

work of those whom taste places in the same category as himself, but we remember Rousseau protesting that he could give Cézanne a few hints on painting, and Bombois' reluctant confession that he did not like the works of the Douanier because they were not 'realistic' enough. The sophisticated artist can be frank about his time and comment on its implications because his intellectual equipment gives him a sense of detachment which, at its worst, is a kind of insulation. What is curious is that of all the Primitives, Bauchant should be the only one to take to religious imagery. His 'Assumption of the Virgin', a flat, flower-bedecked image, posed against an intensely blue sky, is perhaps, the final European statement of that once familiar theme, and his most recent painting is a 'Christ Carrying His Cross'.

Struggling with the problems of expression, as though no one had ever done so before, Bauchant has achieved an act of pure painting, free from any implications save those of so profound a kind as to evade the superficiality of the deliberate. An excellent draughtsman, he elevated his quest for monumentality and magnificence of composition into a permanent part of the revolt against the ephemerality of and looseness of Impressionism. His innate lyricism has become a counterblast against the cold intellectuality of Post-Fauvism. A painter of excellence by any standards, his work emphasizes the fact that the Innocent Eye of the Primitives, of the 'maîtres populaires de la réalité' is not accompanied by an inept hand, and that artistic simplicity is a matter of apprehension, not of execution.

AUGUSTUS JOHN

FRAGMENTS OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—XVII

COCOA is one of the slowest of coolers . . . relinquishing my cup in despair, I rushed out of the kitchen, seized my satchel, and with death in the soul headed for school. I had, perhaps, ten minutes before the bell and over a mile to run through the devious lanes of the lower quarter of the town. At last, bursting into the precincts by way of the playground, I raced across it to arrive

gasping for breath just as the bell 'went' and before the door of the big classroom was closed against me. The Headmaster, though a noted champion of liberty, wielded at the same time a heavy ruler . . . Every morning the labours of the day were prefaced by a short homily by this little man, followed by a hymn or sometimes 'Scots, wha hae', and lastly the Doxology. Our Head, as he stood before his assembled charges, presented a distinctive and memorable figure. His large, spectacled face was crowned with a lofty crest of white hair; he wore a white tie, a frock coat and button boots. His trousers always seemed to me a little short and yet were not turned up. A fervent Gladstonian, he was also a pillar of the local Congregational Tabernacle. Greenhill was an exceptional type of school, not exactly a grammar school, being unendowed, but it catered for the middle classes in the widest sense and Latin was certainly taught, after a fashion. The Head was assisted by a staff comprising two of his daughters and several undermasters. The latter came and went with surprising frequency and seemed to belong to the pauper section of society, being always hungry, ill-clad and down-at-heel. A third daughter of the house actually took lessons with us, but at a desk apart. In her proximity the boys became more than ever gauche and incompetent, whereas in these surroundings the pretty young girl, while diffusing an atmosphere of unease compounded of love and fear, seemed, herself, only to gain in assurance and facility. During the intervals for recreation, my favourite pastime was swinging on the trapeze which, attained by a ladder, hung from a kind of gibbet in the playground. I also joined with zest in such local games as 'Kingery' and 'Whip-tin'. One day, being discovered out of order during drill, I received a smashing box on the ear from our drill-master, an athletic and most conscientious officer. This blow, without increasing my military efficiency in the least, deafened me for life. On one occasion I took part in a proper stand-up fight such as one reads about in boys' books. My opponent, who was, of course, bigger and older than me, naturally got the worst of it and was led away beaten. Unfortunately, instead of enjoying my victory and the congratulations of my backers, I spoiled the whole show by bursting into tears. My sympathies were apparently with the loser! As for my art education, in addition to the official task of copying lithographs of Swiss scenery, I went further on my own account and practised drawing from the life. I found good

models in the masters. Great caution was necessary, for this form of study was clandestine and punishable. One day while thus occupied I was observed by my favourite subject, the Head, who calling me up before him, examined my effort with a wry smile and then attacked me viciously with his ruler, almost disabling my hand for good. Without knowing it, I may have been putting into practice the dictum of Prosper Mérimée: '*L'Art, c'est l'exagération à propos.*'

