him the human being full of peculiarities and absurdities just as clearly as they did the great writer. To the Countess Tolstoy he was the man who said that it was not right to have servants and then asked her at the eleventh hour to provide luncheon for fifteen guests.

I have said that one could be oneself in the family circle. Yes, but it is not possible to be anyone else in that intimate atmosphere; one cannot rise above oneself. The saint and the hero have no place there. The members of a family may not underrate a genius in their midst, but they minimize him by their manner of appreciating, which is not understanding, but delighting in the fact that there is such a man in the family. If a Jones becomes a great preacher or a great statesman, the Joneses rejoice, not because they are moved by the sermons or believe in the value of their kinsman's reforms, but because they are proud to have the Jones name appear in the newspapers. The aged aunt listens to the lectures of her geographer nephew, not because she likes geography but because she is fond of her nephew.

The levelling influence of mediocrity and the denial of the supreme importance of the mind's development account for many revolts against family life. There are many occasions when great men are convinced that, in order to fulfil their destinies, they must escape from the warmth and indulgence of their own families. At one of these moments, Tolstoy embraces a monastic life; a boy hears the call: "Thou shalt abandon thy father and thy mother"; Gauguin quits his family to live in Tahiti as the monk of painting. Each one of us, at least once in our life, has heard the inner call of the eldest brother and has felt himself to be the prodigal son.

I believe the advantages of such escape to be imaginary. To flee from one's family, that is, from ties at first natural and then voluntary which bind us to our own people, is to establish other ties that are less natural, for man was not

made to live alone; he may go into monastic or literary seclusion where there is also indulgence, servitude, and abandon; or he may drift, like Nietzsche, into madness. True wisdom, as Marcus Aurelius knew so well, cannot be acquired by withdrawing from the world. To escape from family life is easy but useless; to elevate family life is a more difficult and a nobler thing to do. But there is a certain period in the lives of young people when it is perfectly natural that they should perceive the bondage of family life more clearly than its great advantages; this is called the awkward age, and in order to speak intelligently of it we must consider more carefully, from within the family, the relationships between the generations.

I have already described the beginnings of these relationships: instinctive and unreserved tenderness on the mother's part; adoration and trust on that of the child; and this is the normal state. The most frequent of the seemingly harmless mistakes for which parents are responsible is to spoil a child—that is, to allow it to believe itself all-powerful when it merely seems to be so because of its parents' weaknesses. Nothing is more dangerous. The formation of a child's character begins during the first months of its life. In a year it will either have become amenable to discipline or it will not respond to it at all. I have often heard people say, and I have often said myself: "One has very little influence upon one's children. Their characters are what they are and one can do nothing to change them."

But in many cases it would have been possible to change them by means of that early education to which little thought is given. During the first days of its existence an infant must be made to live by rule; suffering will be its eventual fate if it responds to no discipline. Society has its unchanging laws. Each must cut his own path with hatched and bill-hook—a painful task, requiring patience, submission, and tenacity. The spoiled child lives in a world of fantasy; he believes until the end of his life that a smile or an angry gesture will produce the desired results. He wants to be loved unselfishly as he was loved by parents who were not firm enough with him. We have all known adult spoiled children: men who reach high positions and then lose them through childish

behaviour; women of sixty who still believe that they can obtain what they want by sulking. The remedy here is for the mother to teach the infant, during those first months when it is getting its early wordless instruction in living, that there are rules to be complied with.

Adler has shown the evil which can be done and the neuroses which can be produced by the blundering of certain mothers who are incapable of impartiality. Relationships between brothers and sisters are models of friendship in many families, but it would be unwise to regard this as the natural state of affairs. *Les Frères Ennemis* concerns a tragic situation that has been observed and written of since the beginning of civilization, and the drama is endlessly renewed. The difference in age of the children in a family plays a rather important role in the formation of character. The first-born is almost always a spoiled child. His gestures and smiles seem, to a young couple still in love, extraordinary and delightful. He soon becomes the centre of the family, and it must not be imagined that he is unaware of this; on the contrary, he quickly comes to believe that this attention and this important position are his due. If another child is born into the family and the first-born is obliged to share the affection of his parents with this rival, or if he finds that he is being neglected for him, he will suffer. The mother quite naturally feels that the younger child needs her. She has watched the growth of her first-born with sorrow, and she now expends the greater part of her affection upon the second child; this sudden shift leaves the former with a bitterness in his young mind which will not be quickly effaced.

With children, emotions such as this one are tragically deep. The first-born may come to long for the death of the intruder who has divested him of his power. Some try to regain attention by complaining, and illness is often a way to victory for delicate children. The woman who seeks to inspire pity so that she may be the centre of attention in her world is a well-known type, but a child is also capable of playing such a role. Children who, up to the time of the birth of a brother or a sister, have been well behaved, become unendurable after that event; they infuriate their parents with endless unaccountably stupid actions. These stupidities.

which often cause the children themselves remorse and disgust are in reality efforts to be taken seriously.

Adler maintains (and I believe it is often true) that the psychological type of the eldest child is clearly recognizable throughout its life on account of its interest in the past, its conservatism, melancholy, love of discussing early childhood because it was life's happiest period. A younger child lives for the future, a future in which the first-born may be excelled. He is often scornful. His political ideas are usually more advanced than those of the elder, partly, in the case of old civilizations, because of the latter's inheritance. Sir William Harcourt's radical political opinions were objected to by his elder brother, to whom he replied: "My dear man, you have the land; let me have my ideas." In a similar way, one finds on studying Chateaubriand's mental development that his position as younger son made him sympathetic, at least in his young days, with the revolutionary ideas of the eighteenth century.

The youngest is also a spoiled child particularly when he is much younger than his brothers, but he is a happy child because his privileges will never be taken from him. He is the darling of his elder brothers, who treat him with paternal affection. He frequently makes a success in life, first because he has self-confidence, and then because, living with children older than himself he has their examples to follow and tries to catch up with them. He is acute and diplomatic, for he is the weakest and is therefore obliged to negotiate and compromise.

It is important that children should feel themselves equally loved, and by both parents; also that they should never be allowed to discover the existence of hostility between their parents. Such things cause them suffering, then loss of respect. People who rebel against everything in later life are often those who, as children, observed a wide difference between the preaching and the practice of their parents. A daughter who is contemptuous of her mother will feel similarly towards all women. A tyrannical father may be responsible for his children's (especially his daughters') conception of marriage as a kind of slavery. It seems to me that a father should desire above all things to give his children the

greatest amount of happiness compatible with the kind of life they are destined to lead. This maximum of happiness is necessary because life is short and childhood memories are their most precious possessions, and also because the misery of a repressed and gloomy childhood may be carried over into later life.

At the same time, a father must be firm; he must make his children realize from their earliest days that the world cannot be conquered easily, for if they do not, great disappointments are in store for them. I have known boys so well protected from the world by their mothers that their first encounters with rough, heartless comrades plunge them into despair. They are incapable of coping with life and are apt to abandon themselves to failure. To insist upon the strict observance of a few rules regarding work and behaviour, and at the same time to do everything possible to insure a child's happiness seems to me the best way to make certain that the transition from childhood to adolescence will be accomplished with a minimum of suffering.

Lifelong intimacy between mother and son may be one of the noblest of all relationships. We have spoken of a mother's adoration of her infant. Later in life, particularly after the father's death, intimacy again becomes close because the son loves and respects his mother and the mother tenderly and protectively respects the new head of the family. This admirable combination of emotions is even better exemplified in antiquity or in peasant communities where the mother still rules the farm with her son and daughter-in-law. The domineering mother who does not love her son enough to realize that his happiness now lies in another woman's keeping is a character that had been frequently portrayed by novelists. We have already said that D. H. Lawrence deals frankly with this theme. The type of mother he describes (in real life, Mrs. Ruskin is an example) may think that her deep love for her son has no physical element in it, but she is wrong. When Ruskin's wife said that her husband should have married his mother, she was right. Lawrence could not have described this situation with so much feeling if he had not himself been involved in it.

The relationship between mother and daughter is somewhat different. Sometimes there is such close intimacy that daughters, though married, cannot get on without seeing their mothers every day. On the other hand, however, a rivalry will develop between the two women, either because the mother is still young and attractive and is jealous, or because the daughter, not being very sure of herself, is jealous of her mother. In such cases it is obviously the duty of the elder woman to stifle her own feelings.

Paternal love is a very different emotion. The natural tie exists, but it is not so strong. Balzac, in *Le Pere Goriot*, has described a father who completely sacrifices himself for his children. Though we accept without astonishment the most exaggerated manifestations of maternal love, Goriot seems to us a pathological case. In many primitive communities we know that the fathers have little to do with their children and that the latter are brought up by their maternal uncles. Even in civilized patriarchal groups, the education of young children is left to the woman. The very young child looks upon the father as the warrior, the hunter, or, in modern times, as the man of affairs who comes home for his meals full of obscure worries, schemes, conversation.

The father represents the outside world, and he is the one who keeps the children at work; he is exacting because in most cases he has not had the life he wanted and hopes that his sons may succeed where he has failed. If he is a successful man, he is overbearing because he wants his sons to be perfect; since they are never that, his excessive affection turns into severity. Also, he wishes them to adopt his own ideals, but they rarely do so. Occasionally, later on, rivalry springs up between father and son, as it does between mother and daughter; a father cannot easily bring himself to give up the control of his business; he may be displeased if he finds that his son is more efficient in this respect than himself. A natural intimacy may exist between father and daughter similar to the one between mother and son. Antigone has counterparts in the modern world, such as Tolstoy's youngest daughter, or the daughters of statesmen and ambassadors who have become their fathers' confidential secretaries. Again we find the truth about humanity in a novel: Balzac's

Père Grandet wished to bequeath his avarice to his daughter, and after his death she actually did resemble him.

When parents see what difficulties their children meet with during their first contacts with real life, they remember their own mistakes; they are anxious to protect their loved ones and they naively attempt to give them the benefit of their own experiences. But these experiences are rarely of any use to others. Everyone must live out his own life; ideas change with the passing years. The sort of wisdom that comes with old age cannot be acquired by a young man.

Experience is valuable only when it has brought suffering and when the suffering has left its mark upon both body and mind. Sleepless nights and conflicts with reality make statesmen realists; how could these experiences be usefully handed on to young idealists who expect to transform the universe without effort? The counsels of Polonius are platitudes, but the moment we start giving advice we are all like Polonius. For us those platitudes are packed with meaning, memories, and visions. For our children, they are abstract and boring. We should like to make a wise woman of a girl of twenty; it is physiologically impossible. "The counsels of old age," said Vauvenargues, "are like a winter's sun which gives light but no warmth." Young people rebel and grown-ups are disappointed, and an atmosphere of irritation and reproof is created. We parents never complain of the unavoidable silliness of children. In one of Coventry Patmore's poems, *The Toys*, a father has been very severe with his son. In the evening he goes to the boy's bedroom; he finds him asleep but his eyelashes are still wet with tears. On a table near the bed he has carefully laid out a stone with red veins in it, seven or eight shells, some bluebells in a bottle, and two French sous, hoping to console himself in his misery by the sight of his favourite things. This touching childishness gives the father a better understanding of his boy's mind and he regrets his severity.

During our children's adolescence we must try to recall our own, and not complain of them for having the thoughts, feelings, and moods that belong to adolescence. This is difficult. At twenty we all say: "If I ever have children I'll be able to get close to them and be the sort of father that

my own was incapable of being." But at fifty we resemble our own parents fairly closely, and in their turn our children, as we so greatly desired (and so uselessly), will resemble us; but this will be when we are no longer there and when their role on earth will be similar to our own.

One sees how all these conflicts and grievances produce the awkward age. A very young child goes through what may be called the fairyland age when food, warmth, and play are benefits received from ministering deities. To many children, the discovery of the outside world and the necessity for work come as a shock. Friends are made at school, and the child begins to see his family through their eyes. He realizes that the people he has always taken for granted and who were as necessary to him as air and water may seem wonderful or insignificant to other children. Many new relationships are formed; the bonds uniting him to his parents relax, but they never break. At this period, people outside the family have their greatest influence, and this is as it should be. At this period also the child turns rebel, but his parents must keep on loving him.

I have pointed out that family life will be very matter-of-fact and dull without the influence of religion and the arts. The adolescent, always an idealist, is offended by the Polonius-like advice of his father. He curses the family and its laws. He wants juster ones. He thinks of love as a great and beautiful thing, and he needs friendship and affection. It is a time of vows and secret confidences; it is also a time of disappointments, for vows are not kept, confidences are betrayed, and lovers are inconstant. He wants to do well and things always turn out badly. His cynicism comes from frustrated idealism and the disparity between his dreams and the reality about him.

It is a tragic and difficult period in every life. Young men have many ideas, but no responsibilities. They do not find themselves in daily conflict with men and things; they have no family to support, no business to run, no public responsibilities. They work with words and phrases only, and this gives them an abstract idea of the world, frequently exalted but always inexact. Women and society are very different from their imaginings, and this makes them un-

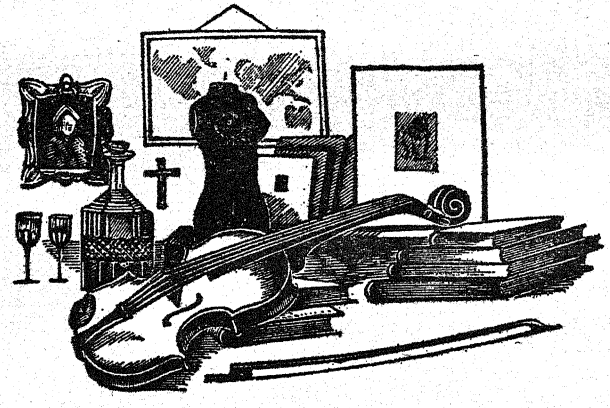
happy. But they soon come out of adolescence; then marriage and the birth of their children strengthen and support their dangerous abstract intelligence with family responsibilities. Little by little, after a difficult apprenticeship in family, business, and public life, they will become real men and will be able to help their adolescent children through similar experiences.

For these reasons it is better that a large part of the awkward age should be spent away from the family circle: thus the discovery of the exterior world is made at school, and the family becomes a haven of refuge by contrast. If such an arrangement is impossible, parents should remember their own young days and be lenient towards failings that were once their own. Sometimes it happens that this leniency is difficult for the parents and that the grandparents, whose age has made them less exacting and their minds freer because their race is run, are better able to understand the rising generation.

The art of family life is extremely important. Badly brought up children can sometimes remould their own characters; occasionally their lack of equilibrium results in genius; but we can assure them an easier life if we know how to give them a serene and happy childhood. A happy childhood is one which is presided over by united parents who love their children tenderly, impose a steady discipline, and see to it that a conspicuous equality between them is preserved. Inevitable changes in character occur at stated periods; advice must be wisely and sparingly given, and the most effective advice is the setting of a good example. Finally, it is necessary to freshen the family atmosphere by letting in draughts of air from the outside world.

A last question must now be asked: is family life an institution that will endure? I believe it to be irreplaceable for the same reason that marriage is irreplaceable, because it moulds individual instinct into social sensibility. It is a sound idea to spend early years away from the family, but to almost every man, after years of apprenticeship to life and inevitable adventuring, the moment comes when he returns with joy to those natural affections. After difficult days spent in an indifferent or cruel world, students, philo-

sophers, cabinet ministers, soldiers, and artists are happy to become again children, parents, grandparents, or simply men, when they sit down to their evening meal in the family circle.



CHAPTER IV THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP

THE ties of friendship are very different from those which unite the married couple and the family, but they are no less necessary to the life of a community. Intellectual emotions come first in friendship; they dominate the instinctive ones. Why are the latter not sufficient? Does not the family permit each human being to find with the least possible opposition, the companions needed for the journey through life?

The answer to this question is that a large number of people live their whole lives in ignorance of marriage. Most of them simply have not considered it; some consciously flee from it. I believe it to be a fact that there are a few more women in the world than men, so that in a monogamous civilization all of them cannot choose husbands. Besides, there are men and women who are so constituted that they cannot marry merely for the sake of marrying. They have definite ideas and tastes when it comes to choosing a life companion. To most of us it seems impossible that any person could go

through life without meeting at least one man or woman with whom a happy union could be achieved. There are, nevertheless, certain people who live so far removed from the world that they meet no one; others, whose lives chance has placed in antagonistic atmospheres, are in a continual state of disappointment and disgust; still others are turned away from marriage by early disillusionment, fear, sexual repugnance, or some obscure complex. It takes courage to make marriage vows; one should plunge into marriage as a swimmer plunges into the sea. Not everyone possesses this courage.

Sometimes marriage is greatly desired, but the chosen man or woman is found to have arranged his or her existence differently. Then, through pride, regret, or spite, whole lives are spent in lonely fidelity to an unsatisfied emotion. The time comes when this memory, so religiously cherished, is no more than an empty cult. But it is too late; youth, with its adaptability and its opportunities for conquest has gone. Many compromises are necessary for a successful marriage. By a natural process, the bachelor becomes too accustomed to a solitary life ever to endure another kind. Even if he wished, he could not make himself into a happy husband. It would be impossible to imagine Stendhal married.

Life must supply other solutions for these people. Where can they find a means of emerging from a complete solitude which is inhuman and likely to lead to insanity? Can their families supply it? But we have shown why families do not lend themselves to the free development of human beings; the indulgence of the family circle is a hindrance. It is easy to imagine an old bachelor with no refuge but that afforded by his family. *Le Cousin Pons* is a case in point, but Balzac showed how uncertain, how unsatisfactory, and sometimes how shocking this tie can be. Pons was saved by friendship alone.

Even for those who have founded a family, for the husband and wife who love one another truly, for children who have parents with whom they get on well, and for Don Juan too, with his thousand and three mistresses, something besides this is necessary. We frequently find that we cannot speak of what is nearest our hearts to our families or to those with whom we are in love, because family ties are of blood and

not of the mind, and because affection is too easily given: and two people in love are always acting parts. Thus in the minds of all—children, father, mother, husband, wife, lover. mistress—are concealed unspoken grievances.

These unspoken things poison the minds of introspective people, as foreign bodies enclosed in a wound poison the tissues. They should talk, open their minds, be themselves in the spiritual sense as well as in the almost purely physical sense of the family circle or of love. Secret and rebellious emotions must be given expression; they must be discussed with intimate friends who, even if they refuse advice, will bring concealed malice and spite out into the open. There is need of another tie than that of love and another group than that of the family.

How is a friendship born? Sexual love is easy to account for. A glance, a touch, a mere chance encounter may cause admiration and desire. Love begins with love. The deepest and most authentic love is usually the most sudden. "Come hither, nurse. What is yon gentleman?" says Juliet. . . . "If he be married, my grave is like to be my wedding bed." Love has little connection with moral worth, intelligence, or even with the beauty of the person loved; Titania has tender feelings for Bottom with an ass's head. The saying, "Love is blind," is a platitude and also a profound truth. "Other people's love affairs are always incomprehensible. "What can she see in him?" is a question every woman asks about every other woman. But, since the emotion is nourished by desire, it flourishes in ground which, to a casual observer, appears sterile.

The birth of friendship is slower. In the early stages it seems such a fragile plant that love, springing up close to its pale, weak stalk, may smother it. La Rochefoucauld says that most women are little given to friendship, because friendship is insipid compared to love. Insipid? No, but cruelly lucid in its early stages. Titania's blindness does not affect those who are seeking friendship; for them an ass's head is an ass's head. And how could one love a person with an ass's head? How is the close bond of friendship to be established between two perfectly lucid people who are not physically attracted to one another?

In some cases this close bond is entirely natural, for the very simple reason that the person encountered possesses rare qualities that are recognized as such. There is a friendship at first sight as well as love. A word, a smile, a look reveals a kindred spirit. A charming act makes us sure we have discovered a noble personality. So friendship starts with friendship as love starts with love. These sudden friendships are possible even when the chosen friend does not possess high qualities, for all discrimination is relative. One young girl suddenly becomes the confidante and constant companion of another; by still another she is thoroughly disliked. In the first instance, chance has revealed a kind of pre-established harmony, and friendship comes into being.

Except in unusual cases, such an encounter is most unlikely to result in a lasting friendship. Love is often made durable by the institution of marriage, and friendship in its early stage is also benefited by some kind of restraint. Human beings are lazy and it very often happens that one wearies of a new-born emotion for no valid reason unless there is some restraint to stimulate and stabilize it. "He repeats himself. . . .She tells the same stories again and again. . . .He is too susceptible. . . .She is always late. . . . He is often boring. . . .She complains too much." In such cases restraint is necessary. In colleges, fraternities, the army, the navy, the officers' mess in war-time, the lunch-table where the functionaries of small towns meet daily, the club—in all these groups there is a kind of family obligation which is healthy. People are obliged to live together and this enables them to appraise one another better and finally to endure one another. I suggest an axiom: Almost all men improve on acquaintance.

These chance friendships, however, are not necessarily true ones. "We console ourselves with several friends for not having found one real one," says Abel Bonnard. Real friendship takes for granted a surer choice. Montaigne had great respect for La Boetie, as well as affection. Not all men and women can devote themselves thus to those whom they respect. Some are jealous of superiority and are far more interested in revealing the faults than in imitating the virtues of a noble character. Others fear the opinion of a mind that

is too lucid and prefer to be friends with someone less exacting.

"Well fitted for friendship is he whom men have not disgusted with mankind, and who, believing and knowing that there are a few noble men, a few great minds, a few delightful souls scattered through the crowd, never tires of searching for them, and loves them even before he has found them." I should like to add to those words of Bonnard that a few amiable weaknesses, added to those high qualities, foster rather than prevent our affection for a person. We do not completely love those at whom we cannot smile. There is something inhuman in absolute perfection which overwhelms the mind and heart, which commands respect, but keeps friendship at a distance through discouragement and humiliation. We are always glad when a great man reassures us of his humanity by possessing a few peculiarities.

A chance word or look, then, may reveal similarity in personality and intelligence. Restraint and will-power allow this early sympathy to grow and establish itself. Confidences are exchanged, and we soon achieve far more intellectual freedom with this comparative stranger than with those to whom we are bound by ties of blood or physical love.

It would be profitable here to ask ourselves what, more precisely, distinguishes friendship—an emotion just as noble as the most ardent love—from simple comradeship, which is more trivial and less complete.

"What men call friendship," says La Rochefoucauld, "is only social intercourse, an exchange of favours and good offices; it comes down to a commercial dealing in which self-esteem always expects to profit." La Rochefoucauld was cynical, at least he liked to think he was, and here he has pointed out precisely what, in relationships between men, is *not* friendship. Commercial dealing? No, friendship can never be that. On the contrary, it implies absolute disinterestedness. We can never make a friend of the man who seeks us out when we can do him a service and neglects us when the service has been rendered.

It is not always easy to detect self-interest, for those who have such motives are clever at concealing them. I once heard the following conversation:

"Be especially nice to the B——s," said the husband.

"Why?" asked the wife. "They are very boring people and you don't need them."

"Don't be unintelligent," said the husband. "I shall need him when he returns to the Ministry, which he is sure to do sooner or later, and he will be far more appreciative of our attentions when he is not in office."

"You're right," agreed the admiring wife. "That will seem more friendly."

Actually it did seem more friendly, but it was not friendship. In all walks of life it is natural that this sort of trading should go on between men who can be useful to one another. There is mutual esteem and mutual fear. Favours are exchanged and the score is kept: "I am going to appoint him ambassador and his newspaper will leave me in peace."

Friendship has nothing to do with such dealing. Two friends should, of course, help one another when the opportunity arises, but such services should be rendered so naturally as to be forgotten, or, if not forgotten, at least considered to be of no importance. And there must be no self-satisfaction. Human nature is such that the spectacle of another's weakness awakens even in the best of us a feeling of power which contains along with the sincerest pity, an almost imperceptible mingling of pleasure. "In the misfortunes of our best friends," said the redoubtable La Rochefoucauld, "we always find something not unpleasing." And Mauriac, in *La Province*, points out that we are always anxious to help the unfortunate but do not like them to keep their drawing-room clock.

It is often said that in prosperity we have many friends. but that we are usually neglected when things go badly. I disagree. Not only do malicious people flock about us in order to witness our ruin but other unfortunates as well, who have been kept away by our happiness, and now feel close to us on account of our troubles. When Shelley was poor and unknown, he had more friends than the triumphant Lord Byron. It takes great nobility of soul to be able, without any taint of self-interest, to be friends with fortunate people.

Disinterestedness is a necessary attribute to real friendship and it is the duty of one friend to guess another's problems

and render assistance before it is asked. If our friends have needs that we can satisfy, we should relieve them of the necessity of seeking our help. Apart from the satisfaction usually produced by an action, this permanent ability to give pleasure is perhaps the only advantage of wealth and power.

Another essential attribute of friendship is, I believe, mutual admiration. "But," you will say, "I have friends whom I do not admire. I love them just the same, and would tell them frankly that I do not admire them." There is a confusion here and the need to probe more deeply into reality. We all have friends to whom we speak harsh truths, and indeed there can be no true friendship without this kind of sincerity. But if we can endure criticism from a friend, which, coming from another, would anger us, isn't it because we know that he admires us fundamentally? I do not mean that he thinks we possess all the virtues or that he finds us particularly intelligent. It is more complex than that. I mean that he has carefully considered our faults and our good qualities and has chosen us; better still, he has preferred us to others.

