

hermit but upon his little pig, his only companion, which is very still and sits very close to its master, sensing an uneasiness in the atmosphere.

In the two earlier versions the house in the background is already in flames, and we can only suppose that before painting the present version Bosch subjected this favourite image to a very keen examination. Here, the house is only threatened with destruction: we see the demons with ladders and scaling irons, the incendiaries, converging upon it, but never reaching it.

From one point of view these fantastic little butchers and incendiaries are dry and vestigial, and it might seem that Bosch is no longer deeply interested in such devices; from another approach they present the essence of all previous ingenuities, for quite clearly and precisely they are personifications of the destructive and murderous tendencies which are, perhaps, concomitants of the hermit's vocation; and if these are tendencies in Bosch also, he is no longer giving in to vicarious enjoyment of them, for we are witnesses of the frustration of the personifications in their struggle to complete one of these dark visions. Not one of these figures is out of the hermit's thoughts and not one is allowed to consummate a task, all are forced by his terrible concentration to exhibit their contemptible incompetence. But although he checks the vision of burning and slaughter which his impulses are striving to complete, there is a tragic consequence: this effort of the will can only effect a qualified mastery of the vision, not a banishment. He is both slave and master of his visions. This St. Anthony is the living image of his mysterious creator.

MARGARET GARDINER

MEETING THE MASTER

THE letter said: 'Your brother writes that you will be in Florence. Do come and see us. You must take tram No. 16 in Via dei Pecori, just near the cathedral. Come to the very terminus—then walk on straight ahead uphill and don't turn till you see two cypresses, close together as two fingers. Take the road to the left there—dip

down in the little hollow—our house is the big square box on the crown of the hill. But let us know and we'll come at least part of the way to meet you, or, if you prefer, send the peasant with the little trap, the barrocino. He'll rattle you up in no time.'

She had read it many times and now, sitting in the tram, she read it again. She was solemn and excited; the whole of her life jostled in her throat to leap into expression. She was going to meet Lawrence, really going to meet him. She felt full and important. Lawrence! A person to whom one could talk, who knew and understood everything. The tram stopped with a jerk and she got out, screwing up her eyes in the glaring light, smoothing out her fresh cotton frock, already a little crumpled and sticky from the heat. And there he was, immediately recognizable, but smaller than she had imagined, somehow a little shrunken, frail.

'Miss Wickham?'

'Yes.'

He shook her hand. 'I'm so glad you've come. My wife has had to go away for a few days on a visit to her sister, but she asked me to send you her greetings and say how sorry she was to miss you.'

Judith was glad. It was turning out just as she wished and she would have him to herself. But she said:

'I'm sorry. I'd so much have liked to meet her.'

Now they were walking slowly up the dusty road, the girl silent and breathless, the man talking easily and gaily, asking for news of her brother, questioning her about her journey and where she was staying.

'Let's look a minute,' he said.

He stopped and sat wearily on a rock by the roadside, coughing. As she turned to the quivering Tuscan landscape below, Judith had a sudden realization of how ill he was and how much his quick vitality cost him.

'It's lovely.'

'Yes, lovely,' said Lawrence. 'The world is lovely.' And then, with surprising bitterness, 'But people, how I hate them. They spoil it all.'

'Oh no,' protested Judith. 'Not people, just like that. Some people, perhaps. But not people, just like that.'

'All modern people are rotten to the core,' he said vindictively,

'destroying themselves and everything else with their little beastlinesses. Well, let 'em.'

Judith was shocked. He surely couldn't mean it: How ridiculous. But she was checked by his intensity and for the moment her own world darkened and was peopled by monsters.

They started up the hill again, and again Lawrence was easy and friendly and everything sparkled and looked gay in the sunlight. The climb was a painful one, with many pauses for Lawrence to rest, so that they were glad to reach the house at last and grateful for its cool darkness. But it wasn't really dark; brightly coloured pictures hung on the chalk white walls, there were striped Mexican rugs on the tiled floor and crisp muslin curtains in the windows. The furniture was painted and everything was tremendously neat and clean, enchantingly gay.

'I'm painting now,' said Lawrence. 'I do nothing but paint. I love it.'

Judith got up and looked at the pictures on the wall. There was a holy family, a group of nuns and several portraits of peasants, all strongly, rather crudely painted in flat, bright colours. Everything he did must be wonderful, and yet she didn't really like the pictures. She gazed at them without a word, hoping, hypocritically, that her silence would be taken for admiration.

'I've cooked the dinner myself,' said Lawrence. 'Are you hungry? I do hope you'll like it.'

He went to the kitchen and returned with a delicious smelling stew pot. They sat down.

'Oh, the potatoes. I've forgotten the potatoes,' he cried.

'Shall I fetch them?' said Judith, jumping up. He looked so frail and worn.