The second master, in imitation of his chief, also employed the ebony ruler, which, like a king's sceptre, seemed to be a symbol of authority. It amused him to approach his pupils softly from behind, as they bent over their books, and skilfully tap on their bonier prominencies with this instrument. When it came to my turn to be thus stimulated I reacted as if by clockwork and landed a smart back-hander to the face of the sadist, sending him, pale and shaken, back to his rostrum. This exploit was the climax to a series of delinquencies which had been reported to my father: always methodical he made a list of them and summoning me to his study or office, read it out. Then, after working himself up to a suitable pitch of excitement, he took a cane and with a 'now, sir!' proceeded to apply it in the usual way, though without much conviction. His duty done he sent me to my room where at last I could freely give vent to my mirth. My father's performance had been but indifferent and added nothing to his reputation.

My reading and writing improved immensely at Greenhill, but not my arithmetic. Both my brother and I were so backward in this subject as to require a separate class to ourselves, the lowest of the low! Apparently, the school did not prosper financially. At any rate, Mr. Goward suddenly decided to sell up and depart for the New World with his family.

A new school had now to be found, and, on the recommendation of some casual acquaintances, we were sent to one in Clifton. I would not recommend this school myself, but as it no longer exists, it is no matter. There were a good many pupils from South Wales here and even from Ireland, with some very raw specimens among them: in fact, it was a very odd assortment of boys among whom my brother and I found ourselves. We were odd, too. Not even the Sunday top-hats, Eton jackets and collars could weld us into anything like the desired uniformity. The many disparate elements in our population seemed to be all represented

here in a form exaggerated and quite unassimilable. This was no disadvantage from the point of view of a budding draughtsman who, least of all, would be interested in the indefinable even when it should be held to constitute the norm of national character. I was not seeking the norm at this stage, but rather the accidents. If a youth called Keith Williams, in spite of his homely name, displayed marked Hittite (or possible Amorite) contours, I was more interested in these than in the greatest common denominator which he shared with all his comrades. My brother was rather closely allied with this fellow and became known as 'Keith Williams's interpreter'.

I made no deep or lasting friendships at this place, but I will always remember with tenderness my association with one poor boy who, though a half-wit, displayed an affection, honesty and trust which we usually attribute to saints but meet with more commonly in dogs. This school was of the preparatory order: it is difficult to decide to what great end we were being guided and prepared. Neither the Head nor his assistants, I think, would have been inspired to answer this question satisfactorily. No prophetic voice caused our hearts to burn within us: no breath from Heaven (or Hell) came to set aflame our smouldering and very smoky imaginations. Philosophy was eschewed; Art apologized for, and Science summarized in a series of smelly parlour tricks. Patriotism was certainly inculcated as the foreign masters learnt to their cost: 'But this is pandemonium,' exclaimed one poor Belgian tutor amidst the uproar of the tribal celebrations for which his class was held to be an excuse. My sympathies, I must say, forbade me to join in these excesses. Sport was also encouraged. I found football excited me, but not cricket. The long hours spent in 'fielding' might, I thought, have been so much better employed. For example, there were the docks of Bristol to be explored, and then the river Avon, flowing westwards under wooded cliffs, seemed to invite one to follow it to the Golden Valley and the sea. In spite of general gloom, boredom, and sometimes anguish, there were moments of wild exhilaration, fun and laughter, and now and then one even found oneself strangely absorbed in one's lessons... I have not forgotten the kind eyes of the Headmaster's handsome wife, nor the generous bosom on which, in great agitation, I once laid my head and wept.

