

THE MERCY OF GOD

BY THEODORE DREISER

Once one of his disciples, walking with him in the garden, said: "Master, how may I know the Infinite, the Good, and attain to union with it, as thou hast?" And he replied: "By desiring it utterly, with all thy heart and with all thy mind." And the disciple replied: "But that I do." "No, not utterly," replied the Master, "or thou wouldst not now be asking how thou mayst attain to union with it. But come with me," he added, "and I will show thee." And he led the way to a stream, and into the water, and there, by reason of his greater strength, he seized upon his disciple and immersed him completely, so that presently he could not breathe. And the disciple struggled fiercely, but the Master's strength was proof against all his efforts. But when the strength of the disciple began to wane and he would have drowned, the Master drew him forth and stretched him upon the bank and restored him. And when he was sufficiently restored, he exclaimed: "But, Master, why didst thou submerge me in the stream and hold me there until I was like to die?" And the Master replied: "Didst thou not say that above all things thou desirest union with the Infinite?" "Yea, true; but in life, not death." "That I know," answered the Master. "But now tell me: When thou wast thus held in the water what was it that thou didst most desire?" "To be restored to air, to life." "And how much didst thou desire it?" "As thou sawest—with all my strength and with all my mind." "Verily. Then when in life thou desirest union with the All-Good, the Infinite, as passionately as thou didst life, it will come. Thou wilt know it then, and not before."

—KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

A FRIEND of mine, a neurologist and interpreter of Freud, and myself were met one night to discuss a much-talked-of book of his, a volume of clinical studies of various obsessions, perversions and inhibitions. My friend had filled responsible positions in hospitals and asylums, and later, as a professor of these matters, had occupied a chair in one of our principal universities. He was kindly, thoughtful, and intensely curious as to the

workings of this formula we call life, but without lending himself to any—at least, very few—hard and fast dogmas. Life appeared to interest but never to discourage him. He really liked it. Pain, he said, he always accepted as an incentive, an urge to life. Strife he liked because it hardened all to strength. And he believed in action as the antidote to too much thought, the way of brooding and sorrow. Youth passes, strength passes, life passes; but action makes it all bearable. Also, he wanted more labor, not less, for humanity, more toil, not less, more exertion. And he insisted that through life, not round or outside it, lay the way to happiness, if there was a way.

He was always saying of me that I had a touch of the Hindu in me, the Far East, the Brahmin. I emphasized indifference to life—or, if not that, I quarreled too much with pain and unhappiness and did not feel strongly enough the need of action. I was forever saying that the strain was too great, that there had best be less of action, less of pain. . . . As to the need of less pain, I agreed, but never to the need of less action; in verification of which I pointed to my own life, the changes I had deliberately courted, the various activities I had entered upon, the results I had sought for. He was not to be routed from his contention entirely, nor I from mine.

Following this, we fell to discussing a third man whom we both admired, an eminent physiologist, then connected with one of the great experimental laboratories, who had made many discoveries in connection with the associative faculty of the brain and the mechanics of associative

memory. This man was a mechanist of the most convinced type. To him there was nowhere in nature any serene and directive force which brought about the marvels of structure and form and movement that so arrest and startle our intelligence at every turn. To him, the beauty of nature and the order of living were accidents, and not even necessary ones. If you would believe him, the greatest human beings that ever lived and the most perfect states of society that ever were had no more significance in nature than the lowest infusoria. One would have thought, as I said to my friend, that such a conviction would be dulling and destructive to initiative and force, and I asked him why he thought it had not operated to blunt and destroy this very great man.

"For the very reasons I am always emphasizing," he replied. "Pain, necessity, life has stung him into action and thought, and hence into success. He is the person he is by reason of action."

"But," I argued, "his philosophy makes him account it all as worthless, or, if not that, as so fleeting and unstable as to make it scarcely worth the doing, even though he does it. Happiness and tribulation, glory and obscurity, are all accidents to him. Science, industry and politics, like races and planets, are accidents. Trivial causes make great characters like himself inactive, and mediocre ones are occasionally permitted to execute great deeds by the chance that should have produced a master. Circumstances are stronger than personalities, and the impotence of individuals is the tragedy of every-day life."