It is very important to realise that sincerity is possible only because of this admiration. We accept any criticism from him who loves or admires us because it does not impair the self-confidence without which our life would be unbearable. Great friendships between writers have been made possible by this alone. Louis Bouilhet sincerely criticized Flaubert, but Flaubert did not mind it because he knew that Bouilhet thought him a master. Heaven protect us from the "sincere friend" whose sincerity consists only of depressing us, who carefully warns us of the evil that is being spoken of us and seems to be afflicted with a peculiar deafness regarding the good.

And Heaven protect us also from the easily offended friend who, refusing to understand once and for all that we are fond of him but that life is short and difficult and human beings capricious, watches us unceasingly so that he may interpret every manifestation of impatience or bad humour as an omen. An easily offended person will never make real friends. True friendship implies full confidence, which may only be completely given or completely withdrawn. If friend-

ship has continually to be analysed, nursed and cured, it will cause more anguish than love itself, without having love's strength and its remedies. And if this confidence is ill-placed? Well—I would rather be betrayed by a false friend than deceive a true one.

Does absolute reliance carry with it a complete exchange of confidences? I believe that true friendship cannot exist otherwise. Jung has said that one of the objects of friendship is to reintegrate secret thoughts and feelings with ordinary social intercourse. How could a friends' admiration have any value if called forth by a fictitious *me* and not the real *me*? Until two people are able to reach down to the level of their sleeping memories, their conversation is without real interest and it languishes. But as soon as the probe goes deep enough, the spring of confidences bursts forth. Nothing is pleasanter than to be aware, during a conversation until then mechanical and boring, of this gradually increasing vividness. On the other hand, confidences are difficult to keep; discretion is not readily acquired. It is easy to shine in a group of people by revealing facts which are not known. If one has no conversation of one's own, it is a great temptation to astonish people with inside information. In this way, confidences are unintentionally betrayed.

"There is no one who speaks of us in our presence as he does in our absence," wrote Pascal. "All affection is based on this mutual deception, and few friendships would survive if we knew what our friends were saying of us behind our backs." Proust has also pointed out what would be our surprise if for one instant we could catch a glimpse of our own image in the minds of other people, and I might add, in the minds of those who are fond of us. Great friends are frequently separated merely by the sometimes true but always imprudent tale-telling of mischievous people.

Sometimes confidences are so secret and so important that they must be reserved for those who will regard them as professional secrets: for priests and doctors; and I would add novelists, who often exercise discretion by putting what is told them into their books in altered form.

Extremely severe treatment must be meted out to those who tell people the things that have been said to them, true

or false—things that may cause pain or separate friends. There is an excellent rule to follow here: quarrel, not with the person who said the things (you can never be sure they were said), but with the person who has told of their being said.

In all circumstances we must defend our friends, not by denying evidence—for they are not saints and may have made mistakes, even serious ones—but by courageously affirming our fundamental respect. I know a woman who, whenever one of her intimates is attacked in her presence, merely states: "She is my friend," and refuses to say more. That, I believe, is true wisdom.

Friendship, like marriage, implies a vow, which is indicated by Abel Bonnard's definition: "Friendship is the positive and unalterable choice of a person whom we have singled out for qualities that we most admire." There must be no conditions: once friends, always friends. But the moralist will say: "What if your friend proves himself unworthy? Will you love him if he goes to prison, or to the scaffold?" Of course! Read the story, in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et la Noir*, of Julien's friend Fouqué who goes with him to the scaffold, or Kipling's poem *The Thousandth Man*:

> Nine hundred and ninety-nine can't bide
> The shame or mocking or laughter.
> But the Thousandth Man will stand by your side
> To the gallows-foot—and after!

I believe that we need only observe life to be convinced that women can be friends. It must be pointed out, however, that friendships between young girls usually amount to veritable passions, more violent than those of boys, and that they contain an element of complicity, of secret alliance against all adversaries. There are various adversaries: sometimes family; sometimes men, regarded as a hostile race against which the weaker sex feels it must join forces: sometimes other groups of girls. This need for complicity and mutual assistance is due to the greater weakness of the adolescent female and to the stricter restraint to which she has for so long been subjected. In the nineteenth century she could never mention in the family circle the things that were most

constantly in her mind. She had to have a confidante.

A successful marriage puts an end to feminine friendships; but if marriage is a failure, the young woman must have others to confide in. Complicity springs up again, not against the family but against the husband. Many women remain faithful throughout their lives to the idea of banding together to defend themselves against the dangerous tribe of men. This banding together becomes ineffective, of course, as soon as two women quarrel over the same man. A woman must have great nobility of soul and a firm belief in her own good fortune to accept unreservedly the happiness of a friend with a man whom she herself might have loved. Some women, due no doubt to an inferiority complex, cannot witness such affairs without wishing immediately to break them up to their own advantage. They want the man, not for himself but to spite the other woman.

The truest and most perfect friendship is possible between highly intellectual women. Such a relationship existed between Madame de La Fayette and Madame de Sévigné, from adolescence until death, without interruption or lessening. There were no disputes except those in which they attempted to settle who had the greater love for the other.

Families are often extremely jealous of friendships which are too close, and this is easy to understand. A friend is a confidant, as it were, hostile to the family. It has always been said that a woman, upon her marriage, causes discord between a man and his friends. But there is a purely male kind of conversation which will always draw men together, bore all women, and enable friendship to take strange revenges. Dramatists have always made fun of the friendship between a husband and his wife's lover. But is it so comic? These two men undoubtedly have more to say to one another than the lover and his mistress. They get on perfectly well, and it is often the husband's presence that makes endurable the intolerable boredom of certain affairs of this sort. Cases have been known where a break occurred almost immediately following the husband's withdrawal from the scene.

It has often been maintained that friendship between men and women can never approach the high level of friendship

between men. How, it is objected, could sensuality not be present in such relationships? If it were not present, would not the least coquettish of women feel herself humiliated? It is contrary to every natural impulse for a man to associate with a woman as freely as is usual in friendship without occasionally being conscious of physical desire, and if he is conscious of it, the whole machinery of the passions is set in motion.

When a man is out to conquer a woman, his sincerity vanishes. Jealousy creeps in and disrupts the calm and serenity necessary to friendship. Friendship implies mutual trust and the sharing of ideas, memories, and hopes. In love, the desire to please replaces this trust; ideas and memories are put through the sieve of an apprehensive passion. Friendship lives upon security, discretion, and finesse; love upon vigour, delight, and dread. "In love, one forgives serious indiscretions more easily than small infidelities." The calm serenity which is friendship's great advantage is replaced, in love, by the constant fear of losing the person one loves. What man, in the grip of a *grande passion*, bothers about intellectual harmony and mutual comprehension? Such things are for those who have never loved, or who no longer love.

We know of cases in history where pure friendship has existed between men and women. The contradictor will admit this, but he will declare that the cases can be divided into three indistinct and deceptive groups. The first includes lovelorn romantics whose hopeless loves remain in the limbo of emotion. Proust wrote of these weaklings whom women take the measure of immediately and, by means of a few affectionate words and harmless gestures, keep in a state of admiring subservience in order to avail themselves of their company. They call these men by affectionate names, but they will always sacrifice them for their lovers.

Sometimes it happens that the woman is also a romantic, and thus an amorous friendship is formed. The life of Madame Récamier provides the classic example. Such friendship, due to its false similarity to love, is always likely to be invaded by a Chateaubriand and, while it lasts, is uninteresting.

In the second circle of this sentimental purgatory we find old men who seek refuge in friendship because they are too old for love. Why is old age the most auspicious time for friendship between a man and a woman? Because they have ceased in one sense to be man and woman. Nothing is left but memories of flirting and abstract thoughts of jealousy; but this is enough to lend a certain melancholy charm to an intellectual friendship. Sometimes only one of the two is old, and then the situation becomes more difficult; but it is possible to conceive of agreeable friendships between young cynics and retired coquettes (Byron and Lady Melbourne), between young women and disillusioned old men (Queen Victoria and Lord Melbourne). Nevertheless, the older of the two almost always suffers, because the younger is unresponsive (Walpole and Mme. du Deffand). Actually, it is inaccurate to call such relationships by the name of friendship, for there is unhappy love on one side and affectionate indifference on the other.

Finally, in the third circle which has a pleasant atmosphere though it is tinged with a slightly painful monotony, may be put those who, having once been lovers, succeed in passing from love to friendship without quarrelling. This is the most natural of all friendships between men and women. Sensuality is appeased, but the memory of a perfect union keeps them from being strangers to one another. Past emotions have immunized them against the dreaded effects of flirting and jealousy, placing their relationship upon an entirely different plane—a more masculine one—while their profound knowledge of one another enables them to achieve a friendship of more than usual intimacy. But here again we find that the relationship is founded upon a confused emotion and that it is quite different from true and simple friendship.

Such is the case against amorous friendship, and pronouncements of the sort are fairly easy to make. It is taking a singularly narrow point of view to be unable to conceive of relationships between men and women without physical desire as a basis. Intellectual intercourse between the two sexes is not only possible but often easier than between two men. "The friendship of two young people,"

says Goethe somewhere, "is delightful when the girl likes to learn and the boy to teach." It will perhaps be said that this virgin curiosity is no more than unconscious physical desire; but what does it matter, if this desire sharpens the mind and deadens conceit? Between a man and a woman, collaboration and admiration are more natural than competition. The woman accepts the secondary role willingly; she gives the man what he needs in the way of courage and moral support.

If this sort of friendship between two young people leads to marriage, perhaps their love will have the ardour of passion without its uncertainty. Mutual occupation of some kind introduces an element of stability; it prevents unprofitable meditation and disciplines the imagination by reducing leisure. It has been shown that many a happy marriage can, after several years, actually turn into a real friendship with all its best characteristics. Even though they are not married, there is nothing to prevent a man and a woman from being trusted and valued bosom friends; but this relationship can never take the place of love.

I believe with D. H. Lawrence that, for a woman, no intellectual or sentimental friendship can ever be a fundamental emotion. A woman depends upon her body far more than she realizes. She will always give first place to the man she loves physically, and if he insists, will renounce the most perfect friendship for him. It is extremely dangerous for a woman to attempt to introduce sensuality into sentimental friendship, to flirt with friends and disguise physical desire with words. And this practice is far more dangerous for a man; using it, he will never acquire the self-assurance that always comes with happy love affairs. "The real value of love," says Valéry, "is the increased general vitality it produces." Contrariwise, intellectual friendship, when it is the empty shadow of love, lessens vitality. If a man on the point of conquest suspects that he cannot bring it off his self-confidence vanishes and he feels diminished.

There are at least two solutions for the complex problem of friendship between men and women. The first is a mingling of love and friendship—that is, the formation of a bond that is both intellectual and sensual. The second is for the

man and woman concerned each to have sexual lives of their own which are perfectly satisfactory. In such cases the woman does not slyly attempt to turn friendship into an incomplete sort of love. It is absurd and inhuman for a man and woman to want to live as though they had no bodies.

Many men and women can find only in the exalted impersonal friendship of a spiritual mentor the super-human confidant whom they need. People without faith or those who have no orthodox religion may achieve the liberation they require through consulting certain doctors who have a high conception of their calling and who will listen objectively and without prejudice to the most astonishing confessions. "I do not at all mean," writes Jung, "that we must never judge the conduct of those who come to us for help. But I do mean that if a doctor is to be of any assistance he must accept his patients as they are." To this I will add that a doctor must be an artist and must, in his understanding of his patients, apply the methods of the philosopher and the novelist. A great doctor not only treats the mind through the body, but also the body through the mind. He is a true spiritual friend.

For certain readers, a novelist may become the unknown friend who saves them from themselves. A man believes himself to be abnormal; he has always had the idea that his emotions were sinful and inhuman. Suddenly, while reading a fine book, he discovers people like himself; his self-confidence is restored and he is at peace with himself. He is no longer alone. His emotions have been brought into ordinary life, because others have experienced them. Tolstoy's and Stendhal's heroes have helped many adolescents to get through their difficulties.

Occasionally a man will entrust the directing of his thoughts to someone whose mind he regards as more powerful than his own. He is deferential and does not argue; he possesses a master as well as a friend. I myself was fortunate in having a master in the French philosopher who wrote under the name of Alain. His opinion matters to me more than that of any man in the world; in other words, he is still my master. I do not mean to say that I think as he did on all

subjects; our ideals are different and I disagree entirely with him on several important questions. But I have never ceased to draw upon his mind and to do so with a prejudice in his favour.

A certain amount of faith is necessary for the comprehension of a doctrine. Choose your masters carefully and, when you have chosen, try to understand them before refuting them. No friendship, spiritual or otherwise, is possible without faith and loyalty. You will be able to gather great minds about you—a sort of spiritual family. I heard recently of a wood merchant in Grenoble who has Montaigne for a friend; he never goes anywhere without one of his master's volumes in his pocket. Do not hesitate to cultivate such intimacies, even to the point of passion. These great minds will take you with them to heights where you will discover your better selves. In order to commune with Plato or with Pascal, the most reserved take off their masks. The reading of a fine book is an uninterrupted dialogue in which the book speaks and our soul replies.

Occasionally the chosen master is neither a writer nor a philosopher; he is a man of action. Friends work with him under his orders. Here, friendship is on a high level; it is free of jealousy because of the common objective. Happiness prevails because every one is busy and there is no time for ill feeling to develop. In the evenings it is delightful to meet and talk over the day's work. Hopes are shared and all must face the same disappointments. Such friendships exist in the officers' mess, also in the groups of young men gathered round Lyautey and Roosevelt. The chief does not enforce his power; he too is a friend in his own way, and sometimes a very polite one; he is accepted and respected by all as the moving spirit in the group.

Society of any magnitude must, in order to exist, be made up of couples, and families, which may be regarded as original cells. As, in the human body, there are not only conjunctive and epithelial tissues but also the more complex nerve-cells uniting all the others, so I believe we must think of society as made up of families which eventually put forth delicate extensions into several others at once, drawing them together, and we may conceive of friendship and admiration

as the more complex nerve-cells. So spiritual love weaves among the threads of fleshly love a weaker, more delicate weft, but one without which human society could not exist. Perhaps we can now catch a glimpse of this miraculous fabric of affection, trust, and loyalty which upholds a civilization.



CHAPTER V THE ART OF THINKING

I GLANCE at my study window and for a moment my thoughts mingle with the images which seem to be painted upon the glass. Beyond the hard geometric pattern of the balcony railing I can see the green waves of the Bois enveloped in the faint bluish mist of a Parisian morning. At the horizon rises a line of hills, and the hospital on the wooded slope of Mont Valérien looks like a Florentine monastery encircled by black cypresses. A flight of swallows

passes across the pale sky thinly veiled by clouds. Far off towards Versailles some aeroplanes are wheeling and droning; they call up memories of war, aerial bombardments, and sirens groaning in the night. Then the green foliage and the singing of birds are forgotten and I fall to thinking of the death of a civilization, of the end of the Roman Empire, of a little town on the Algerian coast, prosperous and charming in the third century, but nothing but a tragic empty ruin a hundred years later. My thoughts turn to the possible fate of our capitals.

Thus my reverie concerns not only the things of the present, but contains visions of distant lands, recounts ancient happenings and evolves theories as to the unpredictable future. My mind seems like a little interior world in which is reflected the huge exterior universe without limit of time or space. Philosophers have sometimes called this reduced model of the universe a *microcosm*, and the immense world we live in, and would like to undertsand and transform, a *macrocosm*. "Man's mind, like an angel," wrote an alchemist in the Middle Ages, "takes possession of all things that are enclosed in the macrocosm." Let us say rather that the mind *tries* to take possession of all things and that the reflection of the world within us is distorted like the sky and the flowers in a silver garden ball.

My reverie is greatly confused because the mirror as well as the objects, the microcosm as well as the macrocosm, are perpetually moving. There is now before me a picture that seems more or less clear; the iron railing, the foliage of the trees, the birds, and the hills at the horizon. But all memory, anticipation, and reasoning are at the mercy of the waves of the sea within us. My ignorances, my passions, my errors, and my forgetfulness cause distortion, but everything continually undergoes changes that are new and strange. In our minds the world is like a map whose contours are confused and whose boundaries are shifting; we must nevertheless use the map constantly.

The desire to think clearly should make us hesitate a long time and search carefully, but the need to act is urgent. The health of a child is failing rapidly. What is his sickness? Is it physical or mental? Whom should be consult?

Is medicine of any use? Is it a true science? What is a science? A lifetime would be required to study these questions seriously, but what can we do? Answers must be found, for our patient is dying. There is not sufficient time for an exploration of the outside world, and the only view of it immediately at our disposal is the tiny confused one which our mind offers.

What we call thought is man's effort to guess or foresee, by combining symbols and images, the effects his actions will produce in the world of reality. All thinking is the sketching out of action, and after this sketch will be painted, not without corrections, the picture of our life. In order to act correctly we must according to Pascal, make an effort to think correctly. What is correct thinking? It is to make our little interior model of the outside world as exact as possible. If the laws of our microcosm resemble fairly closely those of the macrocosm, if our map represents with relative precision the country through which we must travel, there is some chance that our actions may be adjusted to our needs, our desires, or our fears.

Are there methods by which man can control his thoughts so that his actions will fit easily into the existing scheme of things? Is it possible to draw an exact map of the universe, to achieve definite ends by means of this map, and to reach chosen ports?

It seems that the thoughts of most use in the universe of things are those recorded upon living bodies in the form of instincts or habits. A cat leaps upon a table covered with objects. It stands there gracefully and effortlessly, without breaking a cup or brushing against a vase. Such a series of movements implies a careful calculation of strength required and an exact choice of the spot to land upon. But neither the calculation nor the choice was conscious. The cat thought with its muscles and its eyes. The sight of the table enabled it to decide upon the motions that would be necessary, and the visualizing of these motions produced in turn the positions to be taken by its feet, its back, and its head.

In the same manner a tennis-player, a football-player, a fencer, or an acrobat thinks with his body. The fencer never has time to say to himself that, since his opponent is

doing this, he will do that. He thinks with his foil and his fingers. As a boy, I did gymnasium work and I knew that when I used the parallel bars I had to be exact in my calculations. If I could imagine my body balanced in the air, could measure in advance the extent of its wavering, and chose (during the anticipatory thinking) the fraction of a second in which my biceps had to be contracted and my legs raised to accelerate the motion, then, as though by a miracle, everything became easy. But if there was the tiniest break in the film, if it was out of focus for a few millimeters, the rhythm broke down and the projected exercise became impossible.

It is not by a process of reasoning that the sculptor decides to change the curve of a hip; a direct communication has been established between his eyes fixed upon his model and his fingers caressing his statue. Like the gymnast, the artist thinks with his body. Some living things learn to think with the bodies of others. An animal thinks with the herb. If panic seizes a flock of sheep, each animal runs with the flock, not because it understands the reason for the panic, but because the fundamental instincts of its kind teach that if a sheep does not follow the flock it will be at the mercy of its enemies. Like those animals, mentally undeveloped men, children, and crowds are extremely susceptible to instinctive and corporeal thinking.

On a steamer I once encountered a boy four or five years old crossing the Atlantic alone; he had been put in charge of the captian. No adult would have been capable of his adroitness in picking out the passengers who liked him and those who were annoyed by him. He loved the friendly ones and avoided the others. Undoubtedly he was guided by signs which to us would have been imperceptible. After a quarrel two lovers are not reconciled by words; a sign suddenly produces a smile, their eyes meet, and their bodies draw together. Soon they are in each other's arms, far more certain of an agreement than if a long palaver had calmed them.

We may thus take it that bodily thinking which controls some of our actions with extraordinary sureness really exists. But its range is short. The mole thinks very satisfactorily

with its feet, but it cannot think farther than its feet. It knows nothing of the many unsightly molehills that are formed in a green lawn, nor does it realize the fury of the gardener or the unpleasant consequences of this fury for the race of moles. An aviator has precise reflexes which enable him to make safe landings, but he has had nothing to do with inventing the aeroplane. The statesman who administers the finances of a country cannot think with his body. He cannot even think, as the gymnast does, by means of mental pictures of actions, because these pictures would be too numerous. If his duty is to improve the economic position of millions of people, he cannot say to himself, "I'm working for this shopkeeper or that farmer whom I've seen, or for that jobless man whose difficulties I am aware of." In order to speed up his thinking, he must replace these pictures of human beings, fields, houses, and industries by signs and symbols representing either a person or a thing, or all persons belonging to a certain class; and these symbols are words.

The workman, juggler, or gymnast who thinks with his hands manipulates objects which have weight and resistance: bricks, balls, or his own body. The man who thinks with words manipulates merely sounds or symbols, and this makes action singularly easy. At a hotel you lift the telephone and pronounce the word "tea." In a few moments you are miraculously brought a cup, a saucer, a spoon, bread, milk, marmalade, a pot of tea, and hot water. Imagine the complexity of real actions necessary to the production of these things for you. Think of the Chinamen growing the tea, choosing the leaves; the English steamer carrying it; the captain and his crew fighting a storm; the Périgord cowherd driving his beasts to pasture, milking them; the engineer of the train carrying the milk; the baker kneading the bread: the Spanish or Provencal girls picking the oranges for the marmalade—one spoken syllable has put all these people at your service.

The man who thinks with his hands has a limited effect upon the universe; he acts only upon what he touches. The man who thinks with words can, without effort, set peoples, armies, and continents in motion. Let the head of a Govern-

ment pronounce the word "mobilization," and with this tiny act, requiring of him nothing more than an imperceptible movement of the lips, he will drag all the men in Europe from their homes and families. He will fill the sky with bombers having the power to annihilate hundreds of cities; he will bring about the destruction of a world and the end of a civilization. When one considers the possible effects of a single word, one realizes that language may have been regarded as a magic power by primitive peoples. Kipling's Hindoos searched for the "master word" that would give them power over men and things. Faust hunted through the old books of the alchemists for formulas to evoke or drive away spirits. In the Arabian Nights "Sesame" opened a door; this was a legend, but a true one. In all societies there are words that open doors and words that evoke evil spirits. Every speaker earns his dinner with some "Sesame"; every riot is started with a master word.

The man who thinks with his hand moves heavy objects and moves them slowly, brick after brick, with successive displacements. His care is assured by the very difficulty of his actions. He is obliged to maintain this correspondence between the exterior and interior world which we have discussed as the guarantee of true thinking, for if he does not do so the bricks will bruise his hands, he will fumble the balls he is juggling, or fall from the parallel bars in the gymnasium. But actions are too easy for the thinker with words; the delay between error and punishment is too long for him to realize his responsibilities. He plays with flimsy symbols and forgets the terrible consequences that may follow. He is tempted to take, as Leibnitz said, "the straw of words for the grain of things," and to believe that everything has been done when only words have been spoken.

The difficulty is that things have resistance. One can say everything with words. Napoleon III said: "The principle of nationalities must be respected." And this abstract phrase, which could be taken for truth because it evoked no precise image, has brought about the destruction of modern Europe. An economist, sitting at his desk, writes: "To increase salaries is to increase purchasing power and therefore put an end to the crisis." These words were as good as any other;

they had a flavour of truth, and the economist wrote them in all good faith. Actually, the measures they inspired did not end the economic disorder. Why? Because the microcosm could not influence the macrocosm; because there was a divergence between words and things; because a simple phrase did not represent with sufficient exactitude the complexity of the situation.

It would be a dangerous and terrible thing if, in order to judge of the value of a phrase or a formula, one had to wait for its good or evil results. It is natural that, from the beginning of civilization, wise men should have searched for a surer method of handling explosive symbols. In the manner of present-day traffic regulation, men have tried to regulate the circulation of words. This came to be called logic. Logic ought to be the art of following, in the handling of words, certain rules that would also be guarantees because the rules of the interior world would coincide with those of the exterior world. What we call the laws of human reason are rules for thinking, valid for all men in every age. Some of them are obvious—for example the principle of non-contradiction: a thing cannot be both itself and its opposite. One cannot say simultaneously: "Two and two make four," and, "Two and two make five"; or "This dress is white," and, "It is black"; or "I want this country to be free," and, "I want it to be servile." For many years men have hoped that a kind of error-proof grammar of thinking could be based upon clear fundamental principles. This logic, which was Aristotle's and, in the Middle Ages, adopted by the Scholastic Philosophers, is a discipline not to be despised; it is even indispensable. It guarantees our reasoning against certain errors, but it cannot constitute an art of thinking, for the following reasons:

Logic cannot invent; it must continually reiterate that A is A. If it adds anything, it must borrow either from experience or intuition, both of which are outside the range of logic. Logic allows one to say: "This dress is a dress" but only experience permits one to add that the dress is fragile or that it is pleated. Kant has done away with the folly of expecting pure reason ever to get on without experience: "In its passion to enlarge its knowledge, reason,

made confident by this proof of its power, imagines the expanse of the infinite to be widening before it. The fleet-winged dove, rapidly cleaving the air and feeling its resistance, thinks it would fly much better in a vacuum. Thus Plato, scorning the physical world which keeps reason within such narrow limits, ventures beyond into the empty spaces of pure understanding. He does not perceive that he is making no progress despite his efforts; he lacks the solid basis necessary for his support from which his thought may be set in motion." Many of our political reformers flutter about vainly in the empty spaces of pure understanding.