On dark autumn evenings, as we sat at Prep., I would often

hear a melancholy wail coming from far off. It might have been the cry of an itinerant street vendor, but to me it sounded more mysteriously. I hear it now : this is how it went :



On leaving this school I was sent to yet another, only just opened at Tenby. Here everything was new and shiny. The Head was a slightly anglicized Welshman with Scottish proclivities. His wife, however, was definitely home-grown and extremely pretty in a dark way. This school was so small that it was like a family party. We had only one under-master, who, as usual, was a bird of passage, subject to continual replacement. But at last the Head obtained the services of his brother, who was not so easy to get rid of—he had been a policeman . . . Although teaching was hardly his vocation he found the job suited him on the whole and stuck to it. In contrast to his predecessors he soon became famous for the splendour of his appearance. Draped in bold sporting tweeds, with his bundle of golf clubs suspended from his shoulder, and moving with the stately deliberation which his training in the Force had promoted, this tall, blond and muscular Adonis excited general admiration, mixed with some anxiety, for the ladies of the district voted him irresistible.

His story would provide excellent material for a novel in the Flaubertian style with perhaps a touch of Dickens, but as it does not concern me directly I will here leave our Welsh Casanova and return to his brother. This man, with no outward marks of distinction to recommend him, had, no doubt, some charm of manner, which, though illusory, sufficed to arouse the hero-worshipping propensities of a lonely adolescent. Possibly through unconscious transference of the filial instinct, I 'fell' for him, and though at first he responded genially, later on the naïve warmth of my affection which had begun by flattering him now was felt as a menace, bound sooner or later to show up the intellectual weakness and appalling meanness of soul it was his chief business in life to conceal from others and especially himself. His ego, although protected by the mottled gown of authority, was in

danger. I had become an embarrassment. A trifling incident provided him with an opportunity to discredit me and by a drastic sacrifice regain his sense of security. I had absentmindedly overlooked some regulation. The schoolmaster, making a mountain of this molehill, arraigned me before the class. I was accused of deceit: my plea of forgetfulness, though exactly true, fell flat; a long discourse followed on the subject of—veracity! The portentous solemnity of this performance was beyond belief and certainly assumed. Though the charge was contemptible the treachery of a being to whom I had accorded almost divine honours was more than I could bear. The distress I could not dissimulate seemed, no doubt, clear evidence of guilt in the eyes of my comrades—as if I cared for that! However, the operation, though painful, was a complete success: I was cured of my idolatry. Soon afterwards came a fresh parting of the ways: I went to the Slade, but the amateur pedagogue, for some reason or other, cut his throat in a railway train.

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*Ah! que fai bon poujà senso relàmbi
Vers soun désir, emai siegue qu'un soungel!*

*Ah! qu'il fait bon naviguer sans répit
Vers son désir, bien qu'il ne soit qu'un songe!*

FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL.

St. Rémy de Provence, a town not very remarkable in itself, is placed at the centre of a wonderful district. On first visiting it I was unimpressed. It was not to be compared with Martigues, I decided. I missed, above all, the Étang de Berre. There is no clear water to be seen at St. Rémy, but there are canals flowing with a kind of milk and the Rhône and the Durance are not far off: above all, the rocky Alpilles are close by with an endless sequence of exquisite landscapes. As in all French towns, the Place de la République is provided with its regrettable monument to a famous native, in this case, Gounod. A few ambitious villas advertise the pretensions of the local rich, but as these are partly screened behind high walls, the general air of well-seasoned mediocrity remains undisturbed. But the town is not without distinction. Within a mile stands the Hospital of St. Paul with its early church and cloisters. Here Van Gogh was interned after his breakdown in Arles, but, let out from time to time when his health permitted, he was able to render his