"Quite so," agreed my friend, "and there are times when I am inclined to agree with him, but at most times I am not. I used to keep hanging in one of my offices, printed and framed, that famous quotation from Ecclesiastes: 'I returned, and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.' But I took it down because I have

come to believe that there is something else in nature, some impulse not yet understood, which seeks to arrange and balance things. I know that sounds vainly cheerful, and that many people will disagree—you, for one—but I have encountered things in my work that have caused me to feel that nature isn't altogether hard or cruel or careless, even though accidents happen. I don't believe in absolute good or absolute evil, of course, but I do believe in relative good and relative evil. Our friend, on the contrary, sees it all as blind chance; something that I can't reason myself into. I think there is something that helps life along, or out of its difficulties. I know that you won't agree with me; still, I believe it, and while I don't think there is any direct and immediate response such as the Christian Scientists and the New Thinkers would have us believe in, I know there is a response at times, or at least I think there is, and I think I can prove it."

II

He then went on to talk of medicine and surgery and all the new mechanical aids to life and of the new ameliorative laws, such as those relating to child labor, workmen's compensation, hours of work, safety devices and the like. He called these things specific proofs of what he was saying. He said they showed a desire on the part of nature, working through man, to make life easier for all of us. He recalled the Reformation, and how it had ended the iniquities of the Inquisition; and the rise of Christianity, and how it had ameliorated the brutalities of paganism. The automobile, he went on, had already practically eliminated the long sufferings of the horse; our Civil War and humane opposition in other countries had once and for all time put an end to human slavery; also, he recalled how anesthesia had eliminated the extreme agonies of pain. Humane laws, he said, were being constantly passed to better if not entirely cure inhuman conditions, and so on and so forth.

I confess I was interested, if not convinced. In spite of life itself existing on life, there was too much in what he said to permit me to dismiss it indifferently. But there came to my mind just the same the many instances of crass accident and brutish mischance which are neither prevented nor cured by anything—the thousands who are annually killed in railroad accidents and industrial plants, despite protective mechanisms and fortifying laws; the thousands who die yearly in epidemics of influenza, smallpox, yellow fever, cholera; the wide-spread dissemination of cancer, consumption and related ills. These I mentioned. He admitted the force of the point but insisted that man, by reason of the sympathy aroused through pain endured, was moved to kindly action by all such things. If nature loved brutality and inhumanity and suffering, why should it escape pain, and why should it generate sympathy, and tears and rejoicing at escape from suffering by man, and why sorrow and horror at the accidental or intentional infliction of disaster on man by nature or man?

“Let me give you,” he went on, “a specific case that has always interested me. It concerns a girl I know, a very homely one, who lost her mind. Her father called me in to see what could be done. The parents of this girl were Catholics. The father was a successful contractor and politician, and there were three children; he provided very well for them materially but could do little for them mentally. He was not the intellectual but the religious type. The mother was a cheerful, good-natured and conventional woman, and had only the welfare of her children and her husband at heart. When I first came to know the family this girl was thirteen or fourteen, the youngest of the three children. Of the three, and for that matter of the entire family, I saw that this girl was decidedly the most interesting, psychologically and emotionally. She was intense and receptive, but inclined to be morbid; and for a very good reason, as I saw it. For

she was not good-looking, not in any way attractive physically, and she had too good a mind, too keen a perception, not to know it. So she came to resent, vigorously and yet hopelessly, all the little neglects and deprivations which, owing to her lack of looks and the superior charms of her sister and brother, were throughout her infancy and youth thrust upon her. Her mouth was not sweet—too large; her eyes were unsatisfactory as to setting, though not as to wistfulness; her nose and chin were too big, and above her left eye was a birth-mark, a livid scar as large as a penny. In addition, her complexion was sallow and muddy, and she had a bad figure. She walked, entirely by reason of her mental depression, I am sure, at least after she had reached fifteen or sixteen, with a slow and moody gait. Something within her, I am sure, was always whispering that hope was in vain, that there was no use in trying, that she was mercilessly and irretrievably handicapped.

“On the other hand, her sister and brother had been specially favored by nature: a cruel contrast to place so directly before her. Celeste, the sister, was bright, vivacious and colorful. She had a graceful body, a beautiful face, clear large blue eyes, light glossy hair, and a love for life. She could sing and dance. She was sought after and courted by all sorts of men and boys. I myself, as a young man, used to wish that I could interest her, and often went to the house on her account. Her brother also was smart, well-favored, careful as to his clothes, vain, and interested in and fascinating to girls. He too, liked to dance, to attend parties, to play and disport himself wherever young people were gathered.