Logic has certainly made men's minds flexible; it has given them an agility they lacked, but also the dangerous habit of believing that all is accomplished when they have indulged in a process of reasoning which has the appearance of truth. The history of philosophical doctrine shows that, in the course of centuries, men have been able to prove almost everything. They have proved the truth of contradictory philosophies and then their falsity; they have proved the necessity for democracy and also its impossibility; they have proved both the separateness of races and their confusion. "All proofs," said the philosopher Alain, "are for me clearly discredited." Actually, one *can* prove everything if the words one employs are not clear and precise.

A demonstration in Algebra is irrefutable because each term is so exact that the demonstrator can say nothing that is beyond his listener's understanding. Identities in logic are actual identities, but the words used in speaking of emotions, of the conduct of government, of economics, are vague words which may be employed in the same argument with several different meanings. To reason with poorly chosen words is like using a pair of scales with inaccurate weights.

The Cartesian method is an attempt to eliminate certain errors from such reasoning. "I had a strong desire," said Descartes, "to learn to distinguish the true from the false, in order that I might act with a clear vision and go through life with assurance." We must remember the famous rules of his art of thinking. The first is: *accept a thing as true only when one clearly recognizes it as such.* This may seem too simple. "Why," you ask, "accept a thing as true if

I do not believe it to be so?" Descartes replies to your question by laying down another rule: *be careful to avoid haste and prejudice.*

Haste is to be avoided because man cannot understand difficult things quickly. The student who skips through the pages of his textbook will never learn geometry. But men are usually in a hurry—some are compelled to be. An examination has to be taken on a certain day and a whole science or the history of a whole period must be studied before that day arrives. The expert promises to hand in his report within a given time; a government waits; if the expert delays too much, some arbitrary decision will be made; an incomplete report is better than none at all. The journalist would prefer just a few hours more in which to consider a new and obscure question, but the printers are already asking for his copy and the paper must catch the train at two in the morning.

Others are in a hurry because of their vanity. They hate to admit ignorance of anything. A specialist thinks himself disgraced if he has to reply: "I must look into this." In government, business, and society, men speak authoritatively upon questions with which they are unfamiliar. Someone will tell you about Czechoslovakia without ever having been there or even studied its history and customs. Another will give an unfavourable opinion of our aviation when he knows nothing of it except from incompetent observers. Still another will tear a woman's reputation to bits by telling untrue stories of her private life. The average value of conversations could be enormously improved by the constant use of four simple words: "I do not know," or of Louis XIV's favourite remark: "I shall see." If we swear never to surprise anyone into giving a decision and never to be hurried into forming rash judgment ourselves, we will have taken an important step towards Cartesian wisdom.

Haste is not the only cause of error; there is also prejudice. We approach questions with family and group opinions already formed; our disposition, heredity, and education have forcibly moulded our thoughts. If you wish to calculate the effect your group has upon your thinking, try to recall your successive estimates of Clemenceau, Caillaux, and Daladier

after reading articles for and against them in your newspapers; you hated or adored—with good faith but not with good sense.

Our self-interest is another cause of prejudice. Pascal said that if geometry stirred us emotionally as much as politics we would not be able to expound it so well.

There are very few men who do not reckon the cost to themselves of a system of taxes before approving it. Imagine a doctor who has built up a method of treatment which enables him to make an excellent living and adds to his medical reputation; if he should discover that his method was based upon a false theory, would not a hundred good reasons occur to him for doubting the validity of the objections to it?

Everything that is in agreement with our personal desires seems true; everything that is not puts us in a rage. Consider the political life of Chateaubriand; during his exile he became, owing to the Revolution, a constitutional monarchist of the English variety. After the Restoration, Louis XVIII endeavoured to give France that type of government. If Chateaubriand had not surrendered to his personal feelings, he would have wholeheartedly supported the King's efforts, but he was irritated at not being himself chosen to direct the new government. He developed a violent hostility to the King because of this unjust treatment, and he opposed his own doctrine with arguments which seemed admirable because of his gift of language but were actually odious. There is no absurdity or contradiction to which passion may not lead a man. When love or hate takes control, reason must submit and then discover justifications for their folly.

Some people believe themselves to be independent of surrounding influences because their lives have made rebels of them. But rebellion is not a guarantee of independence. On the contrary, it is an acute form of prejudice. The writer who has been too much dominated in childhood will put himself forward as a free thinker in his attacks on religion and family life, but his revolt is the revolt of a slave.

The author of *Le Discours de la Mèthode* first advises us to keep our reason free from passion, and then to make good use of it. For this purpose he provides several rules: *Organize your thoughts in regular order, from the simplest*

to the most complex. Divide problem in as many parts as possible. Make your enumerations so complete and your surveys so general that you may be certain of omitting nothing. This method has undoubtedly been of extraordinary service, first to Descartes himself, and then to the scholars of his day who later became experts in mathematics, mechanical engineering, astronomy, and in some branches of physics. The Cartesian method is still marvellously effective whenever it is a question for the mind, either of discovering its own laws, as in mathematics, or of studying the phenomena which abstraction or remoteness have simplified (as it happens in astronomy). It has seemed, not useless, but insufficient, when applied to the more complex sciences.

In many branches of physics, in chemistry, biology, medicine, economics, politics, the Cartesian method, though still a necessary check, does not make possible the solution of problems, and is not sufficient to direct our actions. How is one "to *organize* one's thoughts in regular order" when *time* is the main factor? How is one to "omit nothing" when the data of the problem are countless? The method constructs within us a microcosm of glass and steel whose exquisitely cut gears engage with perfect precision, but we know very well that the exterior world is not fashioned in the image of this exact and transparent mechanism. The wind-blown leaves, the storm-driven clouds, the labours of the fields and the passions of the city have no place here.

No reasoning, however well conducted and free from haste and prejudice, enables us to foretell, when we look at an apple seed, what the shape of the tree will be, or the flavour of its fruit. No syllogism or theory gives us power to describe the disease that may attack a patient inoculated with an unknown microbe. Such questions must be asked of nature and not of ourselves. The method which, for two centuries, has given men such amazing power, over the external world is a mingling of logic, observation, and experiment. Reasoning has a part in the method, but its conclusions will always be confronted by facts, accepted if they are confirmed by the conclusions and cast aside mercilessly if they contradict the reasoning.

The experimental method is sometimes attributed to Bacon.

He was perhaps the first to formulate its principles clearly, but it was employed unconsciously in very early antiquity. Every savage made experiments without knowing it. Each one of us makes several experiments every day. This morning my study is infested by wasps. I try to discover the attraction. Perhaps it is these carnations on my table? In any case I remove them and in a few moments the wasps disappear. Verification: I get the flowers from the adjoining room and put them back on my table; the wasps reappear, and I have discovered one of nature's laws. I will see that flowers are not put on my table at this season of the year.

Reduced to its essential elements, the experimental method is a fairly simple one. It consists, according to Claude Bernard, "of systematically testing our ideas with facts." Man's observations suggest to him hypotheses based on the relations between phenomena. In order to verify these hypotheses, scholars make further and more rigorous observations. "The observer listens to nature," said Cuvier, "but the experimenter questions her and compels her to reveal herself." For example, he varies the cause and notes the variation in the effect. If he observes a fixed relationship between cause and effect, the idea of a connection is apparently confirmed. However, error is possible. *Post hoc, ergo proter hoc* is frequently a false axiom. That a war breaks out after an eclipse does not prove that the eclipse caused it. There is the story of the Oxford student who drank numerous whiskies and sodas every night and could not think clearly. He gave up whisky and took brandy, then gin with his soda, but the effect was the same. "Undoubtedly," he concluded. "it was the soda." If he had been a wiser experimenter, he would have gone farther and tried the whisky, brandy and gin without the soda; then he would have discovered his error.

The scholar is a man who, by means of observations and experiments, derives hypotheses from the constant relationship between phenomena. If his hypotheses are verified by every possible experiment, he regards them provisionally as laws of nature. Every time I let go of an object which I am holding above the ground, it falls. The rapidity of its falling can be calculated and the acceleration of its falling

towards a given spot is constant. The existence, therefore, of laws regarding the falling of objects will be admitted. Science, which is the sum of such observations, does not in any way constitute an explanation of the universe; it is merely, as Valéry says, "a collection of successful recipes." But these recipes might fail. If I let go of the book I am now holding, and if, instead of falling, it should rise to the ceiling, I would be surprised, but science would not be thrown into confusion. It would merely be obliged to find a more complex law to account for the phenomenon.

Experimental science assumes but one metaphysical hypothesis: the stability of nature's laws. If we do not believe in nature's obedience, or seeming obedience, to definite laws, it would obviously be absurd for us to observe phenomena. If water at the same pressure started to boil one day at 50° Centigrade, another at 75°, and another at 100° without our being able to find any way of predicting these variations, it would be useless to study physics. Happily such things cannot occur. Phenomena have a curious constancy. Why? Metaphysicians, theologians, and even mathematicians have some ideas on the matter. The experimenter knows nothing of it; he is not involved. He finds that the method of observing phenomena, deriving hypotheses from these observations, verifying these hypotheses by experiment, abandoning them if they cannot be verified, and regulating our conduct according to seemingly stable laws, the method which, according to Bacon, "masters nature while obeying her," has beyond a doubt accomplished amazing results.

Owing to its ability to establish constant relations between certain phenomena, which can easily be produced by human force, and certain others which require (if one wishes to produce them directly) more than human force, the experimental method enables man to become a superman. When a child sets all the mechanisms at an exhibition in motion by pressing a button, the action is symbolic of the power which science puts at the disposal of the very weakest of human creatures. Astonishing power! It is wonderful that a tiny insect of a man cast into the universe upon a speck of mud should succeed not only in measuring the distance from his own speck to others like it, but in changing its climate, its

vegetation, and its animals within a few months. It is wonderful that he should have built machines capable of carrying him round his globe in a few hours, and that he should have conquered cold, darkness and famine.

Once again, the scientific method does not explain the universe; it will never explain it, but considering the power it has given to men over physical, chemical, and even biological phenomena, it is natural that many should ask themselves: "Why should not an art of thinking, which has succeeded so well with the material world, be applied to human beings? Why should not the method which has made possible the construction of great factories where robots of steel and copper, do the work of men, be used also to bring happiness to the men who have thus been replaced? Why should not the method which has created races of animal and varieties of flowers create also the superman?" When his children lost their tempers in a political discussion, Lord Salisbury said to them: "Let's try to think this out chemically." By that he meant: "Let's try to regard human substances as we regard chemical ones in an experiment. Do not attempt to foresee its results, but put the chemicals in the retort, heat them, and observe their reaction. If it proves contrary to our doctrine, we will abandon our doctrine." Scientific politics would be like that. Is such procedure possible? And does man find the last word of the art of thinking in science?

After several decades of high hopes—decades at the beginning of which Renan expected to find our world scientifically controlled by members of the Institute, and at the end of which Bertrand Russell imagined that a machine would enable us to know exact moments of past and future events—we must realize, alas, that the experimental method, after having given us the amazing power described above over the external world, has produced very few good results in the domain of ethical, political, and social life. It is easy to understand why:

Experimentation requires a closed process in which artificial isolation is possible. If we wish to know under what conditions water will boil, we isolate a group of factors: source of heat, container, liquid; we apply a given pressure, and we succeed in removing most of the exterior influences. But

no experiment of this kind is possible if it concerns complex human society where the isolation of a closed process cannot be managed.

Experiments must if necessary be repeated, and confirmed by both negative and positive ones. This is difficult in psychology; impossible in sociology. What rational statesman would try to suppress a whole class of society "to see what would happen"? What communist would agree, in order to make an honest counter-experiment, to the re-establishment of capitalism?

Finally, the experimental method requires the good faith and disinterestedness of the experimenter. These virtues, rare enough in scientific experiments of the kind not involving the most violent passions, become superhuman when these passions are aroused.

The scientific search for truth requires that reason shall never cling vehemently to a hypothesis. "If the first duty of a scholar is to invent a system, his second is to regard it with disgust," or at least to be indifferent to it. But a man is a man, and the desire to discover a law may lead the experimenter to temper unconsciously with his findings in a manner favourable to the discovery. In medicine every specialist believes, often sincerely, that his patients are all suffering from the disease in which he specializes. The psychiatrist will say to you: "Almost all illness is psychic." The endocrine-gland specialist will discover disease of the glands where a stomach specialist will find only ailments in his own province.

At least medicine is partly a science. It deals with definite human bodies, which, if necessary during an experiment, may be partially isolated. But when it is a question of the reactions and the passions of millions of human bodies, as happens in economy and politics, the most contradictory theories may all be supported by facts. One can say that experiment has condemned the liberal economy of the nineteenth century since it ended by creating collectivism in our own time; but one can also say that experiment has condemned collectivism, because the latter, in order to save the society it conquered, was obliged to maintain or reinstate

under new names the more or less classic formulas of private property.

Is it possible to base laws upon such experiments? Evidently not, for what makes experiments scientific is their great number and the possibility of repetition. In economy each experiment requires several generations. The so-called Roosevelt experiment and Blum experiment are merely short phases of political evolution too costly to be set in motion voluntarily, too vast for proper observation, and too confused to have any educational value for future generations whose predicament will never be similar.

What is true in economy is also true in politics. We are told: "England has made the democratic experiment with favourable results." But no scientific deduction can be made, for other people are not the English people. Democracy is only a word beneath which must be written realities, and English realities are neither French, Spanish, nor Italian realities. English democracy implies English political life, the taste for open discussion and compromise, the intensity of local life, the understanding on the part of an open-minded aristocracy of the middle classes with whom it consorts freely, the agreement between Parliament and the *élite* of the land—in short, a constitutional monarchy.

To differentiate between democracy and fascism is to differentiate between two words, not two realities or two exact definitions. Between complete liberty and absolute authority, innumerable types of society are conceivable, and, in fact, realized. How is one to discover by experiment whether liberty is better than authority, when there is no means of calculating the degree of a nation's liberty? This does not mean that certain liberties are not desirable, that for a nation at a given time there are no political realities, but it does mean that these realities must be discovered by methods which are not those of science.

One ought perhaps to try to consider political and social problems "chemically," but it must be admitted that this would be impossible in the majority of cases. And that is why many men, so convincing when they speak of their own affairs, talk nonsense the moment they begin to discuss general principles. When an electrical system has to be

repaired, the little world which represents it in the mind of the electrician constitutes such a precise map that he is perfectly at home among the wires and switches. But when a country has to be reconstructed, there is no chart of its social life by which we can lay a sure course towards progress and happiness. Though it be rigorously adhered to, the experimental method is as powerless as pure reason to guide a statesman, an industrialist, or the head of an army.

These men must nevertheless act, make decisions. Upon what are they to base them? Alain says, very profoundly: "Performance must precede volition." A puppy thrown into the water will swim though he has never swum before. He swims before he decides to do it. At birth we are all young animals thrown into the sea of things, and we swim as best we can. The writer, beginning work on a novel, has no precise idea of what he wants to write. If he knew word for word, his novel would already be written. He throws himself into the water. Each chapter suggests the one to follow. Performance precedes volition.

To make plans is sometimes necessary, but the making of plans is not to act. Men produce admirable schemes: "If I were President of the Council. . . .If I were Mussolini. . . . If I were the Air Minister. . . ." To produce a scheme for perpetual peace? Child's play—and Wilson succeeded on the whole in doing it. But to maintain peace in Europe for two years, or two months? A superhuman feat. "Thinking is easy," said Goethe, "acting is difficult, and to put one's thought into action is the most difficult thing in the world." And Tolstoy: "It is easier to produce ten volumes of philosophical writing than to put one principle into practice." For the most part, in matters most important to our existence, we are obliged to find our way through an unmapped labyrinth of actions. What becomes of the art of thinking then?

We have shown the infallibility of instinctive thought and the narrow limits of its domain. The man of action dreams of discovering, in cases infinitely more complex, how to attain the sureness of instinct. In other words, for the man of action, the art of thinking is the art of making thought instinctive. We do not at all mean to say that the man of action should scorn reason. He must think out what he

intends to do, envisage, like the young Bonaparte at Toulon, the problems which he will one day have to solve, observe many facts, and derive laws from his observations. But this meditation, these observations, and these laws must be inscribed within his body. Thought must penetrate deeply and he must react promptly to its stimulus. For in this way only will he acquire the flashing rapidity of decision which events almost always require.

Consider an old physician at the moment when a patient is brought to him. Perhaps, like his confrères he will require tests, and these tests will assist him in his subconscious reasoning, but his instinct, born of the thousands of cases he has observed, will dictate his diagnosis. His reasons for feeling anxious or reassured in regard to a patient are so numerous that he will often find it hard to put them into words. Beside some young and brilliant professor he will not seem to be very learned; nevertheless he *knows* and actually makes fewer mistakes.

The great general does no formal reasoning on the battlefield. From his knowledge of history, his experience, and from information received, suddenly comes the solution, and in Champagne Pétain repeats a manoeuvre of Wellington's. The great writer revises a sheet of manuscript by taking out a phrase or an adjective, or by changing the position of a verb. If we try to explain why these corrections improve the passage we shall undoubtedly succeed, but the writer has no need to do this; he has acquired the instinct for language by long and careful study of the styles of the masters. "The essential thing," says Valéry, "is not to find, but to absorb what we find." Knowledge is ours only if, at the moment of need, it offers itself to the mind without syllogisms or demonstrations for which there is no time.

The microcosm, or interior world, for the great man of action, contains an exact replica of those parts of the outside world where his actions are to take place. A true statesman carries his country within him; he knows better than his prefects what the nation's spontaneous reaction will be. He has acquired this complete knowledge of his people through observation, reading, reflection, and familiarity with citizens of all classes. It is expressed in the form of decisions that are

quick and just. The politician who has no feelers will consult newspapers, statistics, committees; and with all this information will, oddly enough, make mistakes continually. Information is not culture. In the mind of a truly educated man, facts are organized and they make up a living world in the image of the world of reality. The statistician cuts up the world and kills it; the poet moulds a world and gives it life. The great man of action resembles the poet much more closely than he does the encyclopaedist.

The profound meaning of the following famous saying is now clear: "Man is stronger than he knows"; "belief must precede knowledge." We must believe before we know, because acts must precede knowledge. The art of thinking is also the art of believing, because no human being at the present stage of civilization could safely call all his individual and social beliefs into question again or submit them to his conscience. To change all one's opinions is a mental diversion which requires leisure for its indulgence. In order to live a life of action, man must accept most of the moral, social, and religious laws which have been recognized as necessary by his predecessors.

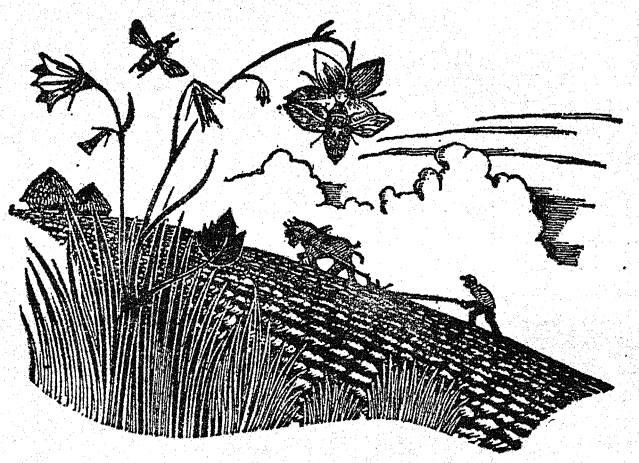
Our minds have successive coatings; the first is superimposed by the beliefs of primitive man; the next by Asiatic, Greek, Roman, and Egyptian religions; the thickest by Christianity and the thinnest by modern ideas regarding the structure of the universe. Of all this we are made: our works of art, our monuments, our ceremonies, our thoughts; and a man cannot free himself from the past more easily than he can from his own body. A sound thought is one which has its foundations deep in the inner coatings of instinct, while its pediments and towers rise up into the clear, bright regions of the mind. It obeys the laws of logic which are its own laws. It observes, whenever it can, the rules of scientific research which have proved their virtues by their victories. It rests upon human traditions which survive in each one of us. Finally, it is a thought from the body and, as such, becomes action and poetry.

If I had to explain in a few words the connection between theoretical thinking and active thinking, I believe I would make use of the following comparison: in a battle, aircraft

and infantry collaborate; aircraft go across the enemy's lines, observe, and reach likely hypotheses regarding its trenches. Aircraft must signal to infantry the direction in which advance seems possible, but aircraft cannot occupy the terrain; serious errors are often, of necessity, made in describing it which infantry will discover during its difficult advance. Infantry cannot fly over obstacles; it must destroy or surmount them, and some of these will seem infinitely more dangerous at close quarters than aircraft believed from their aerial observation. If infantry becomes entangled and blocked, the role of aircraft will be, not to continue a useless advance, but to maintain contact with infantry, realize its errors of observation, and find out how to render assistance. Then they will set forth again on reconnaissance, and the constant collaboration between the executants on the ground and the observers in the sky may lead finally to victory.

It is thus that pure thought can and must fly beyond territory already colonized by custom and observation, over regions that are still hostile. Interpreting signs by hypotheses, it describes what it believes it has seen. Then comes action, which attempts to occupy these regions with the help of plans supplied by thought. Sometimes it succeeds, but more often it is repulsed. Thought must then admit its mistakes, get into touch with reality, and, renouncing the idle notions condemned by experience, suggest new hypotheses. It is only by means of the constant collaboration between reasoning, experiment, and action that we can achieve, not a permanent victory—such is not in the nature of things—but a moment of respite and repose beneath one of those fragile shelters which we call civilizations.

Is it possible to draw in our minds an extact map of the universe and to reach chosen ports? It seems to me that this question may be answered by saying that human thought cannot draw a precise map of the whole universe, that it cannot expect to attain the distant and mythical shores of Utopia, but that, like the navigators of antiquity who used the knowledge of their ancestors and increased it by observing the stars, the tides, and the winds, it can proceed courageously from shipwreck to shipwreck through many Ægean Seas. The wise Ulysses asked no more than that of the gods.



CHAPTER VI — *THE ART OF WORKING*

WHAT is the exact meaning of the verb "to work"? In Littré's dictionary we find the following definition: "to take pains in the accomplishment of a task." This does not seem to us a very good definition. Cannot one take pleasure in work? Let us close the dictionary and consider some examples. A glass-blower works. What does he make? He is given a formless mass which he shapes into a useful article. What does the miner do? He removes raw materials from the earth, such as coal and iron, and gives them to men who will turn them into power, heat, and tools. What does the farmer do? He ploughs the earth, prepares it, and sows it with seed. What does the novelist do? He puts into narrative form the material resulting from his observations of people; in the manner of the glass-blower he creates a work of art from the shapeless mass of this material. What does the student do? He tries to possess himself of the knowledge acquired by those before him; he puts his mind in order; he makes *himself.* To work is to transform or move things and creatures in ways that will render them more useful or more beautiful; it is also to study the laws governing these transformations, formulate them or apply them.

Though man's labours are innumerable and varied, there are a few maxims which should be common to all workers. One must choose among the possible vocations. A man's power and intelligence are limited. He who wants to do everything will never do anything. Only too well do we know those people of uncertain ability who say: "I could be a great musician." ..."Business would be easy for me." ..."I could surely make a success in politics." We may be certain that they will always be amateur musicians, failures in business, and beaten politicians. Napoleon held that the art of war consisted of making oneself strongest at a certain point; in life we must choose a point of attack and concentrate our forces there. The choice of a career must not be left to chance. "What sort of job am I fitted for? What are my natural abilities?"—the biginner must ask himself these questions. It is useless to insist upon the impossible. If you have a fearless son, make him an aviator rather than the head of an office. But once the choice is made, let there be no regrets unless a serious accident occurs.

Within the chosen career there will be further choices to be made. A writer cannot write every sort of novel; a statesman cannot reform every ministry; a traveller cannot visit every country. Here again one must put aside firmly and definitely the temptation to undertake projects for which one is unfitted. Take just the time required for the choice, but no more. When any army officer has carefully considered the consequences of a command, he usually puts an end to his debate by giving the order to proceed. Put an end thus to your own interior questions. "What about next year? Shall I study for this examination, or that one? Or go abroad? Or go into that factory?" It is natural that these questions should be carefully debated, but decisions must be arrived at within a given time—and afterwards, no regrets or changes.

In order to guarantee adherence to the choice made, it is a good idea to write down, from time to time, a schedule for work indicating both immediate and eventual objectives. When referring to this schedule, after several months or several years, we become aware of our powers and their limits. That part of the scheme which requires immediate

action must be isolated and upon it our full attention should be concentrated. Do what you do. *Age quod agis.* Put your whole heart into it. Strive with both your body and your mind towards the goal. When it has been reached, you may retrace your steps, explore the path which cuts across your own, and feast your eyes upon the view. But until the task is done, no exploring or loitering.