tormented vision of the countryside in many a glittering canvas. It is said Nostradamus was born, if he did not practise, here. A mutilated château bears the escutcheon of de Sade. The Antiques or Roman monuments nearby attest in their proportions and battered surfaces the authentic lines of classic tradition. The *fouilles* of Glanum have already revealed something of the importance of this Gallo-Roman town. We are at the heart of Provence and on the track of Julius Caesar's bloody legions. The best way to approach Les Baux from here is by taking the road which, twisting and turning, mounts the Alpilles until the city of ruins comes to view across the gulf of the Val d'Enfer amidst strange formations of 'Bauxite' protruding through the sparse soil like gigantic fungi or old bones: some of these outcrops have been quarried in deep rectangular cavities, for this stone beneath its weathered pachyderm can be cut like cheese. Rooted in the great mother-rock of which its shattered towers are but a prolongation, the stronghold, once the seat of an empire stretching to Constantinople, was, for reasons of State, demolished by Richelieu. But the ugly wreckage of former magnificence and power, salvaged by Time, now smiles equivocally under the maquillage of sun and wind. Charmed by the remote and curious site, I at first thought seriously of establishing myself in one of the numerous chambers cut in the rock and still intact, but I had not reckoned with the force of the mistral at this height and still less suspected the aura of madness and violence which is said to linger where once the Courts of Love were held.

One day, entering a little wine-shop in the village, I found myself listening to a stranger who was addressing the company. His voice and manner were impressive, but though he spoke at the top of his voice I was unable to follow his meaning for he used the Provençal tongue: hearing the name of the poet Mistral repeated, I asked the speaker if he knew this famous person, whom I admired and had often seen at Arles where he visited weekly the Musée Arletan, a repository of the traditional crafts and culture of the region. Changing to French, the orator informed me that Mistral was his greatest friend and if I wished he would be delighted to arrange a meeting. We then fixed a date at Maillanne where he would first of all introduce me to his own home and family—a 'typical Provençal ménage,' he said, 'simple but dignified and perhaps a little old-fashioned'—after which he would conduct me to the

poet's residence. At the hour agreed I arrived with my sketchbook, for I hoped to make a drawing of the master. My new friend's house and family proved disappointing. His wife and children were unattractive and their surroundings squalid. I took the man out to lunch, for he seemed in need of reconditioning. By the end of our meal he had recovered all his assurance and, indifferent to me, addressed himself to the world at large. Our way took us across some fields, my guide during the walk continuing to vociferate like a madman while gesticulating wildly. On arriving at the house we met Monsieur and Madame Mistral, returning from a promenade. After a short colloquy we were admitted, Madame Mistral, a careful Lyonnaise, first reminding me to make use of the doormat. I was then offered a chair in a corner of the poet's study while my intermediary launched out in what appeared to be an agonizing relation of his private woes: to this Mistral listened in evident discomfort. At one moment after a particularly tearful crescendo, the poet, approaching me, murmured in my ear: '*Vous comprenez, Monsieur, notre ami est un peu déséquilibré.*' But I had thought so all along. Feeling at last that our visit should be brought to a close, I made the request for a short sitting before leaving, but the poet would not hear of this. 'But I am not working for the journals,' I explained. This assurance seemed only to clinch his decision: '*Jamais, Monsieur, jamais!*' With a last glance at the statuette on the mantelpiece, a replica of the foul monument at Arles, I took leave of my hero, and shaking off the unbalanced one, caught my train back. Upon reflection I decided that I should have been better dressed for such an enterprise. A neat *complet*, a plush 'Fédora', brown gloves and yellow shoes would perhaps have done the trick. This was by no means the only opportunity I have lost through inattention to detail. In matters of form women are often found to be no less exigent than poets.