“Thus, during the years when she was growing up, and until her sister and brother were married and gone, the house was a centre for all the casual and playful goings-on of youth. Girls and boys, all interested in Celeste and her brother, came and went—girls to see the good-looking brother, boys to flirt with and

dance attendance upon the really charming Celeste. In Winter there was skating; in Summer automobiling, trips to the beach, camping. In most of these affairs, so long as it was humanly possible, the favorless sister was included; but, as we all know, especially where thoughtless and aggressive youth is concerned, such little courtesies are not always humanly possible. Youth will be served. In the main it is too intent upon the sorting and mating process, each for himself, to give heed or care to another.

"To make matters worse, and possibly because her deficiencies early acquainted her with the fact that boys and girls found her sister and brother more attractive than herself, Marguerite grew reticent, recessive and exceedingly shy—so much so that when I first saw her she was already slipping about with the air of one who appeared to feel that she was not as acceptable as she might be, even though, as I saw, her mother and father sought to make her feel that she was. Her father was a stodgy and silent man, too involved in politics and religion and the difficulties of his position to give very much attention to the intricacies of his children's personalities. He was a narrow and determined religionist, one who saw in abstention the only key to peace and salvation. What he thought of the gayeties of his two elder children I do not know, but since they were harmless and in both cases led to happy and enduring marriages he probably had nothing to quarrel with. As for Marguerite, I doubt if he ever sensed in any way the moods and torturous broodings that were hers, the horrors that attended her disappointed love life. He had not been disappointed in his own love life, and was therefore not able to understand. He was not sensitive enough to have suffered greatly if he had been, I am sure. But his wife, a soft, pliable, affectionate, gracious woman, early sensed that her daughter must pay heavily for her ill looks, and so sought in every way to woo her into an unruffled complacency with life and herself.

III

"But how little the arts of man can do toward making up for the niggardliness of nature! I am certain that always, from her earliest years, this ugly girl loved her considerate mother and was grateful to her; but she was a girl of insight, if not of hard practical sense or fortitude, and she loved life too much to be content with the affection of her mother only. Before her was always the spectacle of the happiness of others, their dreams and their fulfillments. For the greater part of these years she was very much alone, imagining and dreaming about all the things she would like to be, and do. Finally she took to reading and to attending theatres, lectures, and what not—to establish some contact, I presume, with the life she saw about her. But I fancy that these were not of much help, for life may not be lived so.

"When I saw her at twenty-four as the medical adviser of the family, I concluded that there must have been many things in the books she read which tortured her quite as much as reality, for she selected only such books as painted life as she wished it to be for her. Her favorite authors, as she herself told me later, were Anatole France, George Moore, de Maupassant, and Dostoevsky. She went much to the theatre; she brooded in libraries, and she followed one lecturer after another, more, I am sure, because she hoped to get some contact, although she never seemed to, with men who were interesting to her, than because she was interested in the things they discussed.

"Somewhere around the age of twenty-one she had met a young teacher, himself not very attractive, whose prospects, as her father saw them, were not very much. But since she was lonely and found some companionship and solace in his company, no objection was made to him. As time went on, and she and the teacher became more and more intimate, both she and her parents assumed that in the course of time he would most certainly marry her. At

the end of his school-teaching year in New York he left the city and started up a long correspondence with her. In addition, he came back to spend his vacation near her in New York, going about with her and seeming to feel that she was of some value to him in some way.

"She was provided with spending money and could take him to places to which he could not possibly have afforded to go alone. It was assumed, because of their companionship and the fact that she would have some money of her own after marriage, that he would propose. But he did not. Instead, he came year after year, visited about with her, took up her time, as the family saw it (her worthless time!), and then departed for his duties elsewhere as free as when he had come. This irritated and infuriated the family. They thought him a weakling and a failure, and she a fool for trifling with him. But she was not willing to give him up; he was her one hope. The general impression was that he was too poor to marry as yet, or thought he was, and was seeking to establish himself first. Several more years came and went, and he returned or wrote, but still he did not propose. And then of a sudden he wrote that he had fallen in love with another girl, and was about to be married.

"This blow appeared to be the crowning one in Marguerite's life, for in the face of the opposition, and to a certain degree contempt, of her father, who was a practical and successful man, she had devoted herself to this man who was neither successful nor very attractive for almost seven years. And, now after so long a period, in which apparently he had used her to make life a little easier for himself, even he had walked away and left her for another. She fell to brooding more and more. She walked a great deal, as her father told me, and began to interest herself in a course of history and philosophy at one of the colleges of the city. And then, of a sudden, she began to swing between exaggerated periods of study and a form of recessive despair, under the influence of

which she retired to her room for days, wishing neither to see nor to hear from anyone. And then she turned as abruptly to shopping, dress-making and the niceties of her personal appearance.