Agreeable men are those who are interested in everything; men who accomplish things, who finish their task, are those who, during a given period of time, interest themselves in one thing only. In America these men are said to possess "single-track minds"; their tenacity and their obsession are sometimes boring, but they succeed, by repeated attacks, in demolishing the obstacles that hinder their progress.

One must believe in the possibility of success. If an objective has been well chosen, your powers will enable you, barring accidents, to achieve it. It is useless and dangerous to undertake unattainable objectives. Failure can destroy self-confidence and energy. Goethe advises young poets to write short poems rather than an epic. Samuel Butler says that we must always eat the best grapes in the bunch first. It may be a sound idea to write the easier portions of a long and complex book first. A task too long to be accomplished at one stretch may be legitimately divided into stages; then each stage should be given one's entire attention. One must not look farther than each stage, thereby following the example of the mountaineer who cuts steps in the ice, refusing to look up at the heights or down into the depths because the sight of either would terrify him.

To write the history of a country seems at first a superhuman undertaking. Divide it into periods. Apply yourself to the one you know best; then to the one that follows. One day you will be surprised to find that you have reached the end of your labours, and you will look with astonishment upon the high wall of ice that you have scaled. After several experiments the heart takes courage and breath comes more regularly. An author who has written a great many books is in no doubt as to his ability to finish the one he is beginning. He dares, like Martin du Gard, Duhamel, and Jules Romains, to attempt the ascent of a huge pile of books, and

he is certain of one day reaching its summit.

When a Lyautey arrives in Morocco, he finds a country in dissolution, with neither leaders, money, nor an army. Where another would despair of achieving order, he applies himself to establishing his power over the cities he holds: Rabat and Fez. From these centres he visits one tribe after another, drops his political ideas here and there to widen like spots of oil, makes slow and gradual gains, and finally reduces the hostility to a thin outer fringe. Thus "the farmer cutting hay does not look towards the far end of the field." Thus the housewife who undertakes a thorough cleaning attacks her cupboards shelf by shelf. The fool thinks everything is easy, and comes in for many rude awakenings; the sluggard believes all is impossible, and undertakes nothing; the good workman knows that great things are possible, and prudently, little by little, he accomplishes them.

There must be discipline in work. Many complain that life is short, but are these people alive even for eight hours a day? The amount of work that can be accomplished by a man who is at his desk at dawn every day, or at his bench, or in his shop, is miraculous. Consider the fact that a writer who produced only two pages a day would, at the end of a long life, have equalled in quantity, though certainly not in quality, the writings of Balzac or Voltaire.

But it is not enough to sit at a desk; one must have quiet. The effectiveness of work increases according to a geometrical progression if there are no interruptions. This is true for the writer who needs time to forget the outside world and concentrate upon his own ideas and images; it is also true for the mechanic who is searching for the cause of a breakdown, or for the manufacturer who is occupied with getting out his orders. Desultory work always shows the effects of interruptions.

Thus it is the duty of the worker to keep clear of time-wasters or, as Montherlant calls them, chronophages. They are pitiless, and from the man who does not resist them they will take the last moment of his time without considering that if left alone he might do valuable work. They are unscrupulous. The hardened chronophage will go to the chief of the army general staff the day a war is declared to

discuss the military status of his concierge. Chronophages function by visit, telephone, and letter. Towards them kindness and patience are grave faults. They must be treated ruthlessly; it would be suicide to make friends with them.

Goethe has spoken wise words on this matter: "It is absolutely necessary to break people of the habit of dropping in on you unannounced. They insist on your concerning yourself with their affairs and their visits fill your mind with ideas foreign to your own. I myself do not need such ideas; I have more than I can do to carry my own to their proper conclusion." And again: "He who wishes to do something for the world must see to it that the world does not get the better of him." And when the world reproaches him, if he fails in some way, for giving in too easily, the justice of this advice will be all the more evident. "You are foolish to go out so much," say the chronophages; "you are neglecting your work." Then they add: "Come to dinner to-morrow."

When, despite contrary orders, a bore forced his way into Goethe's house, he was quickly discouraged by the great man's glacial manner. Goethe put both hands behind his back and refused to speak. If his visitor was someone of importance, Goethe cleared his throat and uttered a few monosyllables which soon brought the conversation to an end. He divided his letters into two classes: those asking for something (these were torn up) and those offering something; and only if the letter contained proposals of some advantage to him would he answer them.

It may be said that such egoism is cruel, that there are some very famous men who do reply to letters, and that, among bores, there are to be found individuals worthy of attention, sympathy, and even affection. Many people complained of Goethe for this inhuman quality in him, but it was this quality that enabled him to produce *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*. He who allows himself to be devoured will be devoured, and he will die before he has done his work. The man who has an ardent passion for work asks of others only what will help him. He shirks no work that can be of use and that he can do well, but he flies from conversations, meetings, talkfests, studios full of phrase-makers. Goethe even

advises such a man to ignore daily events if he cannot do anything about them. If we spend an hour every morning informing ourselves about distant wars and another hour lamenting their possible consequences, when we are neither ministers, generals, nor journalists, nor anything, we render no service to our country and we waste the most irrecoverable of our possessions: our own short life.

This discipline in work extended, in Goethe's case, to discipline in emotion. It is true that if we abandon ourselves unreservedly to our emotional impulses, we often render ourselves incapable of doing any work. These impulses are natural and one cannot advise men to sacrifice their emotional lives in all ways to their work. But two rules must be remembered and observed: the first is not to allow ourselves to be turned away from our work by empty or exaggerated emotions (how many lost college degrees can be accounted for by the whims of a coquette!); the second is to sacrifice everything to work which justifies such a sacrifice. Thus Proust gave his life to finish his novel; thus a national leader in war-time or in some serious crisis will sacrifice everything. Joffre stifled his emotions, and certain of his friends complained of his ruthlessness but this ruthlessness made possible the re-establishment on the Marne.

Great workers are all, or almost all, men who know how to go into retirement from time to time. They have country houses, mountain cabins, cottages by the sea where they throw off all responsibility, even towards people to whom they are bound by affection and friendship. Only there do events and emotions take their proper place in the vast, all-inclusive picture. In the tumult of a large city, a play, an article in a review, or a piece of silly gossip, seem to have some importance; they usurp the place of work and serious thought; beneath the endlessly watching stars, contemptible things recede into the darkness and become invisible. Then, in the night's and the soul's silence, the foundations of lasting edifices are erected upon ground swept clear of rubbish and shabbiness. "Oh, solitude," said Barrés, "you alone have not degraded me." Oh, solitude, it must be added, you alone have not enfeebled me.

Something has been said of the worker who chooses his

own work, is free to do it or abandon it, and must discipline himself because no one else will do so. We must now mention those who are not themselves creators or leaders, but whose business it is to assist such persons. In this category are aides-de-camp, chiefs of staff, departmental heads, secretaries, who must comply with a set of regulations which is appropriate; these regulations are to be closely followed, so that no difficulty may be encountered by those whose duty it is to enforce them. This requires special qualities.

A man who works under orders with other men must be without vanity. If he has too strong a will of his own and if his ideas are in conflict with those of his chief, the execution of orders will always be uncertain because of his efforts to interpret them in his own way. Faith in the chief must keep the gang together.

Obviously deference must not turn into servility. A chief of staff or a departmental head should be able, if it seems to him (rightly or wrongly) that his superior is making a serious mistake, to tell him so courageously. But this sort of collaboration is really effective only if such frankness has true admiration and devotion behind it. If the lieutenant does not admit that his chief is more experienced and has better judgment than he himself, he will serve him badly. Criticism of the chief by a subordinate must be accidental and not habitual.

Marshal Pétain tells how, during the last war, when a new officer was proposed for his general staff, he took him out into the country, propounded a problem in tactics, and then himself indicated a solution. If the officer agreed and proved himself to be what the Americans call a "yes-man," the marshal refused to accept him; if, on the contrary, he criticized the great chief's ideas respectfully but definitely, he was congratulated and appointed. "The trouble was," added the marshal, "that this soon spread through the whole army and I could not open my mouth without the humblest lieutenant saying energetically: 'No, Monsieur le Maréchal!' I lost my temper with one of them. It never happened again."

What must an assistant do if he is sure he is right and if his chief refuses to accept his criticisms? He must obey the

order after offering his objections. No collective work is possible without discipline. If the matter is so serious that it can have a permanent effect upon the future of a country, an army or a commercial enterprise, the critic may hand in his resignation. But this must be done only as a last resort; as long as a man thinks he can be useful he must remain at his post.

Sometimes a threat of resignation suffices, but threats may be made too often. When Lyautey, as a young commandant, first took orders from Colonel Gallieni, the latter taught him the art of resigning. Every time the Governor-General of Indo-China refused to give an order asked for by Colonel Gallieni, the latter sent in his resignation; since he was very much needed, the resignation was not accepted and his request was granted. Later on, in Madagascar, when Gallieni was in supreme command, an argument arose between the two men and the younger sent in his resignation. It came back to him in a few days with these words written on its margin: "Oh, no! Not to me!—Gallieni."

A chief of staff, a departmental head, or a secretary has to adapt himself to his chief's methods of thinking and working. Occasionally the orders received are obscure; he must translate them. Foch's orders were translated to Weygand. If they are merely general suggestions momentarily illuminating the obscure future, the chief of staff must derive detailed directions from them. Thus Berthier translated the Emperor's idea into directions for the movement of troops. If the chief's mood is difficult, it rests with the chief of staff to pacify the men he humiliates or offends, and warn visitors discreetly concerning subjects which should be avoided.

During the last war I was attached as liaison officer to the staff of an English general. He was a brilliant organizer and fundamentally a thorough good sort, but so gloomy and of such difficult moods that he was known by his officers as "The Black General." Due to a happy chance (and because I was French) I was not only spared his bad temper, but treated with affectionate familiarity and invited to have tea alone with him every afternoon. In the course of our intimate conversations I was able to speak of everything, and I gradually found myself (a foreigner) entrusted with in-

numerable missions by British officers desirous, in the interest of the service or their own careers, of acquainting "The Black General" with facts which he would have refused to consider if the officers themselves had presented them to him. I realized at that time what assistance can be rendered both to individuals and groups if a powerful man takes a person into his confidence.

A great man's manias must be respected, because the time required to combat them is too precious to waste. A departmental head and his chief reach a state of symbiosis; the clever official knows what words must never be spoken in the chief's presence because they stir up painful complexes or rouse his anger. He knows how to present a proposition so that the chief will be interested and give a favourable opinion. He is clearly aware of the latter's mistakes and weaknesses, respects him no less for them, but he does his best to make up for deficiencies.

Work for high officials puts young people, unaccustomed to responsibility, power, or the giving of orders, in close touch with deliberations and decisions of the most serious sort. Under such special circumstances secrecy is necessary. The young man or woman, proud of being associated with important affairs, may be tempted to impress their friends with accounts of the work they are doing, but they are in duty bound not to speak of it. Immeasurable evil can follow this kind of indiscretion; and in any case there are the equally keen pleasures of discretion to be enjoyed. Nothing could be more exciting than to be the repository of confidences, to know the truth, and to conceal one's knowledge. Madam Récamier was amazingly clever at this. There was a time when she received the confidences of the leaders of opposing parties, two men striving to obtain the same office, and those of an author and his critics. She listened, offered sympathy, smiled, spoke of one to the other when necessary, but betrayed no one. The role was mainly the answering of a few questions, but it was a useful one, and she played it admirably.

An assistant must get not only information specifically asked for, but also that which may be required later. He must anticipate his chief's ideas, prepare the way for their

accomplishment, get rid of unneccessary anxieties, arrange small matters himself, facilitate the necessary routine which encumbers the existence of all important men. An efficient woman secretary is the perfect assistant. Her role is not confined to taking dictation and "tapping out" letters; she must also file letters and replies, memorize addresses, and turn herself into a walking index. She must possess all the virtues of a departmental head, as well as those of a woman. Being a woman, she has intuition; she can keep intact the self-esteem of her superiors, and she spreads an agreeable atmosphere about the office. At the same time she must not make her femininity obvious, for if one of her superiors should become too conscious of it, the work would suffer. A difficult balance, but one that can be maintained.

For a long time men regarded work as a disgrace and a Divine punishment. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Manual work and much brain work had to be done by slaves. In Rome, grammarians and mathematicians were slaves. Later, the theorists wanted to divide men into proletarians and *bourgeois*, the former being wage-earners and the latter those who lived on incomes or profits, but it was a very obscure distinction. A bank director with a yearly salary of two hundred thousand francs would then be a proletarian; a little shopkeeper or a small landowner earning ten thousand francs a year with difficulty would be a *bourgeois*.

Alain offered a definition which I believe to be, if not altogether exact, at least more complete. All those who live by their work, manual or intellectual, salaried or not, he calls proletarians; all those who live by their speech, he calls *bourgeois*. Lawyers, communist deputies, and beggars are *bourgeois* because they all earn their living by persuading others to pay them. Masons, mechanics, engineers, and good writers are proletarians because they do not need to persuade; the excellence of their work is sufficient to sell it. A big manufacturer is a proletarian if his money is earned through his technical knowledge alone; he is *bourgeois* if his success comes from amiability and relations with important business men.

Therefore, says Alain, we have two very different states of mind. The proletarian who works upon and transforms

nature does not need nice manners but the power to overcome. He is therefore rough and contemptuous of politeness; he dresses, not according to the fashion, but to suit the requirements of his work. Alain's *bourgeois* is amiable; he seeks to say the pleasant thing to those from whom his living comes: constituents, audiences, or friends; his clothes do not shock. Kipling, in an admirable poem, demonstrates the strange distant relationship between the Sons of Martha who do things, build bridges, pave streets, pilot aeroplanes, drive trains, and the Sons of Mary who sleep on soft berths in luxurious *wagon-lits*, cradled by the work of others.

Every division of human beings into two groups, or, as one still says, into "classes," is dangerous and on the whole artificial. A young man of the *bourgeois* class may be, in tastes and behaviour, a proletarian and never happy away from motors. A mechanical engineer may be a Son of Mary when he travels and a Son of Martha in his workshop. But it is nevertheless true that some are spared the hardest work, while it is the daily necessity of others, and deep hatred springs up in this way. Is it possible to remedy an evil as old as the human race? Revolutions have always failed to do it; they will always fail because they take into account neither eternal man or the trust of all doctrines—that of original sin.

But it is possible that the progress of the machine, after having rendered a working-man's existence more onerous and more monotonous, will end by bringing it closer to that of the *bourgeois*. Already, in a hundred years, the number of necessary man-hours for the general run of jobs has been reduced by a third. Work requiring the greatest strength is and will be left more and more to machines. It is true that machines have abolished the work of intelligent and skilful craftsmen, replacing it with the tedious belt-system, but this is only a transitory stage. The belt will one day be served by robots. The workman, whose role will then be scarcely more than one of superintending, will become an engineer.

The important thing to remember in regard to manual work is this: whether the work be simple or complicated, it can be well or badly done. There are clever and stupid ways of digging a trench, just as there are careful and neg-

lectful ways of preparing a lecture. A stenographer may do mediocre or excellent work; it depends upon her technique her care of her typewriter, her spacing of headings and the size of her page, and the attention she gives to re-reading. If she tries to make her work a little better than is required of her, she becomes an artist at once and finds herself rewarded for her gratuitous efforts by deep and lasting satisfaction. She has not done this work for an employer, but for her self-respect and her own enjoyment; it is therefore done freely.

The pleasure of working may become so complete that it often succeeds in replacing all others. In my efforts to imagine Paradise, there enters my mind no vision of a place where winged souls do little else than sing and play their harps, but rather one of a study where I work everlastingly at some marvellous novel of infinite length with the keen power and precision that I could so rarely command upon earth. The Paradise of the gardener is a garden; a carpenter's is a bench.

An excellent example of the mingling of manual work and brain work is that of the housewife when she puts her heart into the accomplishments of her duties. A woman who runs her house well is both its queen and its subject. She is the one who makes work possible for her husband and children; she protects them from worries, feeds them, and cares for them. She is Minister of Finance, and, thanks to her, the household budget is balanced. She is Minister of Fine Arts, and it is her doing if the house or apartment has charm. She is Minister of Family Education and responsible for the boy's entry into school and college and the girl's cleverness and cultivation.

A woman should be as proud of her success in making her house into a perfect little world as the greatest statesman of his organizing a nation's affairs. Marshal Lyautey was right when he said that questions of scale were of no importance. A perfect thing is perfect, whatever its dimensions. There is no repose for women except in families who have too much money. A two-day holiday from shop or workroom means two days spent in cleaning, washing, mending, and caring for the children. There are always urgent things to be done, to which must always be added her efforts not to look too

plain, to dress nicely and to improve her mind. A woman's job, if well done, leaves few moments of leisure, but its rewards are immediate. It is extraordinary to see how, in a few days, with very little money and plenty of courage, a clever woman can transform a hovel into a delightful place to live in. This is where the arts of working and loving intersect.

There is of course an art of teaching; it is a difficult one: and it requires long experience. We realize this the moment we try to control our children. A father is rarely a good teacher; either he thinks he knows things and finds his knowledge to be very slight, or he knows but explains badly, or he is too severe and impatient because teaching bores him, or he is dangerously indulgent because he loves his children too much. It is from professional teachers who have made a success of the art that we must learn its rules.

There can be no teaching without discipline. A pupil must first learn to work. Training of the will must precede that of the mind, and this is why home teaching is never very successful. Excuses are too easily accepted: the child has a headache; he has slept badly; there is a party somewhere. A school makes no compromise and that is its virtue. I am inclined to prefer the boarding-school system. It has some serious drawbacks; it sometimes produces immorality and it is always rather severe, but it makes men. The system forces boys to find their own places in a group; in a family they find these places ready-made and it is too easy for them. If absolutely necessary, and if the parents are judicious, day schools are satisfactory up to the age of fifteen or sixteen. For boys between the ages of seventeen and twenty, freedom in a large city is fatal.

To amuse is not to teach. The object of teaching is to erect a framework of knowledge in a child's mind and gradually to bring the child as near as may be to the average level of intelligence. Later in life the facts taught by experience and new discoveries will add themselves to this framework. It is wrong to attempt to upset this natural order and to appeal to a child's mind by diverting it with the spectacle of modern life. Teaching by means of pictures, radio, and

the cinema is in itself ineffective; these methods must not be used unless they involve (and this is possible) some effort or special enthusiasm. That which is learned without difficulty is soon forgotten, and, for the same reason, oral instruction which does not require the pupil's personal participation is almost always rather useless. Eloquence slides in and out of young minds. To listen is not to work. (Naturally this does not apply to the teaching of modern languages.)

Elementary teaching is the most important. Parents are apt not to attach sufficient importance to elementary studies. "My boy doesn't know how to work," they say, "but he is so young." The fact is that everything depends upon a few subjects being well taught in the beginning. A perfect knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic is an enormous advantage. The majority of people do not possess this elementary knowledge. Many men read badly, laboriously; words do not evoke for them at once the ideas they represent. Mathematics are found to be very difficult or very easy, according to the manner in which the elements have been taught. Imperfect knowledge of the first principles of geometry and the rudiments of algebra makes it impossible to understand anything of what comes next.

It is better to teach a few things perfectly than many things indifferently, and an overloaded curriculum is useless. The object of instruction is not to produce technicians, but good active minds. For that a certain discipline is necessary. "Latin and Geometry shall be taught chiefly," said Napoleon. Add a little history, a little physics, and naturally a great deal of the language of the country. That will be enough. In history and the sciences it is not important for the pupil to be familiar with the most recent discoveries and the most up-to-date theories, but he must understand what the historical and scientific methods are. The relatively simple works of the early scholars are clearer and more useful for him than the minute exactness of modern physicists. "Teaching," wrote Alain, "must be determinedly slow in pace." This phrase is full of meaning for some modern educators with a dangerous tendency towards neglecting the ancient culture of the race, a necessary foundation for all education, and towards stressing recent doctrines and happenings. Informa-

tion is not culture, and young men need culture much more than they need information.

Can reading be called work? Valéry Larbaud says it is "an unpunished vice," and Descartes, on the contrary, calls it "conversation with the most reputable people of past centuries." Both of them are right.

Reading becomes a vice when it is resorted to as a kind of opium or a means of liberation from the actual world and entry into that of the imagination. People with this vice read constantly; to them everything is good; they will open an encyclopaedia and read an essay on water-colour technique as greedily as they will an article on firearms. Left alone in a room, they will go straight to a pile of newspapers and magazines and plunge into the middle of no matter what, rather than be left for a moment to their own thoughts. They seek neither ideas nor facts; merely the endless procession of words which prevents them from facing the world or themselves. They retain very little of this reading; they set up no scale of values based upon various sources of information. As practised by them, reading is a passive affair; they run through page after page without interpreting or explaining, without making room for them in their minds or assimilating them in any way.

Pleasure-reading is a much more active process. The novel-lover reads for his pleasure, hoping to find either beauty, or the stirring and exultation of his own emotions, or the adventures which life has denied him. Another will read for the pleasure of discovering among the poets and moralists a more perfect expression of his own observations and sensations. Still another will read, without concentrating on any single period of history, for the pleasure of verifying through the centuries the sameness of human emotions. This sort of pleasure-reading is healthy.

Finally, work-reading is the sort done by the man who is seeking definite knowledge needed for the support or completion in his mind of a structure whose magnitude he foresees. Work-reading must be done with pen or pencil in hand, unless the reader possesses an astonishing memory. To search twice for a passage one wishes to make use of is a waste of valuable time. May I cite my own case? When I read a

volume of history or a serious book of any kind, I always make notes of the important passages, with page-numbers, on the flyleaf. In this way I can refer to them when necessary without having to read through the whole book.

Reading, like all work, has its rules. A perfect knowledge of a few writers and a few subjects is more valuable than a superficial one of a great many. The fine points of a piece of writing are seldom apparent at first reading. In youth, one should search among books as one searches the world for friends, and once these friends are found, chosen, and adopted, one must go into retirement with them. Intimacy with Montaigne, Saint-Simon, Retz, Balzac, or Proust would be enough to enrich one's whole life.

In one's reading, great writers of the past must be given the most attention. Of course it is both natural and necessary to be familiar with those of the present, for it is among them that we are likely to find friends who have our own anxieties and requirements. But let us not submerge ourselves in a sea of insignificant books; masterpieces are already so numerous that we can never know them all. Let us have faith in the choice of past centuries. A man may be wrong; so may a generation; but humanity does not make mistakes. Homer, Tacitus, Shakespeare, and Molière surely deserve their fame. We give them some preference over writers who have not undergone the test of time.

We must choose our literary nourishment well. Each mind requires its own particular food. Let us learn which authors are *our* authors. They will be very different from those of our friends. In literature as in love, we are astonished at what is chosen by others. Let us cling to what suits us; we are the best judges of that.

Whenever possible our reading should be done in the atmosphere of composure and respect which surrounds a fine concert or a noble ceremony. It is not reading merely to run through a page, get up to answer the telephone, pick up a book when one's thoughts are elsewhere, lay it down until the next day. The true reader manages long evenings alone; for some especially admired author he reserves a Sunday afternoon in winter; he is thankful for a train journey which provides him with the opportunity to read a whole novel of

Balzac, Stendhal, or the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*. He derives just as keen enjoyment from re-reading a favourite phrase or passage (the hawthorn hedges or the *Madeleine* in Proust, or Levine's betrothal in Tolstoy) as the music-lover does when he hears the magician's theme in Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*.

Make yourself worthy of great books, for your enjoyment of them will depend largely upon what you bring to them. The delineation of emotions interests only those who have experienced them or young people who await their flowering with hope and anguish. There is nothing so moving as the spectacle of a young man who could endure nothing but adventure stories last year and has suddenly developed a great liking for *Anna Karenina* because he knows now what the joys and the pains of love are like. Great men of action read Kipling, great statesmen read Tacitus or Retz. It was splendid to see Lyautey absorbed in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* the day after an unjust Government took Morocco from him. The art of reading is in great part that of acquiring a better understanding of life from one's encounters with it in books.

The work of the artist is at once like and unlike that of the craftsman. Both must possess a technical adroitness which can be acquired only by careful study of the masters and patient practice. Naturally a gift is necessary (Mozart, Byron, Hugo, Chateaubriand), but it must be realized that, if not cultivated, the gift will remain sterile. I have seen Valéry at work, and I have studied Proust's manuscripts: patient searching, constant revising, efforts to discover the word which either expresses exactly the idea, or, for mysterious reasons of symmetry and harmony, is the *only* one that will do. The writing of a score for full orchestra presupposes a complex musical education which, except in the case of a man of genius, can be achieved only after long and painstaking work. In the highest and most spontaneous art there is something of gymnastics and training.

Naturally the artist finally achieves experience and a precision of style and touch which occasionally enable him, when he knows exactly what he intends to represent, to do it with rapidity and complete success. This seems miraculous to the

uninitiated. Whistler paid little heed when he was reproached with having painted a certain picture in one hour. He was able to paint it in one hour because he had been painting it all his life.