Eventually, leaving Martigues, which was becoming industrialized, we acquired a little *mas* at St. Rémy to which we resorted as often as possible, that is to say, every year. In the autumn of 1939, as the clouds of war began to gather ever more menacingly, it became necessary to make a decision. The painter Derain was an habitué of the Hôtel de Provence. He had captured with his brush a neighbouring hill-village, Éygalières, and as if to defy competition, plied to and fro in his fast sports car. Derain scoffed at the idea of war. Even when the Place de la République was already

crowded with horses, requisitioned by the Army, '*il n'y aura pas de guerre*,' he asserted, '*c'est une blague*'. But the signs were clear. None too soon we decamped, and reaching Havre with some difficulty, embarked at the last moment to land at Southampton on the morning of the outbreak. In the course of this journey I would, at every stop, set forth to glean the latest news. The elders of the people, in the greater wisdom associated with grey hair, sought to allay the general fears: '*On s'arrangera; on ne se battra pas*': but such assurances failed to convince. On the way to Havre, while picnicking by the roadside, we were joined by a Norman farmer followed by his wife. Gravely and laconically he announced the order for general mobilization. We shared the bottle we had brought from St. Rémy with this man (his wife refusing). The good wine, a gift from Madame Onde, redolent of the soil of Provence now left so far behind (perhaps for ever), proved a blessing for we did not want to think just yet of all the news meant: the sun seemed to have darkened suddenly. We were a friendly little group of miscellaneous people, confused in origin but ensnared together in one vast web of international insanity.

In 1946 we were able to return. Conditions of living then, though not up to the old standards, were tolerable. The war had left its marks. If these were not spectacular, everything and everybody looked shabbier than usual. Many of the children showed signs of privation. Life was certainly dear, yet the consumption of *pastisse* in the evening seemed to have suffered no diminution. *Pastisse*, a substitute for absinthe, is an infusion of herbs laced with cognac, which on the addition of water turns muddy and tastes like cough mixture. To my mind 'Pernod' taken in the old deliberate French fashion was far preferable. Our little *mas* under the rocks had been disdained by the Germans for it had no electricity or telephone, but the G.I.s had broken into it and, in their cultural hunger, had borne away some of my canvases. Others, however, had been rescued by friends. On the whole, the people had little to complain of from the invaders: there had been no Gestapo at St. Rémy, but the behaviour of some of our Allies and the Parisian refugees came in for criticism; the Maquisards, too, according to Madame Onde, had been '*très méchants*', actually demanding the names of such women as had consorted with Germans. 'But I told them nothing,' she said proudly. 'Would

they have had their heads shorn?' I asked. 'They'd have been shot' . . . Black market dealings in a small way were winked at, only big business on these lines arousing resentment. At the end of the Spanish overture to the late global tragedy the poorer population of this agricultural district found means to despatch a lorry of food weekly for the relief of the Spanish loyalists who, fleeing from the vengeance of Franco, had crossed the frontier to be rewarded at the hands of French authority by internment in the atrocious camps of the Pyrenees. There are now industrious Spanish families settled happily at St. Rémy and elsewhere. The St. Rémois, loyal to his father's memory, have chosen in M. Charles Mauron a worthy successor as Mayor of the town. This courageous spirit, though struck blind, has kept the deeper vision: as a man of letters he has established close relations with English cultural circles. His wife, Marie Mauron, née Roumanille, in a growing series of *romans*, reveals a remarkable talent. She belongs indisputably to the *grande lignée* of Provençal literary tradition.

Charles Maurras, of Martigues, was sometimes to be seen at St. Rémy. As is known, the political views of this philosopher earned him condemnation and imprisonment after the war. I inquired after him of Madame Onde, one of his adherents. She assured me that, though in captivity, he was well cared for and very comfortable. Another distinguished figure now always to be seen at the Grand Hôtel de Provence is the Oriental scholar, Monsieur Steinilbert-Oberlin. '*Il connaît le Sanscrit; vous savez c'est la langue d'avant Jesus Christ,*' remarked Madame Onde informatively. On acquaintance, this lonely old savant, with the profile of a Dante, discloses the charming simplicity of a child.