'Yes, do. They're on the stove. Just bring them in as they are, in the pan.'

The kitchen was as neat and fresh as the rest of the house. Judith loved it all. She took the pan and, walking happily back, put it down on the red and white check table cloth.

'Come on,' said Lawrence, and they ate hungrily, enjoying the good food and the rough red wine. When they had finished their figs and grapes and were starting to clear the table, Lawrence looked at the girl severely.

'You need a lot of training about the house.' Judith blushed guiltily as she saw the black ring on the table cloth where she had

put the pan, but Lawrence laughed and said: 'You should have seen my wife when I first married her! She didn't know a thing about housework, I can tell you. And even now, she doesn't know much. As for shopping! I don't believe she'll ever get these Italian weights and measures right.' He himself was so quick and deft, washing the plates, putting the kitchen to rights. But his wife, it seemed, was a real lady, incompetent. He was immensely proud of her.

They sat in the wicker armchairs and talked.

'I do so love your books,' Judith was longing to say. 'They mean so much to me. They are more real to me than the real world.' But she couldn't say that or any of the other things. All the heavy intensity that she had brought to this meeting was dissolved by his gaiety, his preoccupation with detail and his disconcerting outbursts of irritation. And yet, somehow, she felt shallow and frivolous in face of his amazing authenticity. He was a very sick man.

So he told her about Mexico and she told him about Egypt.

'I hated it,' she said. 'It was all so dead and old and finished. And the people, just living on the surface of it, quite disconnected. They seemed to have nothing to do with the country at all—didn't belong to it somehow. They were just living there, but they didn't belong.'

Lawrence nodded.

'But Palestine,' the girl went on. 'That was different. I loved Palestine. It was green and growing up.' She began to tell him how she had ridden up Mount Carmel with a friend and had spent the day in a Jebel Druse village. Their ponies had bolted and her friend, who had never ridden before, had fallen off. The Arabs were highly amused. And in the evening they had sat with the Chief in his big white room, lit by a single oil lamp, and all the men of the village, in their black robes and white turbans, had come silently in and sat shadowy on the floor, close to the walls. Then someone had called for music and after much chatter a man had started to play on a reedy pipe; a monotonous tune, over and over again. Suddenly a boy jumped up and began to dance, his arms and body motionless, but with delicate, subtle movements of his feet. In the growing excitement a man sprang up and then another, following the boy with a quick counter rhythm, till there were four of them dancing in single file, and the whole place was

wildly alive. It was too much for the player—with a shout he flung his pipe across the room. Someone caught it and took up the scrawny tune—the black mass of men swayed and clapped till the excitement overwhelmed them and they all staggered out, drunken and laughing, into the cold, moonlit night.

Judith stopped, out of breath, a little drunk again at the memory. Lawrence was pleased.

‘You’re all right,’ he said. ‘You understand things a little.’

Judith was delighted, triumphant. He had said she was all right! Of course—but all the same she felt troubled, a little ashamed. It had been true, about the sterility of Egypt, about Palestine and about the strange excitement of the dancing. But in a way it hadn’t been her own experience at all, for it had been lived and seen with the eyes lent her by his books. And Lawrence, Lawrence who understood everything, simply hadn’t seen through her; he was pleased with her for what was essentially his, not hers.

‘Two friends of ours are coming up later on,’ he was saying, ‘to look at my pictures. Two ladies, sisters. They live in Florence and do a little sketching. We call them the Virgins. They’re nice.’

He was coughing again, looking drawn and tired. ‘Forgive me,’ he said, ‘I ought to rest a little now. It’s quite silly, but I’m supposed to rest.’

‘But of course,’ said Judith. He did so hate admitting he was ill.

‘Would you like to read one of my stories that has been published in America?’ he asked. ‘It’s a good story—very good. True and tender. But that didn’t prevent its readers from being shocked and from writing to the Editor to say his magazine wasn’t fit for their wives and daughters to read. Not fit to read! My lovely story! Oh, their dirty, mean, poky little minds! There was quite an uproar and the Editor was frightened. He knew my story was good, but he wouldn’t stand by me because he was frightened for his wretched magazine.’ Lawrence spoke with intense bitterness, and this time Judith shared his indignation.

‘How disgusting,’ she cried.

She curled up in the chair and read the story. She was lost again in the magic of his writing, his delicate perception and flamelike vitality. And again she longed to tell him how wonderful she thought his work was, how much it meant to her and how she really understood. She wanted him to know that she too was alive and aware. She wanted to tell him about herself and all that she

had been through, to show him that she knew about love and suffering and death. All the time she had meant to tell him that; she had been so sure. But now doubt crept in, and again she felt curiously ashamed. Why? Lawrence, happier, lighter than she had expected, with his rather absurd grudges, his spite and his bitter outbursts. Yet, in the man himself, even more than in his books, there was a quality of sincerity that she had never met before, a clear integrity that, by contrast, made all her meanings half meant. She felt raw and untried.