But the acquisition of this technical adroitness which is essential to the craftsman is only a part of the work of the artist. Valéry says: "A poem is not written with emotions but with words." Actually, both are necessary. The moment it is a question of art we must get back to the idea of order and form imposed upon nature. Form is necessary, but perfect form with no contents would not move us. Beethoven's symphonies have marvellous form, but the soul of Beethoven has gone into them: his thoughts, his suffering, and his joy. Racine reached perfection in form, but without Racine's passions what would this be?

Apart, therefore, from his technical labours, the artist (and in this he differs from the craftsman) must live, or rather, have lived. "Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity." We see therefore that an artist's life must be made up of at least three parts: a carnal and sentimental part which alone can teach a poet what men are like; a meditative and imaginative part (the artist is a ruminant who must endlessly chew the cud of his past life in order to transform it into artistic material); and finally the actual technical part. This last may be short: I have known great writers who compose for only two hours a day, but whose reveries, reading, and conversations are merely other forms of equally necessary work. *"Die ganze Arbeit ist ruhig sein,"* says Goethe. Repose is work's greatest achievement.

Must an artist live in the world or out of it? I believe this to be an unanswerable question. Total retirement, natural to the Saint, is injurious to most artists. They work marvellously so long as there are materials at hand. Proust, secluded in his cork-lined room, set out in search of the past; if we were to adopt his rhythm of living (and if we had his memory), no doubt we should each find endless material in our past lives. But we could not do again what Proust did; most of us need alternating periods of work and relaxation. Goethe has further advice: "Solitude is a wonderful thing when one is at peace with oneself and when

there is a definite task to be accomplished." Our task must be a definite one before we seek the solitude in which to accomplish it.

The art of resting is a part of the art of working. A man who is tired and greatly in need of rest cannot do any good work. We are all familiar with those terrible mornings after sleepless nights when our brains refuse to function. It would be useless then to attempt to apply the principles of the art of working. Those principles presuppose mind and body to be in good condition. The human organism cannot live without alternating work and rest. The Anglo-Saxon week-end system is a wise one for social hygiene: I have seen members of the French Government so worn out that they could not keep their eyes open and yet obliged to make decisions upon which depended the peace of Europe. In cases like that, rest becomes an imperative duty.

When fatigue is the result of physical effort, rest is not a difficult art: a man throws himself upon his bed and sleeps like a log; but if fatigue comes from mental effort, sleep may be withheld when it is so urgently needed. In this event there is an art of sleeping, and here are some of its secrets; in order to sleep one must believe in one's ability to sleep; drugs taken in very small doses are particularly useful in contributing to this auto-suggestion. One must lie in a position which reduces bodily sensation to its minimum in complete darkness and a mild, even temperature. All thoughts of the present must be banished, for they cause insomnia. The mind should, if possible, be compelled to consider the distant past where the causes of our anxieties do not exist: childhood, adolescence. Think of things which happened long ago and try to visualize them behind closed eyelids; little by little you will enter a peaceful world where it is possible to sleep.

Another method, very different but often effective, is to regard insomnia as unimportant, to think of it as a fortunate accident, to take up a book or some piece of work, and, without setting a time limit, wait calmly for the moment when physical weariness produces sleep.

It is often difficult to fill an active healthy man's leisure. He is bored when not working; he paces the floor like a

caged animal and sinks naturally into vices which are merely the means of getting numberless vivid sensations from his body with which to fill his empty hours. Modern civilization, with its inventions and machines, has increased the number of these hours, and we must learn how to use them. Here are several methods:

Certain occupations which represent work to others are recreations to us. Acting, gardening, fishing, hunting, carpentry are work for the professional and recreation for the amateur, even if the latter indulges in them with the greatest possible seriousness; first because the use of different muscles and nerves is in itself a rest, and then because the amateur feels himself to be released from his conflict with the outside world, to be at liberty to stop what he is doing whenever he pleases. He is spared the fatigue of compulsion.

The playing of games is a still freer form of activity; there are no real problems to be solved, merely an arbitrary set of rules which the participants have agreed to obey. The chess-player and the bridge-player are not in conflict with the Universe, but with pure skill. Two things conducive to rest result therefrom: the players know that the loss of a game is unimportant, and also that the interventions of luck are limited. The moral benefits of sport must be noted here. Respect for the rules is self-imposed by the participants, because games cannot be played without rules. When a habit of this kind has been adopted by a whole nation for several generations it tends to produce law-abiding citizens. "He's not playing the game," the English say of a man who is dishonest in love, business, or politics. Civilization is man's adoption of accepted conventions. Many of these conventions are as arbitrary as tennis or golf rules, but they substitute courtesy for fear and sport for war, because they enable us to foresee the reactions of those with whom we live.

In the theatre we do things only by proxy. We sit, motionless, watching the actions of others. We are interested because "nothing that is human is alien to us." The emotions and passions depicted in comedies and tragedies are our own. We live them with the dramatist. Why is this restful? Because, in the realm of art, no decisions are required of us. A drama, which concerns us and could be

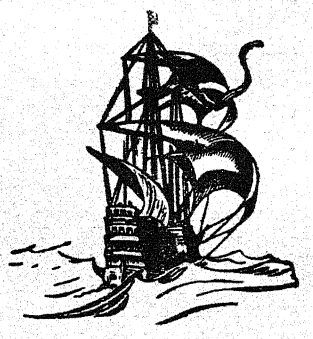
our own, takes place in an imaginary world, and we know this. The aesthetic and the ethical levels are far apart, but the drama distracts its audiences from the pettinesses of life, involves them in its deep and noble passions, and in this way can greatly uplift and exalt them. An effective truce to actual struggles would, however, become hateful if drama were to take the place of real life. The cinema and the radio, in small doses, prepare us for new tasks by distracting us. If indulged into excess, they stupefy us.

It is restful to leave one's home; not because travelling does not entail varied and difficult daily actions, but because it removes our responsibilities. Except in the case of official persons, the traveller now lives for himself alone, and is no longer accountable to a community or a family clan. A foreign country is merely a spectacle; in it we no longer have the continual awareness of responsibility. All of us, from time to time, need a plunge into freedom and novelty, after which routine and discipline will seem delightful by contrast. Periods of rest, however, must be brief, but it is amazing to discover how a few days of travel can restore our mental freshness.

The man who truly loves his work returns to it after the briefest rest with a curious kind of voluptuousness. When he is completely absorbed in his job, the end of work seems like the end of life. But does he ever stop working? A man of this sort carries his problems with him. When a writer travels, he turns some imperfectly worded phrase over and over in his mind. If he wakens in the night, a series of phrases comes into his mind; he will discard imaginary passages in the darkness of his room. The manufacturer on vacation from his office at some seaside resort will suddenly take up pencil and paper and figure out a new cost price on one of his products. If he is within reach of his factory he will return to it on Saturday morning though his men are absent. Wandering through its empty workrooms, he dreams of alteration, increased output, and more efficient methods of production. The farmer walks over his land on Sundays. "There is not a grove of trees or a grassy meadow that has not played its part in his scheme. He observes the effect of the last rain upon his crops and his eye follows the roads

winding between the fields, climbing the slopes or dipping down into the stream-fed valleys; everything is eloquent of past labours and urges him on to new ones."

To disgust men with their work is a serious blunder on the part of human society; what could be more natural than their liking for what they do? "Work keeps off boredom, vice, and poverty." It is the remedy for all imagined evils. "God bless work," my English colonel kept saying to me during the war of 1914, and it is a prayer (I speak from experience) which is always hearkened to. "The soul's joy lies in doing," said Shelley. Active work saves man from himself: indolence makes him a prey to useless regrets, dangerous reveries, enviousness, and hate. Also, the first rule of the art of governing, is, at all costs, to keep a nation at work. A bored nation is impossible to govern, but a nation occupied by work which it believes to be useful and accomplishes on its own initiative is already a happy one.





CHAPTER VII *THE ART OF LEADERSHIP*

MEN can usefully undertake and properly accomplish a common task only when one of them continually directs the activities of all towards the same end. This is self-evident when actions which must follow a rhythm are involved. It would be useless for a gang of men laying rails or a rowing-crew to exert themselves if a foreman or a coxswain did not control their movements. *Every* non-directed collective action turns rapidly into confusion and disorder. All who have fought in a battle know how necessary it is that someone should be in command; and what is true of the army is true of the dockyard, the factory, the newspaper office, the whole country. Whenever men are required to act together, there must be a chief.

The moment the chief makes his appearance and leadership becomes forceful and precise, order succeeds confusion.

During the war 1914, badly led divisions retreated and fell into panic until they were taken in hand by a commander worthy of the name; whereupon they were transformed into troops full of courage and resistance. The same nation, composed of the same men, will show itself to be either disciplined or rebellious, depending upon whether its Government governs or does not govern it. Without leadership, no military action, no national life, no social life is possible.

Human society has, throughout its history, chosen leaders who, piled up pyramid-fashion, formed a hierarchy. Every time these leaders established order and reassured their subjects as to the fate of the country, the latter tried to suppress them; at once disorder returned every time this happened and the hierarchy was re-established in a new form. When the administrative and military hierarchy which constituted the Roman State lost its power, its place was, after a long period of anarchy, taken by a feudal hierarchy. When Russia did away with its capitalist managers, an oligarchy of bureaucrats and technicians performed the same functions. That is why revolutionaries, despite their promises and their desire, have never brought about equality. There can and must be an equality of opportunity and what Bonaparte called *"la carrière ouverte aux talents"*; one can and must desire the equality of everyone in the eyes of the law; but one cannot conceive of equality between leader and led, or of a society without leaders.

Humanity in the course of its long history has invented but few devices for choosing its leaders. The hereditary method is the oldest, and was no doubt used by the wandering tribes of antiquity where the eldest son succeeded the father. Without the order of primogeniture a community was subjected to fights between brothers, frequently followed by schisms and debilitation. In the Bible and in Greek tragedy we find evidence of such conflicts. In ancient and respected monarchies the transmission of power is accomplished peacefully, and the hereditary leader enjoys, in the estimation of his subjects, an added natural prestige of incalculable value.

The high position occupied by the king of England is due to such prestige. Napoleon, who wished to found a dynasty, fully realized this; he knew that the king, though conquered,

would still be king, but that a self-created emperor needed the support of continuous victories.

This is also true of estates or businesses which have been controlled for several generations by the same family. Directors, overseers, and farmers, temperamentally impatient of authority, will submit to that of the head of the family; and this submission is not due merely to habit, but also to perfectly natural feelings and fair reasoning. A father can hand down to his sons the traditions of leadership and devotion to the family business. The hereditary leader, like the hereditary sovereign, feels himself bound to his estates by ties of honour which require sacrifices of him. Of this we have seen splendid examples in France during the long economic crisis we have just passed through.

The danger of hereditary power is that the first-born of a reigning or a leading family may be insignificant or even mentally deficient. Must the nation or the business then be trusted to a man who is incapable of leadership? By no means. In certain countries where this kind of succession is practised, exceptions have been made when the hereditary chief seemed to be unfit for leadership. In England the order of succession to the throne has been changed several times by Parliament. Big business men in the United States have taken measures during their lives to limit the extent of the power which might come to sons unfit to succeed them. Tempered by usage and good sense, controlled by a parliament or a council, hereditary power has great virtues.

The most important quality in a leader is that of being acknowledged as such. All leaders whose fitness is questioned are clearly lacking in force. The elected leader should have indisputable authority over those who have chosen him, but it often happens that the qualities for which he has been elected (eloquence, good-nature) are not the ones required, and that he turns out to be weak and insignificant. Also, in a nation split by parties, it may be that the elected leader represents only a little over half the electors. If the rest of them feel anything like hatred for him, the situation created is dangerous for the State. We have several times seen great countries in doubt and discouragement because a leader

elected by the majority did not have the confidence of the whole people.

The election of a leader is very dangerous when it is a question, not of a country, but of a smaller community where the leader's authority is directly exercised and when he must be re-elected at stated intervals. How can he obtain the obedience of men whose votes he will shortly be soliciting? To elect by a majority vote the head of a business enterprise or the general of an army is to prepare ruin for the enterprise and defeat for the army. All administrations quickly realized this, and even the most democratic countries have given up the system; they see to it that only representative officers, such as deputies, senators, *commissars*, are elected by the people; these officers are (or should be) executives, not leaders. It is very dangerous to divide authority in such a way that no action is possible. The Constitution of the United States is so worded that, if President and Congress are in disagreement, it frequently happens that two whole years elapse during which the country has no foreign policy at all. This is a serious disadvantage for America and for the other nations; the English method, being more flexible, seems to function more satisfactorily.

The mandarinate is the system of choosing leaders by examinations which, if passed successfully, entitle them to diplomas and offices. This method was formerly used in China, and, to a certain degree, it is used in France to-day. In order to obtain positions in the army, the diplomatic service, and most other Government departments, a Frenchman must pass certain examinations. This seems fair because the conditions are the same for all competitors, but it has nevertheless serious faults. A man whose mental powers develop slowly and who might at forty prove himself an admirable leader may find that he is out of the running because of age-limits. The qualities which make a good leader do not always appear and often they are not even recognized during an examination (Paul Valéry has no hesitation in saying that the greatest evils to-day are elections and diplomas).

The mandarinate is absolute when not only is the entry upon a career guarded by an examination, but also each new

promotion must be competed for. In France this is the case with the medical profession. In the army, the *Ecole de Guerre* and the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes Militaires* are two additional barriers to be surmounted, but seniority, appointment, and patronage play their roles in peace-time—victories in war-time. The French system is a limited mandarinate.

There is little to be said of seniority. It is evident that when men grow older they acquire experience, unless they are completely idle, stupid, or too obstinate to learn anything. But there are many old men, and no one has ever maintained that, in order to pick out the best of them, it is enough to look at their birth certificates. Therefore appointments have to be made.

The most reasonable method seems to be for the heads to appoint those directly under them; they will be obliged to count on them and will be responsible for their acts. The hereditary monarch or elected president appoints a prime minister with the approval of a controlling assembly or parliament; the prime minister chooses his own department heads; the department heads make appointments within their departments. The pyramid is erected from the point downwards, which would be insane architecturally, but is successful administratively.

This system is really a good one, as far as human things are good: it is wise in principle, but it functions imperfectly. Apart from those of president and several political ministers, all appointments, including those which require scientific knowledge, should be made on grounds of technical value and moral honesty. It is in the interest of the country, and therefore of those who govern it, that the head of the army or the railroads should be a man of the highest standing, whatever his political opinions, religion, friends, or connections. But nothing can prevent men from having strong feelings. Friends and relatives and political partisanship play a part in appointments, and this is sometimes regrettable. We must all try to control others and ourselves in order that merit may not suffer.

Finally, in certain desperate cases when a nation is disorganized, no one appoints a leader; he imposes himself upon the nation. No supreme power appointed Cromwell,

who was an obscure individual commanding a few cavalrymen. The Revolution made Bonaparte a general; he made himself the nation's leader. Recent examples of this are in everyone's mind. It is evident that the leader who gains his position by force has the necessary qualities for leadership; if he did not have them he would not have acquired so much power. The difficulty is to discover whether his gifts are those of a party leader or a national leader.

When a self-appointed leader comes into power, the difficult question of his successor then arises. Cromwell's son did not rule for long; Bonaparte's son died in exile. Lenin's successor hated what had been done and destroyed it.

The truth is that choosing a leader is a problem which does not admit of a perfect solution. Everything depends upon past circumstances and the nation's future objectives. But whether a leader is elected, appointed, imposed by birth or power, he cannot last if he does not possess the qualities that are required for leadership.

A leader's mission is to direct the actions of others and it is imperative for him to know to what goal he intends to lead them. The most important quality for him to possess is will-power; he must know how to make decisions and take the responsibility for them. Naturally, before making a decision, he must inform himself thoroughly and weigh all the circumstances. When he had decided and given his command, he must stick to his guns, unless some unexpected and insurmountable obstacle is encountered. Nothing is so discouraging to subordinates as a chief who hesitates. "Firmness," said Napoleon, "prevails in all things."

In order to make decisions, a leader must have great moral courage. These decisions are frequently painful to him. At the beginning of the war of 1914, Joffre was obliged to remove a good many generals who were his friends. Occasionally the sacrifice of a few men is required for the safety of many. A leader can and often must be severe; he has no right to be malevolent, or cruel, or vindictive. He must despise idle gossip and control it if possible.

He must have round him a body of devoted assistants who can deal with minor decisions for him. He must not let the trees hide the wood. For the execution of orders, he

has his technicians whom he has chosen and in whom he has confidence; he allows them to act freely and is content to verify, by frequent checking, the exactitude of the information they bring him. "And what do you do?" Layautey, was asked one day. "I am the technician of general ideas," he replied. A leader with experience behind him knows that it is not possible to follow in detail the activities of each one of his subordinates. Especially in matters of economics, he confines himself to pointing out certain general trends and to insisting that private interest should have respect for public interest; he does not try to substitute a plan for the inevitable results of the desires of millions. The traffic officer regulates the flow of traffic, he does not assign a particular course to each vehicle.

The chief must inspire the respect of his technicians; if he cannot, there will be doubts and conspiracies. There is only one way of acquiring respect and that is to be worthy of it. A great leader is a great personage; he is unbiased and without self-interest. Baldwin and Poincaré were perhaps lacking in brilliance, and Baldwin made a point of not having it, but they were both men whose scrupulous financial honesty could not be questioned. Baldwin bequeathed a part of his fortune to the nation; Poincaré would never make use of Government servants for his personal needs. Both had the straightforward qualities that a manufacturer requires of a factory manager or a husband for his daughter. These elementary virtues made them powerful. One could approve or disapprove of their politics, but even their opponents did not refuse them the right to govern. A dictator gains power through being frugal and incorruptible.

A leader must have but one passion: for his work and his profession. He must be reserved, even to the point of shrouding himself in mystery. I would not criticize him for fostering a legend. The character commands and governs as much as the actual person. Kipling's *Man Who Would Be King* was an adventurer who by sheer force of character dominated several mountain tribes and became their chieftain, but he lost his prestige and his throne when he was weak enough to fall in love with one of his subjects and allowed her to see that he was only a man. "How many men," said Napoleon, "get into difficulties merely because

of their weakness for a woman!" And here we should speak of the leader's wife—a difficult role to play; she must defend him against the world, keep him from fatiguing himself uselessly, refrain from suggesting impulsive action, make her house a peaceful refuge and not another empire to be governed—the most ungovernable of all.

Once during a discussion of the essential qualities of a statesman in the presence of William Pitt, some one mentioned industry, another energy, still another eloquence. Pitt said that, on the contrary, the essential quality for a prime minister was patience. He was right, not only for a prime minister, but for all whose duty it is to lead groups of men. Stupidity is a factor to be reckoned with in human affairs. The true leader always expects to encounter it, and prepares to endure it patiently so long as it is normal stupidity. He knows that his ideas will be distorted, his orders carelessly executed; and that there will be jealousy among his assistants. He takes these inevitable phenomena into account, and instead of attempting to find men without faults, who are non-existent, he tries to make use of the best men at his disposal—as they are, and not as they ought to be.

Another form of patience is continuity of effort. When an objective is achieved, the true leader does not imagine that the affairs of his country have been put in order for all time. Nothing in this world is ever permanently settled. "The most dangerous moment," said Napoleon, "comes with victory." A well-kept garden will be overgrown by weeds if it is neglected for a time. A rich and powerful country cannot remain undisciplined for several years without falling into the hands of its worst citizens and being conquered by its neighbours. Its leader knows that his efforts never bring lasting results and that they must be recommenced every morning.

Discretion is an equally necessary virtue. "Secrecy," said Richelieu, "is the essence of national affairs." Charles I of England lost his throne and his head because of an indiscretion; he was imprudent enough to tell his charming queen of his plan regarding certain members of Parliament. She told one of her trusted ladies-in-waiting what was about to happen, and the latter, having friends in the other camp

lost no time in warning the threatened members. Thus, when the moment arrived for the great coup, the king found his birds flown and the people up in arms. Moral: "Tell only what is necessary to the person one must tell, and only when it must be told."

"Nothing," wrote Colonel de Gaulle, "strengthens authority so much as silence." Speech dilutes thought; it allows one's courage to leak away—in short, it dissipates the concentration that is required. Was anyone so taciturn as Bonaparte? The Grand Army followed his example. "I have known officers," wrote Vigny, "who enveloped themselves in a Trappist silence and never spoke except to give an order." President Coolidge knew so well that his muteness was useful to him that he remained silent on principle and also to foster his own legend. Louis XIV had a grand and serious manner which inspired fear and respect in public and prevented people whom he greatly admired from taking liberties even privately. No doubt it is very difficult for a leader to keep the right balance between the reserve and solemnity necessary to his position and the affability required of him in the selection of his subordinates. But this difficulty may easily be overcome by exercising the tact which is one of the natural attributes of a man who is born to great responsibilities.

To all these qualities may be added physical courage (the only virtue which precludes hypocrisy) and health. Good health increases a leader's power, rendering it easier for him to be patient, industrious, and strong-willed. Two of Marshal Joffre's great qualities were his appetite and his ability to sleep. To them we owe the Marne, because good physical equilibrium makes for alertness of mind. "Coolness is the most important quality for a man destined to rule." One recalls the occasion when Gallieni, after giving some orders on the battlefield opened a book. Lyautey, then a young officer, was astonished at such procedure. Gallieni said to him: "I've done all I could do; now I'll wait and see what happens; while waiting, I'll think of something else." It was a good way of clearing his mind and maintaining his composure. Lyautey followed his example later when besieged at Fez and believing all to be lost he took up a

volume of Vigny. "It gives me pleasure," said Montaigne, "to see a general before a fortress which he intends soon to attack, giving his whole attention to the chatting of his friends; and also to think of Brutus stealing a few hours from his nocturnal duties to read and abridge Polybius. It is the insignificant people, weighed down by the burden of their affairs, who do not understand how to put it aside and take it up again."

Character is of the first importance, but intelligence is nevertheless essential. It is desirable for a leader to have a broad education. History and poetry increase his knowledge of human passions. Culture offers the man of action opportunities now and then to capture his serenity; it puts at his disposal models of order and clarity. It is, in a sense, a work of art to reconstruct a country or to lead an army, and the man who has acquired a sense of beauty from his studies will be the more successful for it.

"If the value of scientific studies," writes Marshal Foch, "lies in accustoming the mind to materially determined magnitudes and formulas, the value of studying literature, philosophy, and history is to produce thoughts concerning the living world, thus training and widening the intelligence and keeping it vividly alive and fruitful when it enters the realm of the indefinite. The future will only increase the necessity for an army officer to acquire general culture along with his professional knowledge."

Naturally professional knowledge is essential. When, some time ago, I published *Dialogues sur le Commandement*, Marshal Fayolle wrote me a letter.

> A man (he said) can be a good officer if he has character, good sense, and above all great general knowledge which comes only after long study. It has not been sufficiently recognized that many in the high command during the last war were former professors in the *Ecole de Guerre*: Foch, Pétain, myself, and many others. . .it was the first time professors had become generals and it resulted from the essentially practical instruction offered at the *Ecole*. This instruction is founded entirely upon history and adaptation: text-book

> study and written exercises in winter and studies and manoeuvres in the field in summer. . . .You can imagine that the man who for years has solved varied problems in military tactics does not find himself at a loss on the battlefield. Solutions can always be found if the instruction has followed clear and rational lines, combining the physical, the intellectual, and the moral—important in war—so that each may contribute its proper share. Care must be taken not to neglect one for another; all are equally necessary.

A leader's intelligence must have simplicity and clarity; action is difficult when the mind is full of complex theories and schemes. An over-organized industry wastes just as much money as one without organization—the transmission uses up all the motor's power. (For this reason small enterprises directed by one man have the better of larger trusts because their costs are less and the quality of their product higher). A leader must have a few very simple ideas, acquired from experience and confirmed by putting them into practice. This structure created by experience will contain much exact knowledge for use in connection with a given action.

A leader must know how to use the minds of others. "One must listen a great deal and speak little," said Richelieu, "in order to govern a nation properly." But only certain men who possess exact information are to be listened to. It is an excellent idea to say nothing, and it is no less useful to impose silence on talkative men.

A leader should have a quick intelligence. Time is a factor in all action. An imperfect scheme put into action at the proper time is better than a perfect one accomplished too late. Sometimes time is so important that it becomes the principal consideration. An air minister must not say: "With my assistants, my budget, and the difficulties of administration, how soon can I build five thousand aeroplanes?" but, "Since I must have five thousand aeroplanes by spring, what budget must I insist on and what effort on the part of my assistants must I require in order to complete the job on time?" In the dressmaking business as in that of war, in the running of a bank as in that of a newspaper,

slowness can be fatal. Here the chief thinks quickly and surrounds himself with assistants who act quickly.