"About this time her mother died and, her sister and brother having married, she was left in charge of the house and of her father. It was soon evident that she had no particular qualifications for or interest in housekeeping, and a maiden sister of her father came to look after things. She liked this aunt well enough, although they had very little in common mentally. Marguerite went on as before. Parallel with all this, however, ran certain things which I have forgotten to mention. Her father had been growing more and more narrowly religious. Before she was twenty-three he had noted that she was indifferent to her church duties, that she had to be urged to go to mass on Sunday and to confession once a month. Also, he told me afterward, as something to be deplored, that her reading had caused her to believe that her old faith was by no means infallible, or its ritual important; there were bigger and more interesting things in life. This had caused her father to mistrust and detest her reading. From having some sympathy with her at first, he came to have a cold and stand-offish feeling. She was, as he saw it, an unnatural child. She did not obey him. He began to look into her books, and came to feel that they were not fit for anyone to read. They were immoral. They were irreligious. He forbade her to read such stuff, to bring such books into his home. When he found some of them later he burned them.

"So she hid her remaining books and read them only outside or in the privacy of her locked room. Her father's discovery that she was still doing this, and his rage, caused her to think of leaving home. But she was without training, without any place to go. If she should go she would have to teach, perhaps, and for this she now decided to prepare. By now her father had drawn away from her to such an

extent that he wished little if anything to do with her. She was defiled, as he saw it, with mortal sin, and not repentant.

"It was about this time that she developed the aberrations which brought me into the case. As I have said, she began by manifesting a new and exaggerated interest in her looks. Much to her father's and his sister's astonishment, she painted and primed in front of her mirror nearly all day long. Lip sticks, rouge, eyebrow pencils, perfumes, rings, pins, combs, and what not were suddenly introduced—very expensive and disconcerting lingerie, for one thing. The family had always maintained a charge account at two of the large stores, and to these she went and indulged herself in all such things. High-heeled slippers, bright-colored silk stockings, hats, blouses, gloves, furs, to say nothing of accentuated and even shocking street costumes, began to be sent home. Since the father was out all day and the aunt busy with the household, no note was made of all this until she began to put on her new finery and to walk out in the streets. Then came the bills, sixty days late. And then came the storm.

IV

"Previous to this, especially in the period of her greatest depression, she had dressed with no thought of anything, apparently, save a kind of resigned willingness to remain inconspicuous, as if to say: 'What difference does it make? No one is interested in me, anyhow.' Now, however, all was changed. She had supplied herself with hats so wide and fancy or fixy, as her father said, that they were a disgrace and clothing so loud that anyone anywhere would be ashamed of her. There were, as I myself saw, too many flowers, too much lace, too many rings, pins and belts and gew-gaws. And the colors were likely to be terrifying, even laughter-provoking, especially to those accustomed to think of unobtrusiveness as the first criterion of taste—a green or red broad-brimmed hat,

for instance, with a frock of some other and discordant color. And the perfumes with which she saturated herself were, as her father said, impossible.

"So arrayed, then, she would go forth to attend a theatre, a lecture or a moving picture, or to walk the streets. And yet, strangely enough, and this was as curious a phase of the case as any, she never appeared to wish to thrust her charms, such as they were, on anyone. On the contrary, there had generated in her the sudden hallucination that she had so powerful a fascination for men that she was in danger of bewildering them, enticing them against themselves to their moral destruction, and her own. A single glance, one look at her lovely face, and presto! they were enslaved. She needed but to walk, and lo! beauty—dazzling, searing, destroying—was implied in her every motion, every gesture. No man could endure it. He turned, he stared, he dreamed, he followed her and sought to force his attentions on her. Her father explained to me that when he met her on the street one day he was shocked to the point of collapse. A daughter of his so arrayed, and on the street! With the assistance of the aunt steps were at once taken. All the charge accounts were cancelled. Dealers were informed that no purchases of hers would be honored unless with the previous consent of her father. The worst of her sartorial offenses were unobtrusively removed from her room and burnt or given away, and plainer and more becoming things substituted.