My habit of an evening usually took me to more popular resorts. In the various cafés of the town I have already made acquaintance with some of the publicans and their clients. Ensconced with a medicinal *pastisse* or a glass of wine, I achieve that agreeable sense of detachment-in-intimacy which the thunderous conversation of the customers, combined with the strains of the accordeon, induces. I note the grouping of the figures, the relation of the heads; and sometimes I will be rewarded by the apparition of a face or part of a face, a gesture or conjunction of forms which I recognize as belonging to a more real and harmonious world than that to which we are accustomed.

As, on an autumn evening, I ascend the road towards the Antiques beyond which our *mas* is situated, the fantastic rocks of Mont Gaussier rise out of the mist as in a Chinese masterpiece, and I despair of landscape painting. Perhaps there will be time to pay a call on the brave Bernard and his amiable family who keep 'Le Robinson', an outlying café much frequented on Sundays when there is music and dancing. Ordinarily the usual little circle of friends will be found at cards. The 'Philosophe' (who keeps goats) will be there to uphold the banner of the Ideal. No *pastisse* for him but always 'un canon' (a glass of wine). Perhaps the 'Parisienne' may look in: we hope not; she is a pretty little woman, certainly, and well educated, but, making no pretence of virtue or even correctitude, her presence and behaviour can only be embarrassing. And now a short ascent by olive groves and vineyards brings me to the Mas de Galeron standing by a group of pines on a spur of the Alpilles. The terrace of the *mas*, above an intervening vineyard, faces Mont Gaussier and the nearer rocks. Here at a megalithic table under the almond tree, we take our meals. The view northwards is wide and comprehensive. Beyond St. Rémy the tall towers of Châteaurenard stand halfway between us and the distant gleam of the Pope's Palace at Avignon. To the north-east rises the bald dome of the Ventoux (our barometer, for the weather prospects are judged by its visibility), and beyond the valley of the Durance, the mountains of Luberon overlook the road to Aix.

Though Provence has recovered its ancient language (unlike the Breton, not yet banned by the Government), it has not escaped the corrosive blight of the Industrial Age. When I visited a prosperous-looking farmhouse, such as the home of Pierre Galeron which seems to promise an interior dignified by the solid and elegant productions of traditional craftsmanship, I suffered a severe shock. Ushered into the *salon*, I found myself in the midst of an appalling agglomeration of 'junk'. These manifestations of modern domestic technology have everywhere displaced the household treasures left by a previous generation, which, long since sold, are now only to be found in museums and the collections of amateurs. Hastily confessing a preference for the more familiar amenities of the kitchen, I was conducted thither and offered a ceremonial and much-needed glass of wine. There is no doubt that the new style is popular and greatly admired, but so,

in its day, was the old. How this surprising transvaluation has come about is a matter for speculation, but I may remark that the phenomenon seems to be related to another widespread symptom of social disorder: I refer to the sense of monotony, futility and boredom which, together with general restlessness and unease, marks the end of an epoch.

ROBERT HAMILTON

THE CHALLENGE OF ALDOUS HUXLEY: 'THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY'

THE BACKGROUND

PRACTICALLY every philosophical position has been criticized at some time or other, but whatever position we take up, even that of the most extreme scepticism, we cannot seriously deny that all experience exists in a subject—object relation. Confronting the subject, or self, stands the object, or not-self; and in this division lies the germ of the tremendous conflict between power and love which has torn like a gale through human life from its beginnings—the conflict between the self as potential absolute *reflecting* the object, and the essential limitation of the self *within* the object. The first gives rise to the egoistic tendency which is common to all self-conscious creatures, the desire to seize the object as reflected in the self, and make it (albeit fictitiously, since we can never do so in fact) serve the self, the desire which theologians have put forward as the explanation of the Fall of Man and the rebellion of the angels. The second gives rise to the tendency to transcend and integrate the self in some aspect of the object conceived as an ultimate value that is known and loved and pursued. But everything depends on *what* is conceived to be the ultimate value. If this conception is inadequate, the self is thrown back in despair, from whence arises a greater and more violent egoism.

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