Finally, a leader must take into account both tradition and custom. Mere existence is, in his opinion, a virtue. He builds the future of materials the more solid of which are furnished him by the past. He re-cuts and re-shapes but he never discards. In an admirable story, Kipling showed how the River Gods punished the Builders of Bridges for having defied the ancient laws of work. We men of the twentieth century are marvellously equipped for conquering the universe, but the universe has terrible ways of avenging itself, and the consequences of our acts are not always easily foreseen. During a revolution, men seem to destroy the traditional defences of a country, but one must wait for the end of it in order to form an opinion. The French Revolution was ended by a Restoration. The wise leader does not forget that the sorcerer's apprentice had the utmost difficulty in quieting the magic broom which his spells has set in motion.

Whether he be minister, officer, builder, or manager, the leader communicates, with his subordinates in three ways: by the orders he gives, by the reports he receives, and by the inspections he makes.

An order must first of all be clear. A meditation may be vague, a scheme always has something of the vision in it, but an order must be precise. All orders can be misunderstood; an obscure one will never be understood. "To do a thing well," said Napoleon, "one must do it oneself." This is not true, but the prudent leader will admit that few people understand and that almost everyone forgets. It is therefore not enough to give an order; one must see to its execution and, when giving it, anticipate anything that may nullify its effectiveness. The stupidity of human beings and the malevolence of chance are limitless. The unexpected always happens. The leader who endeavours to frustrate the onset of ill luck and who strengthens the weak points in his schemes against stupidity is more apt to impose his will than one who does not take these measures.

These precautions become less necessary when the leader succeeds in gathering about him subordinates whom his

experience has taught him to trust. Every national leader has his cabinet, every general his personal staff. These assistants are familiar with the chief's peculiarities; they know how to serve him; they understand his orders at once and see that they are carried out to the letter. There are nevertheless few people in the world who can be counted on. It was said of President Wilson that he had faith in humanity but distrusted all men. The true leader distrusts humanity but has faith in a few men.

How are these men to be chosen? One of the leader's duties is to make himself familiar with groups of men from which he can recruit his subordinates. One of Marshal Pétain's strong points when he took command of the French army was his former professorship in the *Ecole de Guerre* where whole generations of young officers had passed through his hands. Gambetta journeyed through every part of France so that he might get to know the magistrates of the departments. A man who has the honour to govern a country must try to discover its best men for important Government offices. Not only must he make use of existing material, but it is his duty and to his interest to create new material. This is done abroad by political parties; in England, for example, by the Conservatives. They keep an eye upon the great universities, hoping to find young men who can one day be turned into statesmen. There is a college for their special training. If they prove themselves brilliant, the party obtains for them a seat in Parliament and the Prime Minister endeavours to give the best ones some experience by making them parliamentary secretaries, then under-secretaries. The party leader must see to the recruiting of a governing class; this is also the duty of the heads of big businesses, and some of these men realize it. Le Creusot, for instance, has schools which are admirably conducted and where an impartial sifting out makes it possible to prepare each boy for the highest post of which he seems likely to be capable.

It is often difficult to create a perfect understanding among subordinates. There should be no snobbery or, as it were, local patriotism, in any one department, rendering it hostile to other departments. With the railroads, when there are

difficulties between operation and management, or in an army staff, when a dispute arises between headquarters and officers in the field, it is important that everyone should be made to understand that an army, a factory, or a country resembles a separate and living body and that any conflict between its organs would be literally suicide.

If often happens that the subordinates who have great admiration for their chief and work hard for him are jealous and vie with one another too greedily for his favours. He must foresee these unfortunate situations and deal with them, for they seriously endanger the efficiency of the group. As the experienced chauffeur can tell by listening to his motor that one of its cylinders is not firing properly, so the born leader knows when his subordinates are not serving him, seeks the cause, and finds it. Frequently the cause is insignificant: a little dirt in the carburettor, a shrug of the shoulders—actually no more than a nervous habit, but mistaken for an insult.

The leader receives reports on the morale of his subordinates and the results of his orders, and he always distrusts these reports. I once knew an old manufacturer who said: "All information is false." And he was right, for almost everything is exaggerated, distorted or suppressed. The only way not to be mistaken in one's facts is to make personal inspections from time to time. These visits can be amazingly effective; true and exact reports are sent in immediately. Marshal Pétain tells how, in 1915, he took command of a sector where for several weeks headquarters had been insisting upon attack, the *communiqués* had been reporting small gains and, naturally, rather heavy losses. Pétain wisely suspected something, went into the front lines with surveyor's instruments, found that the *communiqué's* had been falsified to please headquarters, and that the gains were imaginary. Reports submitted to those in command are almost always favourable or presented in a way to strengthen the theories of the officer who has prepared them.

An exacting leader can always command more affection than one who is indifferent. The best way to impose severity is to have about one only those whose qualities one values. Any man can easily endure criticism if his character and

intelligence are clearly not called into question. To say quickly and forcefully what one feels strongly is the wise course. A severe reproach, if rapidly spoken, is less painful than hostile and sulky dissatisfaction. Subordinates must realize that if an order is not carried out they will suffer, but also that they will be exonerated if its execution leads to disaster. A true leader will always take full responsibility for his actions.

The king is the natural defender of his people against the avidity of the Great, and any leader must see to it that his workmen, soldiers, or sailors are treated by his subordinates with justice and respect. That is the most difficult part of his duty; he must not weaken the authority of his lieutenants or tolerate any abuse of their authority. There is no rule here; in this, as in all things, he walks a tightrope, dipping his balance-rod first to the right and then to the left in order to keep his equilibrium. In 1917, Pétain's severity, justice, dignity, and affection in suppressing mutinies provided a fine example of this equilibrium.

As far as possible the duty of a leader is to foresee dissatisfaction and to remedy injustice before complaints are made. To accomplish this he must maintain close contact with the men he controls. Let him go into the trenches if he is a general; let him arrive at the factory with his workmen now and then if he is the manager. He must have some imagination; an understanding of other men's lives is necessary to him, so that he may be able to protect those under him from unnecessary suffering. The secret of gaining their affection is to feel affection for them and to be able to do their jobs as well as they do them themselves. Men endure taking orders, and even like it, if the orders are given intelligently.

Governing and commanding are two distinct arts in time of peace. To command is to lead a group of human beings under discipline towards a definite goal. An army officer knows that he will be obeyed by his men, except in rare cases of serious insubordination. He also knows perfectly well what his objective is: the defence or the taking of certain territory. The head of a large commercial enterprise knows that he must produce a certain commodity at a given

price and in certain quantities, and that if he fails he will be ruined and his employees jobless. Except when social conditions are unbalanced, he is his own master, providing he complies with the law. A dictator is like a general: he commands rather than governs.

The head of a free nation's government must direct towards obscure and shifting objectives the actions of a group of people who are not compelled to obey him by anything except the fear of anarchy, which fear does not exist in times of social peace. He can do nothing without being criticized by opponents whose desire to put someone in his place makes them the more pitiless. His lieutenants are not respectful assistants; they are his equals and his eventual successors.

What virtues must we require of a man to whom we entrust the directing of our affairs? Above all, a sense of what is possible. In politics it is useless to formulate great and noble projects if, due to the existing state of the country, they cannot be accomplished. The impulses of a free people are at all times a parallelogram of forces. The great statesman realizes precisely what these forces are and says to himself without ever being seriously mistaken: "I can go just so far and no farther." He does not allow himself to favour one class, foreseeing the inevitable reactions of the neglected groups. A prudent doctor does not cure his patient of a passing complaint with a remedy that produces a permanent disease of the liver; and a judicious statesman neither appeases the working class at the risk of angering the *bourgeoisie*, nor does he indulge the *bourgeoisie* at the expense of the working class. He endeavours to regard the nation as a great living body whose organs are interdependent. He takes the temperature of public opinion every day, and if the fever increases he sees to it that the country rests.

Though he may fully appreciate the power of public opinion, a forceful and clever statesman realizes that he can influence it fairly easily. He has calculated the people's power to remain indifferent to his efforts; they have their moments of violence, and their angry protests are legitimate if the Government brings poverty on them, takes away their traditional liberty, or seriously interferes with their home

life. But they will allow themselves to be led by a man who knows where he is going and who shows them clearly that he has the nation's interest at heart and that they may have confidence in him.

The sense of what is possible is not only the ability to recognize that certain things are impossible—a negative virtue—but also to know that, to a courageous man, things which appear to be very difficult are in fact possible. A great statesman does not say to himself: "This nation is weak," but "This nation is asleep; I shall wake it up. Laws and institutions are of the people's making; if necessary, I shall change them."

But above all, the determination to do something must be followed by acts, not merely words. Mediocre politicians spend most of their time devising schemes and preaching doctrines. They talk of structural reform; they invent faultless social systems and formulate plans for perpetual peace. In discussing the art of thinking we said that a project is never an action. In his public speeches the true statesman knows how, if necessary, to make polite bows to new theories and to pronounce ritualistic phrases for the benefit of those who guard temple gates; but he actually occupies himself by taking care of the real needs of the nation. "In 1939," he says, for instance, "France must above all maintain peace, provide for her aerial defence by producing more aeroplanes, increase her production in other industries, and finally, put her finances in order." He endeavours to accomplish these definite and precise objectives in ways that seem best to him. If he finds obstacles in his path, he makes detours. Vanity, intellectual pride, and a feeling for system are serious handicaps to the politician. Some party leaders are ready to sacrifice the country for a theory or a set of principles. The true leader says: "Let the principles go and save the nation."

Will his work be incomplete? Will injustice follow? He realizes these possibilities, for every complex piece of work is incomplete. In Georges Bernanos's splendid book, *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, an old priest tries to make a young one understand that even a saint cannot turn a parish into a group of upright men and women. To illus-

trate his point the old man tells the story of a Belgian woman who was sexton of a church and wanted to make it shine like a convent parlour. "Oh, the old wretch was a worker. She cleaned, she waxed, and she polished. Naturally there was a fresh coat of dust on the benches every morning, a new mushroom or two on the floor of the choir, and cobwebs—why, my boy, there were cobwebs enough to make a bride's trousseau." The sexton did not lose heart; she swept and she washed. And the moss began to grow up the columns. Sundays filled the church with dirt; and festival days finally killed her. "In a way," concludes the old priest, "she was a martyr; one cannot deny that. Her mistake was not in fighting the dirt, but in trying to get rid of it altogether, as though such a thing were possible.... A parish is necessarily a dirty place."

A continent is dirtier still, especially an old continent like Europe, which has been invaded for centuries by mushrooms and ants, by bitterness and hate. President Wilson was like the old Belgian woman; he wanted to turn this dusty old planet immediately into a federation of lawyers. It was an excellent idea, of course, but it was impossible to carry out, just as it is impossible to-day to see how things are going and clean up Europe once and for all. A great statesman, like a good housekeeper, knows that cleaning has to be done every morning. A quarrel takes place; he endures it patiently, realizing that another will begin as soon as it has subsided. He agrees to a settlement, though it be unsatisfactory and merely temporary, because he knows that in human affairs nothing is satisfactory or permanent. After repeated delays, peace (international or social) draws near. Ten years, twenty years, and the work of his generation will have been done. Then the next one will begin its day-to-day existence.

It is the right of a leader worthy of the name to be obeyed. A community that cannot respect the leaders it has chosen is doomed, for it will become incapable of action. It may, of course, prefer one hierarchy to another. In time of war, for instance, it is obliged to substitute the military for the civil, and when this is done there must be allegiance to the chosen leaders. Lack of discipline spells defeat to an army and ruin to a manufacturer. Similarly, communities at the

mercy of two conflicting hierarchies are poorly constituted. It is a bad thing for workmen to be torn between two disciplines: that of their employer and that of their trade union. The extent of the employer's and the union's power must be clearly indicated, and, when this has been done, absolute authority given to each in their own sphere. Such an arrangement has been shown to be possible in England and the Scandinavian countries.

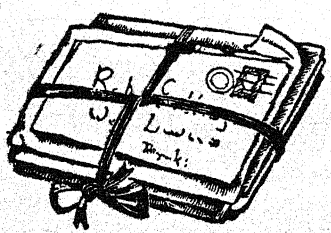
It is also a leader's right to retain his leadership. How could he accomplish good results without the proper time at his disposal? Before entrusting a man with the reorganization of a colony or the establishment of an aeroplane factory it is necessary to make full inquiries and to be quite certain that he is the best man for the position. But when the choice is made, he must be given time to acquire experience, and, except in cases where it is evident that a mistake has been made and that the man chosen is unworthy, he must be retained. Time establishes innumerable connections and facilitates the exercise of authority. When Lyautey was asked to tell the secret of his success in Morocco, he replied: "I lasted for thirteen years."

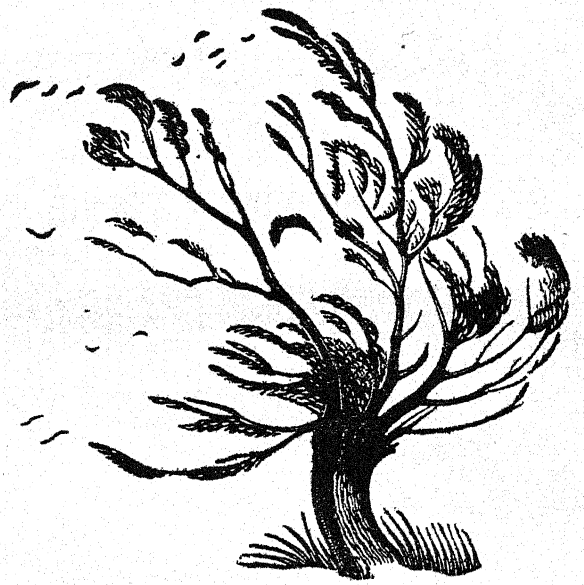
But how can one reconcile discipline and length of office with the free exercise of the right of criticism? Would not a leader with unlimited power soon turn into a tyrant or a madman? Aldous Huxley invented "the Caesar game"; he considered his friends, asking himself which one of the Caesars so-and-so would resemble if he were given supreme power. Few characters came through this test. . . .Criticism is clearly necessary but what part can it and ought it to play?

In the army and, generally speaking, in all cases where immediate action is required, obedience must be absolute; criticism must come from those in command, but during the normal life of a free country everyone possesses the right to criticize, within certain limits set by experience. If it is the clearly expressed will of a nation, its leaders may be changed from time to time; but they must be neither defamed, nor changed too often, nor dictated to by the man in the street. In the establishment of true liberty, which is a splendid thing, there must be not only a just code of

laws, but also good moral and ethical education. The degree of our worthiness to become a free people shall be determined by our ability to respect a lawful leader, to agree to the existence of an opposition, to listen to its arguments, and especially to put the nation's good above all party prejudices and private interest. Liberty is not one of man's inalienable rights; it is a desirable but difficult acquisition, and must be contended for constantly.

This moral education is even more necessary for those who are destined to lead; in addition to his power to control his fellows, a leader must possess a strong sense of duty; he cannot retain his position unless he renders himself worthy of it every day. No man is a good leader if, when he has been put at the head of a community or a commercial enterprise, he seeks only to better his personal affairs; nor is the man a good leader who accepts a command in the army and puts his pleasures above his responsibilities; nor is he who, in his leadership of other men, gives in to anger, resentment, or on the other hand, to favouritism and nepotism; nor is he who, having a share in the conduct of his country's foreign affairs, sacrifices its permanent good to internal bitterness and intrigue. The role of the leading classes is to direct—that is, to indicate the path of honour and work. To lead is not a privilege; it is an honour and it is a trust.





CHAPTER VIII *THE ART OF GROWING OLD*

GROWING old is a strange process, so strange that we often have difficulty in believing that it can overtake us as it does others. Proust, in *Le Temps Retrouvé*, admirably described the astonishment we experience when, after thirty or forty years, we meet suddenly by chance men and women who were boys and girls when we were. "At first," he says, "I could not understand why I was so slow in recognizing the master of the house and his guests, why they all seemed to be in disguise, mostly with powdered wigs that completely changed their appearance. . . .The Prince himself seemed to have adopted the ceremonial he had prescribed for his guests; he had a white beard and dragged his feet as though they were in leaden slippers. His moustache was white too as though it had the frost of Tom Thumb's forest upon it; it seemed to get in the way of his tightened mouth, and he should have removed it after he

had achieved his effect." Proust had known him in his young days: "As far as I was concerned he was my friend, a boy whose years I unconsciously calculated, since I felt that I had not lived since that time, to be the same as my own. I heard people saying that he looked his age and I was surprised to notice on his face several signs that are characteristic of old men. Then I understood that this was due to his being really old and that life makes old men of boys who live for a sufficient number of years."

Yes, it is only by observing the effects produced by time on men and women of our own age that we see, as in a mirror, what has taken place in our own faces and in our own hearts. For in our own eyes which have come along with us through the years we are still young; we still have the hopes and fears of youth; we are unconscious of the place occupied by young men in the rising generations. Sometimes a word will surprise us. A young writer addresses us as *Mon cher maitre* when we thought we were his own age, almost his fellow-writer. A more painful experience is to hear people say of a young girl: "She must be mad to have married an old man of fifty-five with white hair!" when we are fifty-five and have white hair and a heart that does not want to grow old.

When does old age begin? We have long imagined we would escape it. Our mind remains alert and our strength seems to be unimpaired. We have made several tests. "Shall I be able to get up that hill as quickly as I did when I was young? Yes! I'm a little out of breath on reaching the top, but my time is the same, and anyhow, wasn't I always a little out of breath before?"

The transition from youth to old age is so slow that he who changes is scarcely aware of doing so. When autumn follows summer and winter follows autumn, the transformations are so gradual that they escape daily observation. However, in some cases autumn advances, like the army that besieged Macbeth, concealed behind the barely discoloured leaves of summer; then one November morning a violent storm tears off the golden mask and behind it is left the gaunt skeleton of winter. The leaves we thought still alive were dead, clinging to the branches by a few tiny

fibres. The storm has revealed the evil and not caused it.

Sickness is the storm that rages in the human forest. A man or a woman may appear young despite their age. "She is marvellous," we say, or, "He is extraordinary." We admire their activity, their mental alertness, and the sparkle of their conversation. But one day we discover that, after committing an indiscretion for which a young man would have paid with no more than a headache or a cold, they have been carried off by the storm—a heart attack or pneumonia. In a few days a face can wither, a back bend over, eyes lose their brightness. A moment can turn us into old men, which means that we have been ageing for a long time.

When does this autumn equinox occur in our lives? Conrad said that when a man reaches forty he sees before him a shadow-line, crosses it with a shiver and believes that the enchanted realms of youth are closed to him thereafter. To-day we put this shadow line at about fifty, but it exists nevertheless, and those who cross it, though they be active and alert, experience the slight shiver and the brief moment of despair that Conrad speaks of.

"I'll soon be fifty," wrote Stendhal on his trousers' belt, and the same day he made a careful list of the women he had loved. Though he had encrusted them with all the diamonds of "crystallization" more successfully than any man in the world, they had been rather mediocre. At twenty, he had imagined sublime amorous experiences, and they were deserved because of his knowledge of love-making and his feeling for the importance of the emotions. But the women he wanted to love existed only in the books where he himself had brought them to life. As he crossed the shadow line, he wept for the mistresses whom he had not had and never would have.

"I'm fifty now," thinks the writer; and what has he accomplished? What has he been able to say? It seems to him that everything is still to be written and that he has scarcely glimpsed the books he should have produced. For how many more years will he be able to work? His heart is not strong. Ten years? Fifteen? "Art is long, life short." This phrase, which once seemed true but banal, suddenly becomes full of meaning for him. Will he ever

have the leisure, as Proust did, to set forth "in search of the past?"

Old age is far more than white hair, wrinkles, the feeling that it is too late and the game finished, that the stage belongs to the rising generations. The true evil is not the weakening of the body, but the indifference of the soul. Upon crossing the shadow line, it is more the desire to act than the power to do so that is lost. Is it possible, after fifty years of experiences and disappointments, to retain the ardent curiosity of youth, the desire to know and understand, the power to love wholeheartedly, the certainty that beauty, intelligence, and kindness unite naturally, and to preserve faith in the efficacy of reason? Beyond the shadow line lies the realm of even, tempered light where the eyes, not being dazzled any more by the blinding sun of desire, can see things and people as they are. How is it possible to believe in the moral perfection of pretty women if you have loved one of them? How is it possible to believe in progress when you have discovered throughout a long and difficult life that no violent change can triumph over human nature and that it is only the most ancient customs and ceremonies that can provide people with the flimsy shelter of civilization? "What's the use?" says the old man to himself. This is perhaps the most dangerous phrase he can utter, for after having said: "What's the use of struggling?" he will say one day: "What's the use of going out?" then: "What's the use of leaving my room?" then: "What's the use of leaving my bed?" and at last comes "What's the use of living?" which opens the portals of death.

Except for the simplest organisms which escape death by dividing themselves into two new organisms, every living thing comes to old age at a certain time in its life, varying with the different species. Why does the May-fly have but two hours of amorous pursuit, while the tortoise and the parrot can live for two centuries? Why are three hundred years allowed a pike and a carp, when only thirty were accorded to Byron and Mozart? "The things of God knoweth no man." The average length of a man's life a hundred years ago was about forty years; to-day, in the most highly

civilized countries it is nearly sixty—a rapid change, and one which allows us to think that, if wars and revolution do not impede the progress of hygiene, a hundred years will be the normal length of life in the next century. This will not, however, affect the question of old age in the least.

The closer they are to Nature the more cruel are men to old age. The ageing wolf commands the respect of the pack so long as he can capture his prey and kill it. Kipling has described, in his *Jungle Book*, the rage of the cubs at being led into battle by an old wolf who is losing his strength. The day when Akela missed his gazelle marked the end of his career. The toothless old wolf was put out of his misery by his young companions. Primitive men are like animals in this respect. A traveller in Africa writes of a frightened old chieftain who besought him: "Give me some dye for my hair. If they notice that it is turning white, they'll kill me." Certain South Sea islanders obliged their old men to climb coconut trees, which they then shook. If the old men could avoid falling they won the right to live; if they fell their cases were judged and their sentences executed. Thus custom seems brutal, but we too have our coconut trees. Public addresses, lectures, and playing roles on the stage are ordeals following which the public may say of a statesman, an author, or an actor: "He is finished." In many cases this amounts to a death sentence, either because poverty comes with retirement or because sickness is the result of despair. War is the general's coconut tree and young women are those of lewd old men. A statesman who makes his ministers leap through burning hoops in order to test the flexibility of their joints is practising coconut-tree politics. With less primitive peoples, old men are not put to death, but they are harshly treated. In Montaigne there is a terrible story of the father who saw his son hollowing out a wooden bowl and asked him what he was making: "It's for you to eat from when you're as old as grandfather." Another tells of an aged father whose son had dragged him by the hair to the door of the house, at which point the son heard the old man shout: "Stop! I dragged *my* father only this far."

Among peasants where life is close to nature, physical strength still regulates the relationship between the genera-

tions. In urban groups the triumph of youth is certain in times of revolution and rapid change, because youth adapts itself more quickly than age. To-day young people pilot aeroplanes as yesterday they drove automobiles. In these times they can no longer look forward, as was possible under well-established regimes, to the certainty of getting jobs and the acquisition of power and wealth. Youth represents bare strength ; it upholds prophets, like Hitler, who set forth simple aims and hold out great hopes.

Contrariwise, wealthy civilizations of long standing tend to come under the power of old people. Old men are in control because, in a world where no changes have occurred for a long time, experience becomes a valuable asset. In a country like England, which sets great store by precedent and is governed by custom, old age triumphs. In ancient China, old men were accorded a chivalrous affection. "No man with grey hair," said the Chinese, "must be seen carrying a burden in the streets." In modern China these feelings and attentions are on the wane. In every young government strength is worth more than ancestral wisdom, but no government can remain young. As it grows older there is more respect for mature men, than for old men. The leader who has built his career upon a basis of youth, loses youth. Like the old wolf, he tries to hide disgrace ; he keeps himself fit and affects the fearlessness and excess of a young man ; but sooner or later time will make him a senator, then a corpse.

Thus youth and old age hold sway, alternating in a natural rhythm. Circumstances control everything and it is useless to wish it otherwise. Rapid changes, new and strange inventions : the triumph of youth ; stability and tradition : the prestige of old age. Perhaps the best scheme for the two generations was that of Homer's warriors : young heroes in command, and the wise Nestor as minister of state.

The problem is more complex for the individual. Old age brings countless difficulties, but I do not believe that they are insuperable. They must, however, be squarely faced if they are to be overcome. I shall try to paint a complete and discouraging picture of these evils and ask my readers not to let it frighten them. When a doctor has a patient with

a serious illness and is determined upon certain precautions, he says: "This is what will happen if you do not take care of yourself," and he then enumerates symptoms, each one more appalling than the last. "None of these will develop," he adds, "if you take the preventive measures I suggest." Here, then, is what the evils that accompany old age *can* be and what they will not be for you if you know how to forestall them.

