

poser is less likely to be limited by a poem which means nothing or by a theosophy which may mean anything. Is it not possible that music has become inhuman because it has tried to be all too human? Beethoven is universal, but he is thoroughly human. Georges d'Orlay is specific, but the thing he specifies is like nothing on this earth.

The reaction in modern music seems to have taken the wrong direction. It should have reacted against a servile specification of the things that interest humanity. It has reacted instead against humanity itself. Bach wrote music for a cathedral. His realist successors tried to describe the bishop. The more modern musician revenges himself on the bishop by drowning his cathedral under the sea.

Or is it that music is actually leading us to altogether new lines and levels of thought? Are our musicians secretly determined that music shall not be distanced by the higher mathematics in generalizing the universe?

We have much the same feeling when listening to Scriabin as when listening to Professor Eddington. Perhaps, unknown to us of grosser perception, our modern musicians already move in the time-space which is still an eerie habitation for persons of common clay. For ourselves, we are content to end roughly where we began and to renew our original question: Why on earth should so much of our modern music be unearthly?

[*To-day*]

## AN ESSAY ON EYES

BY CLAUDE TESSIER

'READER, I have no ear!' Thus Elia in the beginning of his famous chapter. But I write of eyes; and, reader, I have

an eye — an eye for other eyes. Of which there are three kinds — human eyes, animal eyes, and inanimate eyes. By the last I mean the eyes of things such as the succulent potato and the needle. Let profiteers remember the latter; for are we not told that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? Surely this should prick the conscience of the war-wealthy.

Bull's eyes have variable functions in our commonwealth. Some have an incurable aversion to red; others disturb the tranquillity of thieves, lovers, and tramps on dark nights; another kind brings fame to sportsmen and our soldiers at their musketry course; while mothers thank the gods for that round, striped, sticky variety which solaces the heart and quietens the tongue of the innocent child. Horses, cats, dogs, fauns, owls, and fowls all have characteristic eyes, for which the novelist is duly thankful. We have all met in our fiction the maiden with the fawn-like eyes and the jealous sister with orbs of stealthy felinity, and the bad girl of the family who is often affected with a nasty squint to add to her burdens. Becky Sharp had cat's eyes, I am sure; and does not R. L. S. in one flash-phrase illumine the engaging personality of the versatile Jim Pinkerton by telling us that 'his eye was active as a fowl's'?

Whenever I gaze into the eyes of a horse I feel sad. Something in those liquid depths speaks to me of long, long years of labor, of innumerable loads drawn endlessly along rutty roads, of patient obedience, assisted by a whipthong, to masters good and bad; and then I am depressed, for I do not like to be reminded of toil, and my rebellious spirit snorts at the thought of patient obedience to masters good and bad.

And now we come to human eyes. Old and young, dim and sparkling, gray, green, hazel, brown, blue, and black (two varieties), fat eyes, bulging and deep-set, round and narrow, so I might go on. But I am not a cataloguer trying to do for eyes what Galton did for finger-prints. Science has not yet half exploited the possibilities of the human eye; she has let Sister Art cultivate almost exclusively this fair field of God's creation. The painters have done well, and so have the authors. Even sculptors do their best, yet there is always something lacking in even the finest statuary.

Think of those cold, white figures of Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar could they be endowed with the fire that once flamed from the living eye! Speculations on the lost arms of the Venus of Milo are legion, but I wonder about her eyes; for the eyes of a beautiful woman are as full of mystery and significance of all the deepest secrets of Nature and the divine handiwork of God as the stars in the universe. Did not rare Ben Jonson sing to his love:

Drink to me only with thine eyes,  
And I will pledge with mine.

And that was saying something in those tipping days at 'The Mermaid.'

The Bible constantly refers to the eyes of man — 'An eye for an eye,' 'If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out,' etc.; and the psalmist denounces the rich by crying that 'their eyes stand out with fatness.' Profane as well as sacred writers have made good use also of our divinest attribute. Open any library catalogue — *Eyes Like the Sea*, *The Green Eye of Goona*, *Two Bad Blue Eyes* (which sounds interesting), and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* are among the book titles which we notice, while the latest addition is *The Eyes of a Child*, which Mr. Edwin Pugh has just given us.