"But though now debarred from dressing as she would, she imagined that she was still being followed and admired and annoyed by men, and at her very door. Eager and dangerous admirers lurked about the place. Her father and aunt began to notice that on leaving the house or returning to it she would invariably pause, if going out, to look about first; if returning, to look back as if she were expecting to see some one following her. Her comings-in were not infrequently accompanied by some-

thing like flight, a great haste to get away from a pursuer, presumably a dangerous or at least a very importunate one. There would be a feverish, fumbled insertion of the key, and then she would fairly jump in, looking back with a nervous glance. Once in, she would pause and look back, as though, having succeeded in eluding her pursuer, she was still interested to see what he was like or what he was doing. Often she would go to the curtained windows of the front room to peer out. And to her aunt she explained on several occasions that she had been followed all the way from Broadway or Central Park or somewhere, sometimes by a most-wonderful-looking gentleman, sometimes by a most loathsome brute. He had seen her somewhere and had pursued her to her very door. Brute or gentleman, she was always looking back.

"When this first began to happen they had troubled to inquire into the matter, looking into the street or even going so far as to go to the door and search for the man, but there was no one, or only some passing pedestrian or neighbor who certainly did not answer to the description of a handsome gentleman. Sensibly then, they began to assume that this also was an illusion. By now the thing had reached a stage where they began to feel a genuine alarm because of her and what she might do. Guests of the family were accused by her of attempting to flirt with her, of making appealing remarks to her, and neighbors of known conventionality of presuming to waylay her and force her to listen to their pleas. Thus her father became convinced that it was no longer safe for her to be at large. The family's reputation was at stake.

"At this time I was sent for, and asked to say what, if anything, could be done for her, and if nothing, what was to be done with her. I was permitted to talk to her, but not as a medical man. Rather, I was presented to her as an old friend of the father's who had dropped in as of yore after a considerable absence. She seemed

pleased to see me, only I noticed on this visit, as on subsequent ones, that throughout the conversation she seemed to wish to keep her face averted from me, especially her eyes. She looked here and there, anywhere, everywhere, save at me.

"After she had left the room I found that this development was new to the family. They had not noticed it before. I suspected at once that there was some connection between it and her disappointed love life. Since Freud and his disciples have made clear the immense psychic import of the seeking and repelling impulses of the sexes toward each other, the terrible effect that lack of success in love in youth has upon some natures, upon almost all, has come to be understood. This averted glance appeared to me to have something to do with that. Fearing to disturb or frighten her, and so alienate her, I chose to say nothing, but instead came again and again in order to familiarize her with my presence and cause her to take it as a matter of course. And to enlist her interest and sympathy, I pretended that there was a matter of taxes and property and that her father was helping me to solve the problem.

"In order to insure her presence I came as a rule just before dinner, staying some little time and talking with her. To be alone with her I had her father and his sister remain out for a few minutes after I arrived, and I invented all sorts of excuses for getting into conversation with her. On all of these visits I noticed that she still kept her face from me. One day I said: 'I notice, Marguerite, that whenever I come now you never look at me. Don't you like me? You used to look at me, and now you keep your face turned away. Why is that?'

"'Oh no; of course I like you, doctor, of course,' she replied, 'only,' she paused, 'I will tell you how it is: I don't want to have the same effect on you that I have on other men. You see,' she went on, 'it's my beauty. All you men are alike: you can't stand it. You would be just the same as the rest. You would be wanting to flirt with me, too, and it wouldn't be your

fault then, but mine. You couldn't help it. But I don't want you to be following me like the rest of them, and you would be doing it if I looked at you as I do at the others.' She had on a large hat, which evidently she had been trying on before I came, and now she pulled it coquettishly low over her face, and then sidled, laughing, out of the room.

"I was deeply moved, really. For I knew now that this was an instance of one of those kindly compensations in nature about which I have been talking,—a new proof of the deep wish of Providence to make life reasonably endurable for all of us. Here was this girl, sensitive and seeking, who had been denied everything—or, rather, the one thing she most craved in life: love. She had been compelled to sit by and see others have all the attentions and pleasures, while she had nothing—no pleasures, no lovers. And because she was denied them their import was exaggerated in her mind; their color and splendor were intensified by her lack. She had been crucified until beauty and attention were all that her soul cried for. And now behold the mercy of the forces I have been talking of. They diverted her mind in order to save her from herself. They appeared at last to preserve her from complete disaster. Life does not wish to crucify people, of that I am sure. Basically, fundamentally, it is well-intentioned. Useless, pointless torture has no real place in it; at least so I think."

V

He paused and stared, as though he had clinched his argument.

"Nevertheless and notwithstanding," I insisted, "life lives on life. If not, explain the stockyards, the butcher shops, the germs that live and fatten as people die."