In the first place, apart from exceptional people, an ageing body is like a worn-out motor; with careful treatment, examination, and repair, it can still give service. But it is not what it was, and too great an effort should not be required of it. After a certain age, action becomes difficult, manual labour sometimes impossible, and brain-work uneven. Occasionally, artists remain in possession of their gifts until the end. Voltaire wrote *Candide* at sixty-five; Victor Hugo produced some very beautiful poems in his old age, and Goethe the admirable ending to his second *Faust*; Wagner finished *Parsifal* at sixty-nine. In our own time, Paul Claudel, at seventy-two, completely re-wrote *L'Annonce faite a Marie* which was first written in his twenty-fifth year. With others, on the other hand, inspiration comes to an end rather early, often because their talent was the result of youthful tribulations and because they never concerned themselves with the outside world. The heart governs the mind.

"Old age is a tyrant," said La Rochefoucauld, "who forbids indulgence in the pleasures of youth under penalty of death." First of all, those of love are prohibited. Old men and old women have the utmost difficulty in inspiring young love, though they be full of spirit and vigour. When affairs of this sort do exist, it must be determined how great a part is played by respect, admiration, and abnegation.

Balzac has often provided us with the tragic spectacle of an old man in love. Obliged now to obtain with gifts and favours what his personal charm won for him in his earlier days, the aged lover will ruin himself for every young woman clever enough to waken a crazy hope in his breast. Chateaubriand, who knew only too well what such suffering was like, left a terrible manuscript entitled *Amour et Vieillesse*; it is the long and grievous lament of a lover who does not know

how to grow old. "Those who have loved women a great deal will always love them; that is their punishment." And women who have loved many men are punished by hearing the younger among them say with genuine surprise: "I'm told she was once very beautiful."

In many cases the heart itself grows old. A curious withering takes place in old age. Can it be that physical desire fails to support the emotions sufficiently? And can it be that a realization of the briefness of life has weakened desire and affection? The egoism of certain old men is always astonishing. Aphile spent his whole life with Eunice. He became her lover when she was twenty-seven. He insisted upon her leaving her husband, but he could not marry her because he was himself married. She gave up family, children, friends, and respectability; she devoted herself to his pleasure, his work, and his career. A long friendship followed their love affair. When he was eighty and she seventy, they were still meeting every day. Finally she died, and everyone who knew them was sorry for Aphile. "This will kill him," they said. But nothing of the sort happened. He recovered immediately from the shock. He was not only too old to love, but also too old to suffer.

This egoism of old age prevents friendship with younger people, who miss the warmth which, if combined with the experience of old age, would attract them. Stinginess is also one of the sins of age; it has partly to do with a fear of being in want. The old man knows that he may not find it easy to earn his living and that hard work may be difficult for him, so he clings to what he has. He anticipates every eventuality with innumerable hiding-places and strong boxes. And there are other reasons for stinginess; every human being must have a passion, and this one may be indulged in by all ages. It apparently affords keen pleasures, such as counting one's money, investing it, following the stock market, keeping a little power despite a weakening body. Stinginess becomes a game whose devotees can obtain extraordinary delights by gradually eliminating all reasons for spending. In this connection re-read *Eugénie Grandet.*

"It is not the fear of being in want of money which makes old men close-fisted," wrote La Bruyère, "for there

are many such who have so much money that they could hardly be anxious on that score. And in any case, how could they be afraid of being without the conveniences of life when they voluntarily go without them in order to satisfy their stingy impulses. . .?" This vice is due rather to age, and an old man's natural disposition is to give in to it as to pleasures in youth or ambition in maturity. It requires neither vigour, nor youth, nor good health to be close-fisted; one has merely to keep one's money in strong boxes and deprive oneself of everything. Old men find that this satisfies their inherent need for a passion.

Faults of the mind increase with old age as do those of the features. An old man is incapable of taking up new ideas because he lacks the power to assimilate them, so he clings with crabbed tenacity to the opinions of his maturity. He pompously believes himself able to deal with any problem. Contradiction infuriates him, and he regards it as lack of respect. "In my days," he says, "we never contradicted our elders." He forgets that in his day these same words were spoken to him by his grandfather. Unable to interest himself in what is happening round him and thereby keep himself up to date, he tells stories of his past over and over again; and these are so boring to his younger listeners that they end by avoiding him altogether. Solitude is the greatest evil of old age; one by one lifelong friends and relatives disappear, and they cannot be replaced. The desert widens, and death would be pleasant if its rapid approach were not so curiously threatening.

Tolstoy, who was an artist of great precision, paints an arresting portrait of a woman who did not know how to grow old:

> After the loss of her son, followed so quickly by that of her husband, she felt herself unexpectedly forgotten in this world—a being without aim or object. She ate, drank, slept, sat up, but she did not live. Life left no impression upon her.
>
> She asked nothing from life except repose, and repose she could find only in death. But till death should come she had to live, that is, employ all her vitality. She exemplified in a high degree what is noticeable in very

young children and very old people. Her life had no manifest outward aim, but was merely, so far as could be seen, occupied in exercising her own individual proclivities and peculiarities. She felt the necessity upon her to eat and drink, to sleep a little, to think a little, to talk, to shed a few tears, to do some work, to lose her temper occasionally, and so on simply because she had a stomach, brain, muscles, nerves, and a liver.

All this she did, not because action was called forth by anything external, not as people in the full vigour of life do, when above and beyond the object for which they are striving is the unnoticeable object of putting forth their strength.

She talked, simply because she felt the physical necessity of exercising her lungs, her tongue. She wept like a child because she had to blow her nose and the like. What for people in the full possession of their faculties was an object and aim, was evidently for her only an excuse.

This state of second childhood was understood by all the household, though no one ever mentioned it, and all possible endeavours were made to gratify her desires. Only occasional glances, accompanied by a melancholy half-smile exchanged between Nikolai and Pierre, Natasha and the Countess Mariya, would express the reciprocal comprehension of her state. But these glances also said something else; they declared that she had already played her part in life, that what was now to be seen in her was not wholly herself, that all would at last come to be the same, and that it was a pleasure to yield to her, to restrain ourselves for this poor creature who was once so dear, who was once as full of life as we ourselves.

Memento mori, said these glances. Only the utterly depraved and foolish people and little children would fail to understand this, and find cause for shunning her.

Old age diminishes our strength; it takes away our pleasures one after the other; it withers the soul as well as the body;

it renders adventure and friendship difficult; and finally it is shadowed by thoughts of death.

The art of growing old consists of struggling against these evils and of making life's end happy despite them. But is this possible when they attack the body? Is not old age a natural physiological change, the inevitable progression of which must be accepted? Could not a fable be written with the title: *The Tree that Wanted to Keep its Leaves*? It tries to hold them, to fasten them to its branches; but the autumn gales turn it into a black skeleton like its fellows at the appointed time.

Nevertheless, civilization and experience have taught men how to struggle, if not against old age itself, at least against the appearance of it. Adornment plays a major role here. Ageing women often attach more importance to their clothes than do young ones. Nothing could be more natural. Bright jewels catch the gaze and turn it from the wearer's physical shortcomings. The soft iridescence of a fine pearl necklace causes one to forget the furrowed neck which it encircles; the flash of rings and bracelets conceals the age of hands and wrists; fillets and ear-rings as tattooing in primitive tribes, dazzle the eye so that wrinkles and crow's feet may not be noticed.

Everything that tends to make it difficult to distinguish youth from age is an act of civilization. The best-mannered age in history invented the wig—a homage rendered by hair to baldness. The effect of powder and rouge is to make young women like their grandmothers, and invalids like healthy people. Clever dressmaking establishments and beauty shops create fashions which make it possible for elderly women to keep hoping. After a certain age, the art of dressing consists of hiding one's shortcomings, and this is another form of politeness. The veil is a marvellous invention for confusing the image and giving its wearers the semblance of beauty. All adornments are veils: they conceal the ravages of time as well as may be.

Will science be able one day to prevent old age from undermining and destroying our bodies? Will it create a Fountain of Youth in whose waters we may really become young again? It has often been said that the age of a human being is indi-

cated, not by his birth certificate, but by the condition of his arteries and his joints. A man of fifty can be older than one of seventy. It must then be possible to make a man younger by means of a physiological restoration of his cells. Biologists have accomplished this with inferior organisms: certain molluscs, if placed in a small quantity of sea-water, will poison themselves with their own excrements, ageing rapidly; but if the water is changed every day, old age is delayed. It is possible that the ageing of our cells may be due to an accumulation of waste matter, and that we can lengthen our lives by its elimination.

The restoration of youth to animals has been attempted by grafting certain organs or injecting certain hormones. Old rats thus treated recapture their vigour, charm, and sexual activity for about a month, and four such operations have been possible. In this way, a rat's life is lengthened by a half, and with apparent increase of enjoyment. The effects of this treatment are, however, of progressively shorter duration. Doctor Voronoff's experiments with rams are well known; his results with human beings are less well defined. But all this seems of little importance when any man to-day may reach eighty or more years if he lives a healthy life. Do we want to live longer than that?

At eighty, a man has experienced everything: love, and its ending; ambition, and its emptiness; several foolish beliefs, and their rectification. Fear of death is not very great; affections and interests concern people who have died and events of the past. In a cinema theatre when the show is continuous the spectator has the right to retain his seat as long as he wishes to do so, but actually, when the scenes he has already witnessed reappear on the screen, he leaves the theatre. Life is a continuous show. The same events take place every thirty years, and they become boring. One after another the spectators take their departure.

When H. G. Wells was honoured by a gathering of English authors on his seventieth birthday, he made a speech in which he said that the occasion recalled his feelings as a child when his nurse said to him: "Master Henry, it's your bedtime." A child protests when bedtime comes, but he knows in his heart that sleep will carry him off and that

he very much wants the rest. "Death," continued Wells, "is a nurse both affectionate and stern; when the time comes, she says to us: "Master Henry, it's your bedtime." We protest a little, but we know quite well that the time for rest has come and that in our hearts we are longing for it."

If we accept without too much dreariness the thought that life's span is limited, we can at least hope to reach the end of our course with healthy minds and bodies, and this is definitely possible.

Old age is not necessarily accompanied by the numerous evils already mentioned. Many animals pass without profound physical change from life into death. A well-exercised body will keep its flexibility and grace for a long time. The secret is never to neglect oneself. What was done yesterday may be done to-day, and what is discontinued is never resumed. Exercise and regularity can accomplish wonders. Many men of seventy fence, box, swim, or play tennis. The wise course is to exercise regularly up to the last possible moment, and not intermittently or to satisfy a whim. It is not possible to interrupt the progress of old age once it has set in; to deny old age the possession of our bodies is fairly easy and infinitely desirable. "It is only too easy to prolong human infirmities," said Montaigne, "by taking them on too soon. I prefer being old a long while to being old before my time."

There must be no premature renunciation, physical or emotional. The heart, like the body, needs exercise. Naturally there can be no deliberate stirring up of emotion, but why, merely for reasons of age, should one deny oneself those that can be genuinely experienced? Because old men in love are ridiculous? They are ridiculous only if they forget that they are old men. There is nothing ridiculous about two old people really in love. Each still finds in the other those qualities which were admired in youth. Tender consideration, affection, and admiration have no age. In fact, it often happens that when youth and its passions have vanished, love takes on an asceticism which is delightful. Sensual misunderstandings disappear with physical desire and jealousy with youth; impetuosity wanes with the body's strength. From the remnants of a stormy youth may be created an

agreeable old age. Thus the existence of a couple resembles a river which leaps dangerously over jagged rocks near its source, but whose clear waters flow more slowly as it approaches the sea, its broad surface reflecting the poplars along its banks and the stars at night.

The loves of old age can be just as genuine and just as moving as those of youth. They have the purity of friendship and also the ardent anxiety of young love. Victor Hugo tells how deeply he was affected when he saw Madame Récamier and Chateaubriand together, the one blind and the other paralysed. "Every day at three o'clock M. de Chateaubriand was carried to Mme. Récamier's bedside. It was very moving. The woman who could see no longer sought the man who could no longer feel; their hands met. God be praised—they were close to death; they still loved one another." Disraeli dragged himself nightly into society so that he might catch a glimpse of Lady Bradford. She undoubtedly caused him a certain amount of suffering, but Disraeli was incurably romantic and she was the object of his last dreaming. Women should use their coquetry to stir up old men's illusions and fill their last days with the naive anxieties of youth. How many emotional lives believed to have ended forever, have suddenly and surprisingly flamed up again!

Emotional life, moreover, does not consist of amorous impulses alone. Far from it. An old man's affection for his children and grandchildren can frequently occupy his whole horizon. It is delightful to watch our sons and daughters living their lives. We enjoy their pleasures, suffer when they suffer, love when they love and take part in their struggles. How can we feel left out of the game while they are playing it in our place? How can we be unhappy when they are happy? After our own joy at first going to the circus, is not that of taking our children to see it the keenest? After our pleasure in discovering the poets we love, is not that of watching our children enjoy the books we give them the most satisfying? And when life can no longer offer us great joys because our years prevent, is it possible to imagine a keener pleasure than that of bringing happiness to our children?

Grandparents are frequently more congenial with their

grandchildren than with their children. An old man, having retired from active life, regains the gaiety and irresponsibility of childhood. He is ready to play, tell stories, and listen to confidences. Even a child's strength is similar to his own. He cannot run with his son, but he can totter with his grandson. Our first and last steps have the same rhythm; our first and last walks are similarly limited.

Nor is it true that an old man is necessarily lonely. He will be, if he is self-centred, close-fisted, domineering, or feeble-minded; but if he fights against the usual faults of old age and is determined to be generous, modest, and affectionate, he will have young men seeking his friendship and anxious to benefit by his experience. His difficulty will be to communicate this experience (by which he will have been, if not disillusioned, at least undeceived) without lessening the natural enthusiasm of youth. After all, experience does not teach us that every enthusiasm is absurd. From it we learn simply to wait for results, not from high-sounding words, but from hard work and great courage. Youth will accept such teaching from men who are worthy of giving it.

Every year, towards the middle of December, I proceed by way of La Turbie on its high ridge, to the little house, like those of the Roman peasants, where M. Gabriel Hanotaux lives. There is an olive tree overhanging the sunken road which makes me think of Virgil. Despite his eighty-five years, the owner of the orchard climbs the steep slope beneath the orange trees more quickly than many a younger man. His voice has a pleasant sound: "My grandmother taught me to speak French as it was spoken in the time of Louis XV," he says. "Her grandmother taught her to speak it." M. Hanotaux's common sense is, like his accent, both ancient and young. "I shall give you a few precepts to repeat whenever you are in need of comfort. They are simple and effective. Here they are: Anything can happen.... Everything is forgotten....Every difficulty can be overcome.....No one understands anything....If everyone knew what everyone said about everyone, no one would speak to anyone." This last maxim, which enchants me, has taken the sting out of many an unpleasant rumour. "Above all things," he added, "never be afraid. The enemy who

forces you to retreat is himself afraid of you at that very moment." The study of history and a long life have taught this old man self-confidence and serenity, not despair and indifference. At eighty-five, he is making innumerable plans for the future; he is considering several long journeys; he builds and he plants. Similarly, when the *Exposition Colonaile* was ended, Marshal Lyautey said to me: "And what am I to do now?" I told him the Government would surely find some way of using him. "But when—but when?" he cried. "I will soon be eighty-one; I must get started."

That is the proper attitude. It has been said that old age is the feeling that it is too late, that the game is over, that the stage now belongs to the oncoming generations, and that the real evil of old age is not the body's decline but the souls' indifference. We can and must struggle against this indifference. Men age less quickly if they maintain valid reasons for living. It might easily be believed that a man is worn out and depleted by an agitated existence, violent emotions, struggles, studies and endless seeking. As a matter of fact the reverse seems to be true. Clemenceau and Gladstone, both holding the office of prime minister when over eighty, possessed astonishing vitality. Growing old is no more than a bad habit which a busy man has no time to form.

But how can a man stay busy? When he grows old, are not occupations difficult to find? Is it sound practice to have governments or businesses conducted by old men? In many cases old men are better leaders than young men. Rome was saved by the old Fabius. In the war of 1914, both sides were led by generals of advanced years. Agamemnon did not want ten men like Ajax, but like Nestor, and he was sure that if he had had them Troy would soon have fallen. Old diplomats and old doctors are deeply experienced and very wise; untouched by the passions of youth, they are able to give judgments with accuracy and calmness. "Great things are not accomplished with physical strength and agility, "says Cicero, "but through consultation, authority, and the mature wisdom which old age, far from lacking, is endowed with abundantly."

There are two satisfactory ways of growing old: the first

is not to grow old; it is the way of men who escape old age by living active lives. This is the meaning of the Faust myth, completed by Goethe at the end of his poem. In vain has the aged Faust regained a youthful appearance; love and ambition have deceived him. But in the end he is saved by work. Blind and near to death, Faust sets himself the task of draining a stagnant lake and turning it into a pasture. He has a foretaste of the joy of accomplishment and liberation just before he dies. Mephistopheles prepares to take possession of the soul that was sold to him, but angels descend and carry the immortal part of Faust to heaven, the part of him which never lost faith in the efficacy of action, and for this faith was granted salvation.

The second way of growing old properly is to accept old age with tranquillity and renunciation; therefore happily. The time for struggling is past; the game has been played; death's repose is at hand; misfortunes have lost their sting. When the aged Sophocles was asked whether he still enjoyed the pleasures of love, he said: "May the gods keep me from that! I have freed myself from love as from a cruel and savage master."

I have encountered several old men who were like the wise men of our dreams. Released not only from the frenzies of love, but also from future responsibilities; they are not envious of younger men; they pity these younger men because life's stormy seas lie ahead of them. Deprived of a few pleasures which they renounce easily, they keenly enjoy those that remain. They know how useless advice can be and realize that everyone must live his own life. We are glad to listen to their recollections because they spare us their criticism. Occasionally, when things become too difficult, we ask them to resume their leadership; this we do all the more readily because every one knows that they do not wish this power.

There are more than two ways of growing old unpleasantly. The worst is to be continually grasping at what cannot be retained. Only too familiar are the ageing business-men who refuse to delegate any of their power and who make slaves of their sons, when the latter would love and respect them if they had the wisdom to share their responsibilities. Fami-

liar figures, too, are those close-fisted parents who force their children to live restricted lives in order that they may cling with their own trembling hands to symbols of the pleasures they can no longer enjoy; familiar also are those devotees of ambition whose lives are poisoned, even up to their last days, by jealousy and dissatisfaction. The art of growing old is the art of being regarded by the oncoming generations as a support and not as a stumbling block, as a confidant and not as a rival.

There is much to be said concerning retirement. Some men cannot survive it because they have not prepared themselves for it. For the man who has retained his curiosity, retirement in old age can be the most enjoyable period of his life; but he must be aware of the emptiness of public renown and desire the peace of obscurity; he must still have the wish to learn and understand; in his village, his garden, or his house, he must have some restricted personal occupation. The wise man, after having given all his time to his public activities, now devotes himself entirely to his personal affairs and development; and this will be easier for him if he has been able to interest himself in poetry and the beauties of nature, even during his busiest years. For myself, I cannot imagine a pleasanter old age than one spent in the not too remote country where I could re-read and annotate my favourite books. "The mind," says Montaigne, "must thrive upon old age as the mistletoe upon a dead oak."

The dead are friends whom death is powerless to take from us. Great writers are immortal companions who can embellish our old age as they enchanted our young days. Music, too, is an extraordinarily faithful friend. To those of us who have lost our faith in human nature, it offers refuge in other pleasant worlds. Not long ago, during a particularly beautiful rendering of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, I watched the faces of the poeple round me. Everyone, both young and old, was in a transport of delight. Naturally there was a scattering of the embittered, weary, and infirm among them, but these were equally enchanted. Waves of sound broke over them, the cool spray of melody caressed them, they were revived and liberated by the composer's genius. I shared their happiness, and I found myself in perfect accord with

those great gentlemen of the past who arranged for their deaths to be accompanied by the music they had loved best.

"A man's life is happy," says Pascal, "if he begins by being in love and ends by being ambitious." It will be still happier if, after all his ambitions have been satisfied, it ends in tranquillity. Thus, ten or twenty years after passing the line of shadow at fifty, a man may cross the line of light. The first onslaughts of old age seemed painful to him; it was difficult for him when he found that the times which he had thought to be his own were given over to new thoughts and swayed by new personalities. But now he is at peace and happy to be an alert and impartial onlooker. His contented features and the smiling frankness of his gaze are sufficient indications of the state of his soul. No—old age is not a hell above whose gate must be written: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." The reasons for despair which an old man believes he has, have been analysed and it has been shown that none of them is irremediable. If weakness accompanies old age, it is a matter of health; there are vigorous old men, and young men who are weak and sluggish. Many pleasures are denied to old age, but those which are not have the added charm of being recognized as short-lived. It is said that old men have difficulty in finding occupations but they frequently work, lead, and govern better than young men; and they are not without friends; they are, on the contrary, surrounded by them if they are worthy of friendship. And finally the fear of death in old age may be conquered by faith and philosophy.

There are two good ways of dying: the way of the Epicurean who believes that death is nothing, and the way of the Christian who believes that it is everything. "Accustom thyself," says Epicurus, "to the idea that death is nothing in so far as it concerns us; for good and evil are merely matters of perception and death means the loss of all perception. The realization that death is nothing is one of the joys of mortal life. . . .Life holds no terrors for him who really understands that there is nothing after it has ended. . . . There is no death while we exist and we cease to exist after death." The Christian philosopher does not fear death, for he regards it merely as a transition, after which he is confi-

dent of finding those he has loved and of enjoying an existence infinitely more satisfying than his earthly years.

It is hardly surprising that saints and heroes should die noble deaths. But without considering such sublimities, there is nobility in the death of a good workman who carries on his job up to the very end. Writers have died with dignity: one remembers how the last moments of Balzac and Proust were peopled by the characters they had created: one called our repeatedly for Doctor Bianchon, and the other kept scribbling the name of Forcheville. Charles II of England died like a king and a gentleman: "I have been an unconscionable time a-dying; I hope you will forgive me." Richelieu, when asked whether he would forgive his enemies said: "I have none save those of the State." Corot expressed the sincere hope that he would be able to paint in Heaven. Chopin said: "Play Mozart in memory of me." Napoleon died as a leader should die, muttering: "France.... army...head of the army."

Occasionally a man is so engrossed by his calling that it survives him, as it were. Halle, the philosopher, who was also a doctor, took his own pulse up to the last. "My friend," he said to one of his colleagues, "the artery has stopped beating." These were his last words. Lagny, the mathematician, published, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a new and abridged method for extracting square and cube roots. When he was dying he appeared to be unconscious and no longer recognized his friends. Someone leaned over him and said: "Lagny, what is the square root of one hundred and forty-four?" "Twelve," he answered. He was dead.

"If I were a maker of books," wrote Montaigne, "I would publish an annotated compendium of various kinds of deaths." Two English writers, Birrell and Lucas, have brought out the book that Montaigne hoped would be compiled, and the reading of it increases one's respect for human courage; there is little cowardice in its pages. "To die—to sleep—No more....For in that sleep of death what dreams may come....?" There may still be no answer to Hamlet's terrible question, but it is useful to know that many human beings in every walk of life have courageously asked it.



CHAPTER IX THE ART OF HAPPINESS

FONTENELLE, in his *Traité du Bonheur*, defines happiness as a state in which we desire to remain without change of any sort. Unquestionably, if we were able to achieve a state of mind and body which make us say to ourselves: "I want everything to be like this for ever," and as Faust to the Moment: "Oh, stay, thou who art so beautiful," we should be truly happy.

But if, by the word "state", we mean the combination of phenomena which occupies a person's consciousness at a given moment, this unchanged duration seems inconceivable. It could not even be perceived as duration. How could there be no change, when the composing elements of that perfect happiness are so unstable? If it is a question of another person, death may intervene; if of music, the music will cease; if of a book, its last page will eventually be read. We may well desire the unchanged duration of a state, but we know that this stability is impossible; and that in any case if we could render the moment stationary the happiness it brought us would soon diminish, because the novelty would have gone.

We must therefore distinguish among the elements which make up our state of happiness those numerous ones that can change without diminishing it and those that are necessary to its duration. In Tolstoy's novel, *Anna Karenina*,

Levine, who has just become engaged, walks through the streets admiring everything: the sky is bluer, the birds sing more sweetly, and the old doorkeeper gives him an unusually affectionate look. But Levine, on that day, would have been just as happy in any other city; he would have found it and its people just as attractive. There is a light within him that shines upon everything, and this inner light is the essence of his happiness.

It is not events and the things one sees and enjoys that produce happiness, but a state of mind which can endow events with its own quality, and we must hope for the duration of this state rather than the recurrence of pleasurable events. Is this state actually an interior one, and can we recognize it otherwise than by the change it produces in all exterior things? If we exclude sensation and memory from our thoughts, there is nothing left but a wordless emptiness. Where can pure ecstasy and pure happiness be found? As certain phosphorescent fish see the water, the seaweed, and the other creatures of the sea light up at their approach but never perceive the movable source of this illumination because it is in themselves, so the happy man, though he is aware of his effect upon others, has difficulty in perceiving his happiness and even greater difficulty in predicting it.