Lawrence came back, refreshed and smiling, and hummed as he went into the kitchen to make tea.

‘Here they come,’ he called.

The Misses Smith, like as two peas, came into the room. In spite of the hot Italian sun, both were dressed in trim grey flannel suits buttoned tightly over their thin chests, both wore grey felt hats and carried, rather incongruously, bright parasols. Their kindly, faded faces lit with pleasure at the sight of Lawrence and he, a charming host, chatted and teased as he handed them tea and pastries and warmed them with his attentiveness. Judith was puzzled. For all his alleged hatred of humanity, Lawrence seemed to like them so much, these rather dull, prim and elderly Virgins. And they, though they spoke to him severely, as if he were some reprehensible small boy, were clearly delighted by him, blossomed and grew animated in his presence.

With instinctive cruelty the girl stretched in her chair, flaunting her fresh roundness, her uncreased youth. But the Virgins didn’t notice; they were concentrated on Lawrence.

‘Now look at the pictures,’ he said.

Obediently they rose and stood in front of the holy family. A young Joseph, dark faced, grinning slightly, dominated the picture, standing tall and rather coarse, with his arm possessively round Mary. And she leaned placidly against him, looking up, utterly careless of the child that was perched upon her knee. Like Judith, the Misses Smith were silent and it was clear that they, like her, didn’t care for the picture. But Judith now veered passionately in defence of Lawrence’s work. ‘Silly old things,’ she thought, and she said:

‘Lovely, isn’t it?’

The Virgins didn’t answer.

When they came to the bevy of nuns, however, it seemed to please them better.

'But why did you put *him* in?' asked the elder Miss Smith, pointing to the figure of a peasant who peered derisively at the group from behind a corner of the convent. 'He spoils it.'

'Why, he's the whole point of the picture,' said Lawrence, laughing.

He went to a cupboard, brought out a sheaf of water colours and started to show them.

'That's good,' said one Miss Smith, and the other agreed. Here was something they understood and, looking through the pile, they spoke as fellow artists, discussing, criticizing.

'Here's one I particularly like,' said Lawrence. He grinned maliciously. 'It's called "Le Pisseur".'

They all looked. 'But why?' thought Judith. 'Why? I don't see it.'

The younger Miss Smith was the first to speak. She flushed.

'Really, Lawrence,' she said, 'You go too far.'

Lawrence was furious.

'What do you mean?' he cried. 'I go too far? What's wrong with the picture? Look at it. Look at that lovely curve. It's a lovely, natural thing.'

But it was too much for the Virgins. They were really shocked and hurt.

'No, no, Lawrence,' said the elder. 'You shouldn't do these things. You really shouldn't.'

After they had gone, Lawrence was still angry.

'The impudence,' he said, 'the incredible impudence. To speak like that to me. I'm a real artist and they take it on themselves to say things like that to me!'

'Oh, well,' said Judith, secure in being all right, in understanding things a little, in her wholehearted allegiance to him. 'Oh, well—the Virgins.'

Lawrence paused. He looked at her, mocking, amused.

'You're the real virgin, you know,' he said.

RHYS DAVIES
D. H. LAWRENCE
IN BANDOL

THE winter of 1928 I was living in the South of France. A letter arrived one morning: '... would you care to come and be my guest in this small and inexpensive hotel for a few days? My wife and I would both be pleased if you came—D. H. Lawrence.' Some friends of his in London had sent him my first novel and told him I was in Nice.

I had always imagined him as a remote inaccessible person, brooding and alone in his later esoteric rages and fumings, impatient of the ordinary European world, flying from it to places like Mexico and Australia. Inaccessible even while in Europe. In London I had learned very little about him as a person; the younger set in which I moved had never seen him; he was becoming a legendary figure, mystic, and with more than a touch of the hieratic about him. But I had always wanted to meet him. So I was surprised and thrilled when out of Bandol, along the coast, came the note. How nice of him, I thought in excitement and a little fear, to invite me, a stranger, to stay with him.

I went in trepidation. The visit was so important to me. Just as his books had meant as much to me as all my own experiences of life, becoming mixed with those experiences, I thought this meeting would intensify what he had already given me. For the younger generation of writers in England then, in that strange confused directionless decade after the war, he alone seemed to be carrying a torch. True, a smoky, wild torch. But nevertheless a light, though exactly on what path it was shedding illumination was often a matter for dispute, quarrel and even derision. I think we admired him because he was not sitting down inertly during those slack years. He was crying aloud, if sometimes incoherently, of the deceit, falseness and dangers of those apparently victorious after-war years. Not that he was political, or even social, minded. His message was directed into the heart, the loins and what he would call 'the bowels of mankind'. Meaning instinct as opposed to the mechanization of the individual. His work was a fresh