He paid no attention to me. Instead, he went on: "This is only a theory of mine, but we know that there is no such thing as absolute evil, any more than there is absolute good. There is only relative evil

and relative good. What is good for me may be evil to you, and vice versa, just as a man may be evil to you and good to me. In the case of this girl I can't believe that so vast a thing as life, involving all the enormous forces and complexities that it does, would single out one little mite for torture. But, according to my theory, the machinery does not always run true. A spinner of plans or fabrics wishes them to come forth perfect, arranges a design and gathers all the colors and threads for a flawless result. The machine is well oiled. The engine is perfectly geared. Every precaution is taken, and yet in the spinning here and there a thread snaps, the strands become entangled, bits, sometimes whole segments, are spoiled by one accident or another. But not intentionally. Precisely so are these flaws in human beings, which come from I know not where, but are accidental, I am sure, not intended by the spinner. At least I think so. They cause great pain. They cause the worst disasters. Yet our great mother, nature, the greatest spinner of all, does what she can to right things—or so I wish to believe. Like the spinner, she stops the machine, unites the broken strands, uses all her ability to make things run smoothly once more. It is my wish to believe that in this case, where a homely girl could not be made beautiful, still nature brought about what I look upon as a beneficent illusion, a providential hallucination. By way of insanity, Marguerite attained to all the lovely things she had ever longed for. In her unreason she had her beautiful face, her adoring cavaliers; they turned and followed her in the streets. She was beautiful to all, to herself, and must hide her loveliness in order to avert disaster to others. How else would you explain that? As reasoned and malicious cruelty on the part of nature? Or as accident? Or as a kindly intervention, a change of heart, a wish on the part of nature to make amends to her for all that she had suffered, not to treat her or any of us too brutally or too unfairly? How?"

THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Music

JAZZ

BY VIRGIL THOMSON

JAZZ, in brief, is a compound of (a) the fox-trot rhythm, a four-four measure (*alla breve*) with a double accent, and (b) a syncopated melody over this rhythm. Neither alone will make jazz. The monotonous fox-trot rhythm, by itself, will either put you to sleep or drive you mad. And a highly syncopated line like the second subject of the Franck symphony in D minor or the principal theme of Beethoven's third "Leonora" overture is merely syncopation until you add to it the heavy bump-bump of the fox-trot beat. The combination is jazz. Try it on your piano. Apply the recipe to any tune you know. In case you are not satisfied with the result, play the right hand a little before the left.

The fox-trot, which appeared about 1914, is the culmination of a tendency in American dancing that has been active ever since rag-time was invented in the early years of the century. The Viennese waltz and its brother, the two-step, died about 1912. For two years following, fancy steps like the tango, the maxixe, and the hesitation, with their infinite and amazing variations, made anarchy in the ball-room. This was resolved by a return to the utmost simplicity, and the common language of legs became a sort of straight-away walk. Any man could teach his partner in ten steps his peculiar form of it, whether he called it the castle walk, the lame duck, or what not.

Soon after this primitive step became established ball-room dancing began to show the disturbance that shook all of

polite society when the lid of segregation was taken off of vice and the bordello irrupted into the drawing-room. Ragging, a style of dancing with slight foot-work, but with much shoulder-throwing, came home from the bawdy house bearing the mark of the earlier hoochie-coochie, a monotonous beat without accentuation. It infected the walk-steps, had a convulsion called the turkey-trot, which proved too difficult to keep up, and finally, calling itself both the one-step and the fox-trot, became national and endemic. The former name, which merely indicated a tempo, is no longer used. The tempo of the latter has been expanded to include it.

At present the fox-trot is our only common dance-rhythm. Its speed varies from 66 to 108 half-notes to the minute. It will bear any amount of muscular embroidery, from the shimmy to the halt, because its rhythm is in the simplest possible terms. The Viennese waltz is practically extinct in America. What is now called a waltz is simply a three-four fox-trot, as the two-step was a four-four waltz. The rhythm of the Viennese waltz is $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ or $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ and that of the hesitation $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ \times or $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$. There is one accent to a measure, as indicated. The two-step also had one accent, $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ or $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$. But the fox-trot has two, $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ \times and the jazz waltz has three, $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$ $\underline{\underline{\bullet}}$. The waltz, however, is not at home in jazz. After a century of Europeans, from Schubert to Ravel, had played with it, there was small possibility left in it for rhythmic variation. It is not comfortable now, for the true waltz-step is almost impossible unless the music has a flowing