Perhaps it will be easier to get at the truth by enumerating the obstacles in the way of happiness. Open Pandora's box and, as the misfortunes of humanity take flight, make mental notes of the more common ones.

First poverty and sickness whirl darkly through the air. Of all misfortunes these are the most to be dreaded. When their visitations are too often repeated, very few remedies are effective. It is easy but useless to pretend as the Stoic philosophers did, that suffering is merely a word. "For past suffering exists no longer," they said, "present suffering is undiscernible, and future suffering is not yet with us." Actually this is not the case. Man cannot at will dissociate the different periods of his existence. The remembrance of past suffering makes present suffering an ever-increasing burden. A strong man can doubtless fight suffering and preserve his serenity in spite of it. Montaigne courageously endured a very painful malady, but what is a wise man, or a saint, to

do when his life is nothing but a groan of agony?

Diogenes could quite well make little of poverty, for he had the warmth of the sun, his food, his tub, and he was alone in life. What if he had been jobless with four children to feed in a city with a cold climate where food could be bought only with cash? Here is real misfortune, and it is insulting to offer the consolations of philosophy to people who are cold and hungry. Food and coal are what they need.

These extreme cases of sickness and poverty must not be confused with predicaments which, though painful, are infinitely less hard to endure and do not put insurmountable obstacles in the way of happiness. The Stoics were right when they differentiated between our "natural and necessary" requirements—food and drink—and our "natural but *not* necessary" ones. There is real poverty and there are real sicknesses for which one cannot have too much pity. But there are as many imaginary invalids in the world as real ones. Our minds have unbelievable power over our bodies and much of our suffering is imaginary. Some men are really ill; some believe themselves to be ill; and some make themselves ill. When Montaigne was mayor of Bordeaux, he said to his fellow-citizens: "I am willing to take your affairs in hand, but not into my liver and lungs."

There is imaginary poverty in the world as well as imaginary illness. To declare yourself unfortunate because a crisis which affects everyone has reduced your income is insulting to those who are really poor, so long as you have a roof over your head, food to eat, and clothes to wear. A friend once told me of a charwoman who killed herself because she was obliged to move into a room in which there was no place for a grealty prized piece of furniture—another case of imaginary misfortune.

After poverty and sickness comes failure: failure to achieve one's ambition, failure in love. We make plans for the future; they are thwarted and our hopes are destroyed. We want to be loved; we are not loved, and jealousy poisons our days and nights. We hope to get a job and make a success of it, to travel, but we fail to do so. The Stoic philosophers triumph easily here because the majority of these

misfortunes are unreal; they are matters of opinion. Why is a man miserable when his ambitions cannot be realized? Is it because he suffers physically? Not at all. It is because he remembers the shortcomings that caused his past failures and wonders whether his future success will be hindered by the intrigues of his rivals. If, instead of thinking about what the past could have been and what the future is likely to be, he made an effort to arrive at an exact realization of the present, what would be the result? Almost always a perfectly satisfactory state of affairs. I should like to see people with imaginary troubles adopt the method suggested by Saint Ignatius, which is to visualize the object of one's desires clearly and without distortion.

You wanted to be governor of a state, and you failed. What will result? You will not be obliged all day long to interview people whom you prefer not to see. You will not be burdened with hundreds of matters which you have not had time to consider carefully. You will not be opposed by hostile people who will look into your private life and discover crimes you did not commit. You will be forced to live a peaceful life and to enjoy your leisure, to re-read your favourite books and, if you have a taste for companionship, to chat with friends. That is what your failure will amount to if you exercise a little imagination. Is it a misfortune? "Tonight," wrote Stendhal, "I am slightly vexed at my two subordinates being made department magistrates and not myself; my vexation, however, would be greater if I were obliged to bury myself for four or five years in some hole with six thousand inhabitants."

If men could regard the events of their own lives with more open minds, they would frequently discover that they did not really desire the things they failed to obtain. There is a great difference between spoken wishes such as: "I should like to get married. . .to be a senator. . .to paint a good portrait," and actual burning desires which consume one's whole being. The latter make themselves known by acts. Unless the desire is absolutely impossible and absurd, it may frequently be achieved if enough determination is used. A man who desires honours obtains honours; he who wants friends gets them; a woman who desires conquest makes con-

quests. The young Bonaparte wanted power; the obstacles to its achievement seemed insurmountable; he surmounted them.

Of course there are many cases where circumstances render success impossible; it is not easy to move the universe, and the difficulty frequently lies in the man himself. He *thinks* he desires to achieve a definite result, but some inner force pulls him in the opposite direction. How often have writers said to me that they would like to write such and such books if the kind of life they led did not make it impossible. If they passionately desired to write the books, they would lead different lives. Evidence of Balzac's strength or will and devotion to his work can be found in the kind of life he led or, more precisely, in the work itself.

In the tenth book of Plato's *Republic*, Er, the Armenian, went down into Hades and discovered how the souls of the dead were treated.

> When Er and the spirits arrived, their duty was to go at once to Lachesis; but first of all there came a prophet who arranged them in order; then he took from the knees of Lachesis lots and samples of life, and going up to a high place, spoke as follows: "Hear the word of Lachesis, the daughter of Necessity. Mortal souls, behold a new cycle of mortal life. Your genius will not choose you, but you will choose your genius; and let him who draws the first lot first choose a life which shall be his destiny. Virtue is free, and as a man honours or dishonours her he will have more or less of her; the chooser is answerable—God is justified.' When the Interpreter had thus spoken he scattered lots among them, and each one took up the lot which fell near him, all but Er himself (he was not allowed), and each as he took his lot perceived the number which he had obtained. Then the Interpreter placed on the ground before them the samples of lives; and there were many more lives than the souls present, and there were all sorts of lives—of every animal and of man in every condition. And there were tyrannies among them, some continuing while the tyrant lived, others which broke off in the middle and came to an

> end in poverty and exile and beggary; and there were lives of famous men, some who were famous for their form and beauty as well as for their strength and success in games, or, again for their birth and the qualities of their ancestors; and some who were the reverse of famous for the opposite qualities. And of women likewise; there was not, however, any definite character in them, because the soul must of necessity be changed according to the life chosen. But there was every other quality, and they all mingled with one another, and also with elements of wealth and poverty, and disease and health...he who had the first choice came forward and in a moment chose the greatest tyranny; his mind having been darkened by folly and sensuality, he had not thought out the whole matter, and did not see at first that he was fated, among other evils, to devour his own children. But when he had time to reflect, and saw what was in the lot, he began to beat his breast and lament over his choice, not abiding by the proclamation of the prophet; for, instead of throwing the blame of his misfortune on himself, he accused chance and the gods, and everything rather than himself.

We all have the right to examine our lot. A man decides to marry a certain woman for social or business advancement, or for money, but he knows and everyone knows that she is second-rate. In two or three months he will be complaining of her stupidity; but was he not already aware of it? This was in the lot. No great amount of experience is required to discover that the greedy search for money or success will almost always lead men into unhappiness. Why? Because that kind of life makes them depend upon things outside themselves. No one is more vulnerable than the ambitious man; some incident he knows nothing of, or some remark incorrectly repeated, will turn an influential man against him or cause a nation to persecute him. He will say that he had bad luck, that fate was against him. Fate is always against those who seek benefits, the acquiring of which does not depend upon themselves. That was in the lot also. The gods are justified.

Greed and ambition place us in conflict with our fellowmen, but it is far worse to be in conflict with ourselves. For we are happy when we can examine yesterday's actions and those of our whole life and say: "Perhaps I have acted unwisely; I may have been mistaken, but I did my best and I followed my own ideas. What I have said I can say again, or if my ideas have changed I can admit without shame that there were good reasons for my errors which were due to listening to incorrect information, or to my own faulty reasoning." When this interior harmony exists, the need for painful self-communion vanishes.

In reality, this agreement with oneself is somewhat rare. There are, in each one of us, two beings: a member of society and a human being with passionate feelings—an intellect and an animal. It is very unpleasant to realize that we are a prey to self-indulgence and that we are wise men only during a part of our lives. A harmonious agreement with oneself is difficult to achieve because many of our thoughts have very different origins from the ones we like to give them. We pretend that we are talking reasonably when, with false judgment and weak arguments, we are merely working off an old grudge. We are hostile to a certain group of people because one of its members has done us some serious injury. We refuse to admit these weaknesses, but our conscience tells us that they exist and we become dissatisfied with ourselves, we become bitter, violent, absurd, and we insult our friends because we know we are not the men we should have liked to be. Whence the importance of Socrates's "Know thyself." In order to achieve serenity, the intelligent man must first make objective all thought-distorting passions and memories.

Another cause of unhappiness is the fear of danger. I do not mean to say that certain fears are not legitimate and even necessary. A man who is not careful to avoid being hit by a swiftly moving automobile will die on account of this lack of visual imagination. A nation which does not fear armed and hostile neighbours will soon be enslaved. But fears serve no purpose when they concern unpredictable events. We all know men who are so apprehensive of illness that their lives are destroyed. The man who is afraid

that his money will be lost imagines the various ways in which he can be ruined and deprives himself of present happiness in order to be ready for misfortunes which, if they occurred, would merely reduce him to the state in which his fear has placed him. The jealous man foresees dangerous encounters with other men for the woman he loves; he struggles to put these imaginings from him, and in the end he kills her love with his crazy watchfullness, and thus brings on the catastrophe he feared.

The acute mental suffering caused by fear is all the more useless because anticipation is usually far worse than actuality. Illness is horrible, but it is less so than we are led to expect from the spectacle of our afflicted fellow-beings, because fever and the habit of illness create, as it were, another body which reacts differently. Many of us are afraid of death, but nothing that we imagine regarding our death can be true; for all we know, we may die suddenly; also in normal cases the natural phenomenon of death has its various corresponding physical states. I remember distinctly meeting with an accident which might have been fatal. I lost consciousness but the memory I have of the few seconds immediately preceding the accident is not a painful one. I knew a man who, like Er, the Armenian, had come back from Hades; I mean that he had been virtually drowned and then revived. He said that his death had not been painful.

Our notions of the future are almost always false; we imagine future misfortunes with the point of view of men who live in the present. Life is difficult enough as it is. Why introduce an element of melancholy apprehension? In a well-known play, there is a scene on board a great liner: two young people on their honeymoon are standing at the rail looking at the sea, and we hear the orchestra playing. They move apart, disclosing a life-buoy with the ship's name on it: *Titanic*. For us in the audience the scene becomes tragic, because we know that the *Titanic* is going to sink, but the actors in the drama are merely enjoying another beautiful evening. If they had feared a tragedy, their fear would have been legitimate, but it would have spoiled a delightful hour uselessly. Many people spoil their lives by imagining immi-

nent misfortunes. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Among the idle rich, boredom is one of the most common causes of unhappiness. People who have difficulty in earning their living may suffer greatly, but they are not bored. Wealthy men and women become bored when they depend upon the theatre for their enjoyment instead of making their own lives interesting. Plays contribute to the happiness of people whose lives amount to something, because their creative faculties are roused in the theatre. A man in love enjoys a *comédie d'amour* because it concerns his own life. A statesman at a performance of *Julius Caesar* dreams of his desk. But if the spectator role becomes permanent, if the spectator is not an actor in the drama of actual life, then boredom lies in wait for him and he is soon a prey to imaginary worries: endless self-examination, regret for the past which is beyond recall, and fears for the unknown future.

Many men, strangely enough, find a bitter and unhealthy pleasure in declaring that there are no remedies for these real and imaginary misfortunes. They enjoy their troubles; they treat with hostility those who try to help them. Certainly, during the first few days of mourning the loss of someone, of some serious and undeserved misfortune, suffering is frequently beyond the reach of consolation. Friends can do no more than offer their wordless and patient sympathy.

But are we not all familiar with professional women mourners who do their utmost to maintain by outward show the sorrows that time should be allowed to efface? I pity those who attach themselves to a past that cannot be recalled, when their sorrow affects no one but themselves; but I greatly disapprove of them when, with their propaganda of despair, they hope to drag down younger or braver people who expected happiness from life.

This sort of behaviour must be curbed. True suffering shows itself inevitably, even when efforts are made to hide it in order not to interfere with the happiness of others. I once saw, with a group of gray companions, a young woman who had been the chief character in a horrible tragedy; her silence, her hard-won smiles, and her unavoidable preoccupation betrayed her continually, but she courageously main-

tained a fictitious serenity which made her companions' enjoyment possible. If your memory cannot function without unnatural solitude and daily lamentations, it must already have lost its precision. The best way to honour friends who have died is to treat our living ones with equal affection.

But how are obsessions to be dealt with? What protection is there against these inexorable states of mind which possess us even in sleep? Nature offers the greatest and most easily enlisted. The sea, the mountains, and the woods have a calming effect because of the contrast between their grandeur and indifference and our own insignificance. Frequently, in our saddest moments, it is comforting to lie in the grass beneath the trees for a whole day of solitude. In our deepest sorrows there are always social obligations, and if we cut ourselves off from them for a time we shorten sail and are less vulnerable. This is why travel is such an effective remedy for mental suffering. If one remains in the atmosphere of one's misfortune, the obsession is continually revived and memories crowd closer. Travel is like casting off one's mooring.

Music is another world where a sufferer may take refuge. Music possesses itself completely of the soul; it is often like a torrent that rushes through the mind, leaving it purified; or it is a summons, an evocation of our sufferings, which quickly and miraculously gives them their proper significance. For every phrase reminding us of them there is a corresponding one which soothes them; this worldless and unthinking dialogue, leading us to the final determination, is consoling. Music, its clear-cut rhythms marking the passage of time, disposes of our erroneous ideas of the permanence of mental anguish.

"I have never experienced a sorrow that an hour of reading would not soothe," is a much-used phrase and one that I do not altogether understand. I am unable to allay a real sorrow by reading, because I cannot in such circumstances fix my attention upon a book. Reading requires an unpreoccupied mind, and I believe that it can play a useful role during a mental convalescence. An obsession can be got rid of only by the use of more definite actions which cannot be accompanied by inattention: writing, operating a deli-

cate mechanism, walking upon dangerous paths. Physical fatigue is healthy because it induces sleep.

"All that is useless," groans the expert in gloom. "Your remedies are weak and ineffective. Nothing can awaken my interest in life. Nothing can make me forget my sorrow."

How do you know this? Have your tried these remedies? At least make experiments before pronouncing upon their results. There are exercises which, though they cannot produce positive happiness, do prepare the way for it.

Avoid spending too much time in meditating upon the past. I do not mean that meditation is unwise. Almost every important decision should be preceded by meditation; if meditation concerns a definite object, it can do no harm. What is harmful is the endless turning over in the mind of some loss, some insult, some abuse, in short something that cannot be remedied. "Do not cry over spilt milk," says the English proverb. Disraeli advises us never to explain and never to complain. Descartes said: "I have learned to check my desires and not to fight against the world's laws and to believe that what could not be accomplished was for me absolutely impossible." From time to time the mind must be cleansed and renewed. There is no happiness without forgetfulness. I have never known a real man of action to be unhappy during action. How could he be? Like a child at play, he stops thinking of himself.

Bertrand Russell says that when he reads his friends' books or listens to their talk he almost comes to the conclusion that happiness is impossible in the modern world. He finds, however, when he talks with his gardener, that this idea is absurd. The gardener looks after his tomatoes and his eggplants; he knows his job and his garden perfectly, and he knows also that his crop will be a fine one: he is proud of it. Here we have one kind of happiness, the reward of every great artist, every creator. For intelligent people, action often means escape from thought, but it is a reasonable and a wise escape. "He who desires but does not act breeds corruption." One might also say: "He who thinks but does not act breeds corruption." Thought which leads nowhere is dangerous. The man of action is not disturbed by the contradictions of the universe and the complexities of life; he

takes them as they come and the synthesis builds itself up. On the other hand, inaction regards the apparent incoherence of the universe as a matter for sorrow—a sorrow which is quite artificial. Action itself is not enough; one must act in harmony with the society of which one is a part. A permanent state of conflict wears one down and makes work difficult, sometimes impossible.

Choose a community to live in whose efforts lie in the same direction as your own and where there will be interest in your activities. Instead of living in conflict with your family, who in your opinion do not understand you, and in the conflict destroying your happiness and that of others, seek out friends who think as you do. If you are religious, live among believers; if you are a revolutionary, live among your own kind. You can still try to convince the sceptical, and in this you will have the support of those who are in agreement with you. It is wrongly held by many that to be happy one must have the admiration and respect of a great many people; but the esteem of one's own circle is essential. Stéphane Mallarmé, deeply beloved by a few disciples, was far happier than a celebrated man who knows that his reputation is questioned by those whom he admires. The monastery has brought peace to innumerable souls through its singleness of thought and purpose.

Do not make yourself unhappy by imagining distant and unpredictable tragedies. Several days ago I encountered an unhappy man in the Tuileries Gardens with its gay children, its fountains, and its sunlight. He was walking beneath the trees, alone, melancholy, thinking about financial or military disasters which he said he expected within two years. "Are you mad?" I asked him. "Who the devil knows what will happen next year? Life is difficult and our peaceful moments are few, but the future will certainly not in any way resemble your gloomy forebodings. Enjoy the present. Imitate those children sailing their white-sailed boats on the pond. Do your duty and leave the rest to the gods." Obviously the future must be considered in the light of one's own power to influence events. The man of action cannot be a fatalist. The architect has to think of the future of the house he is building; a workman has to take measures for safeguarding his

old age; a member of the Chamber has to consider the possible effects of the budget for which he is going to vote. But once decisions are made and measures taken, peace of mind must be re-established. It is absurd to try to foresee things when the means of doing it are lacking.

When one is already happy it is important not to lose the virtues which have produced happiness. When they are successful, many men and women forget prudence, moderation, and kindness—qualities which were instrumental in their success. They are arrogant or thoughtless; an excessive self-confidence prevents them from accomplishing difficult tasks, and they soon become unworthy of their good fortune. They are surprised when their luck changes from good to bad. The ancient practice of sacrifice to the gods in return for happiness was a wise one. Polycrates, Tyrant of Samos, threw his precious ring into the sea as a sacrifice, and there are several ways of throwing the ring of Polycrates into the sea. The simplest is to be modest.

These recipes for happiness have not been invented by us; they are well-known and have been taught ever since the existence of philosophers who meditated. Those of antiquity, Stoic as well as Epicurean, advised submission to one's fate, moderate desires and a life in harmony with oneself. This was the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, of Montaigne; it is also that of the wise men of our own time.

"What?" exclaims the Anti-Sage (Nietzsche; Gide—but a Gide so complex that he is sometimes the Sage; and in the younger generation, perhaps Malraux). "What? This acceptance of a vulgar, insipid fate? This insignificant happiness? This refusal to live a dangerous life? This resignation? Are these what you offer us? We do not want happiness; we want heroism."

"You are partly right, O Anti-Sage, and I shall try presently to show that happiness is not resignation, but joy. You are wrong if you think that wisdom is not itself a heroic struggle. Submission to events which have no connection with our actions does imply giving in to ourselves. We accept the sea and its storms, the crowd and its passions, man and his struggle, the body and its needs, because these are the elements of the problem; if we did not accept them

our discourse would concern a shadowy, imaginary world. We believe in our ability to change the world in some slight way, to steer a ship in a storm, to dominate a crowd, and above all to transform ourselves. We cannot eliminate all the causes of sickness, defeat, or humiliation (nor can you), but we can make of sickness, defeat, and humiliation occasions for victory and the acquisition of tranquillity."

"Man does not aspire to happiness," says Nietzsche, "Only Englishmen do that." And elsewhere: "I do not want happiness; I want to do my work." But why cannot one seek happiness while doing one's work? Happiness is neither comfort, nor the search for pleasure, nor laziness. The sternest of philosophers seek happiness like all men, but in their own fashion.

Wisdom is only the first stage of the journey towards happiness. It prepares the way by riding the mind of useless torment. It silences useless discussion of the most insignificant emotions. When this mission is fulfilled, happiness can exist. But what will this happiness be like? I am sure that it is a mingling of love and the joy of creation—that is, self-forgetfulness. Love and joy can take widely varying forms, beginning with the love of two human beings for one another and ending with the love of humanity which is so well described by the poets.

He who has not spent hours, days, or years with someone he loves cannot know what happiness is, for he is unable to imagine a protracted miracle like this—one which makes out of ordinary sights and events the most enchanted existence. Stendhal is one of the men who have best understood the similarity between happiness and love, and I call attention here to an admirable passage in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, describing Fabrice's happiness in the prison at Parma. He is in grave danger of death, but what does this matter when his days are illuminated by the brief appearances of Clélia? He is happy.

What a woman's love does for a young man like Fabrice, maternal love does for a mother, love of his colleagues for a leader, love of his work for an artist, and the love of God for a saint. The moment we succeed forgetting ourselves entirely, the moment we lose ourselves, due to some mystical

impulse, in some other existence, we find ourselves; and the events which do not concern this other existence become unimportant. "An unsatisfied woman requires luxury, but a woman who is in love with a man will lie on a board."

It is true that in thus giving his love to fragile beings man becomes more vulnerable. He who passionately loves a woman, children, or his country gives hostages to fortune. He will be tortured from then on, though he be in good health, put down though he be powerful, forced to ask for mercy though he be courageous and hardened to suffering. Fortune has him in her grasp. He is forced to watch with burning anxiety the sickness of those he loves tenderly—a suffering far worse than that caused by any malady of his own, because his physical powers are intact. He wants to help, but feels utterly useless. He would like to surrender himself instead of his precious hostages, and sickness—arrogant and tyrannical—chooses its victims relentlessly. In spite of himself he feels like a coward and a traitor, because he has escaped. This is the cruellest of all human torments.

What becomes of our Stoical wisdom now? Would it not tell us that it is madness to involve our destinies so closely with those of fragile human beings? Did not Montaigne refuse to take the affairs of his fellow-citizens into his liver and lungs? Yes, but Montaigne himself suffered when the victim was La Boetie. It cannot be denied that this conflict exists; and Christian wisdom is more profound than Stoical wisdom because it takes this into account. The only perfect solution would be to place one's affections only where one may be sure of constancy. From this comes the lasting and intangible happiness of sincerely religious people. But human instinct involves us with human beings. Wisdom is no less to be prized in the many cases where real love is not concerned. It rids us of imagined misfortune; it banishes useless apprehension; it maintains a healthy distrust of sufferings which are nothing but words.

One of the most serious obstacles to happiness is the awkwardness of modern man, with his mind full of doctrines and abstract formulas, when he attempts to re-establish contact with real emotions. Animals and unsophisticated people achieve happiness more naturally, because their desires are

simpler and truer. Civilized man, a parrot enslaved by his chattering, ceaselessly inoculates himself with loves and hatreds which he does not actually feel.

In this disorder from which spring so many imaginary misfortunes, the artist can help us to recapture real emotions better than the philosopher. Mystical knowledge alone, whether it be of art, love, or religion, gets at the essence of things; it alone brings stability, peace, and happiness. The artist who tries to capture the beauty of a landscape and whose gaze seems to dart out towards it in order that he may not miss a single detail knows perfect happiness while he is working. In his *Christmas Carol,* Dickens shows how a wretched, egotistical old man finds happiness, until then beyond his comprehension, because he allows himself to become fond of several people and through them is able to cast off his worst fault. Whenever we catch a fleeting glimpse of the extraordinary unity of the universe; when the motionless hills, the rustling trees, the swallows darting across the sky, and the insect crawling upon the window-pane suddenly become a part of our life and our life a part of the world about us, then we are aware, in a flash of intuition, of that love of the universe so greatly surpassing submission to it, which is expressed in the *Hymn to Joy.*

"Do you wish to know the secret of happiness?" Several years ago in the agony column of *The Times* this question was asked, and all those who replied received an envelope containing two verses from Saint Matthew: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Such actually, is the secret of happiness, and the ancients had the same idea in another form when they declared that Hope was left at the bottom of Pandora's box when all the evils had taken flight. He who seeks love shall find it; he who devotes himself unreservedly to friendship shall have friends; only the man who desires happiness with his whole heart shall find it.

Early in life we put questions in an unanswerable form: "How am I to find the perfect man who deserves my love, or the unfailing friend who deserves my confidence? Where

can laws be found which will assure the peace and happiness of my country? Where and in what occupation am I to achieve happiness myself?" No one can reply to those who state their problems in this way.

"What are the questions that should be asked? Where am I to find a person with weaknesses like my own, but with whom, thanks to our good intentions, shelter from the world and its changes may be erected? What are the hard-won virtues necessary to a nation's existence? To what work can I devote my time and strength, thus forgetting my fears and regrets with the help of discipline? Finally, what sort of happiness shall I be able to achieve, and by whose love?"

There is no permanent equilibrium in human affairs. Faith, wisdom, and art allow one to attain it for a time; then outside influences and the souls' passions destroy it, and one must climb the rock again in the same manner. This vacillation round a fixed point is life, and the certainty that such a point exists is happiness. As the most ardent love, if one analyses its separate moments, is made up of innumerable minute conflicts settled invariably by fidelity, so happiness, if one reduces it to its important elements, is made up of struggles and anguish, and always saved by hope.