The poet's eye, 'in fine frenzy rolling'; the scholar's eye, that patient, tired gaze of the mighty reader of books, having a charm all its own; the 'glad eye,' so popular in flapperdom; the weak, fixed stare of the spiritualist and reforming visionary. These are a few everyday types. Then there is the eye of 'The Ancient Mariner,' which was of such mesmeric power that the wedding guest, despite the lure of the music, the minstrelsy, and the merry meal, sat on a cold stone while the skinny old sea-dog expatiated on how he shot the albatross, and the consequences thereof.

We kiss with our lips, but, after all, love is more concerned with the eyes. Think of our popular songs — 'Two Eyes of Gray,' 'Could You Be True to Eyes of Blue?' and so on. A song writer knows the symbol of the old, old story, and he reaches the heart of the people through the eye. Lewis Carroll, who loved children, wrote thus of one of his favorites:

Child of the pure unclouded brow,  
And dreaming eyes of wonder.

Could he have limned better the sweetness of childhood than by speaking of those dreaming eyes of wonder? I think not. In that marvelous volume produced by two old Germans for the perennial delight of world-wide infancy, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, there is a pretty story called 'One Eye, Two Eyes, Three Eyes,' that laid hold of my childish imagination with a grip which I have never been able wholly to shake off. It tells how — but you know the story? If not, stop the first child whom you meet coming out of school, and ask for the tale of 'Little Two-Eyes,' then you will understand the power of the eye in the mythology of the human race.

Polyphemus possessed only one eye in the middle of his forehead, so, in

spite of his celebrity, he is to be pitied. Goliath also had good reason to regret his lack of normal humanity's visionary power, for, you remember, David 'got there' with a stone, and the Giant, owing to his unfortunate ocular limitation, thereupon expired. Speaking of the Bible reminds me that Shakespeare has many powerful passages anent our subject:

Avaunt and quit my sight

Thou hast no speculation in  
Those eyes which thou dost glare with,

gibbers Macbeth to the apparition. As usual the great dramatist gets to the root of the matter. The eye without 'speculation' becomes fearful to the soul of man — when the spirit has fled the casement through which it looked upon the world — that which remains

is barren as ashes, and life shivers and turns away. A war poet wrote:

The men go out to Flanders as to a Promised Land.

The men come back from Flanders with eyes that understand.

They had *seen* things, and their eyes were forever changed.

Should there be an incipient novelist among my readers seeking a hint for the art and craft of fictioneering, I would recommend to his notice the words of the man who had no love for clean linen yet trounced a noble but negligent lord in stinging diction. 'Let him give his days and nights to the study of Addison,' roared Johnson, when asked how the tyro could learn to write. I would say to the aspiring maker of story books, let him give his days and nights to the study of eyes.

[*Le Figaro*]

## CHAINS: A SCENE FROM A PLAY

BY GEORGES BOURDON

[EDITORIAL NOTE: The Comédie Française has just given the first presentation of the play from which this scene has been taken. The performance was marked by an extraordinary tumult, for the play deals with the relation of the citizen to peace and war.

Lieutenant Robert Piérard, 'sociologist and intellectual,' an internationalist before the war, has, nevertheless, fully and bravely accomplished his military duty. Seriously wounded at the first battle of the Marne, he is taken prisoner by the Germans, and not allowed to communicate with his family. Through a mistake in identity, his family are led to believe that he lived up to pacifist doctrines in the hour of national peril, and surrendered to the enemy in a cowardly manner. The only friend who remains true to him under these circumstances is a Russian woman to whom he is bound by the profoundest ties of love and community of mind. In a moving scene which begins in tenderness and finishes in violence, the ideals of the woman and the soldier clash. Lydia, the Russian, has just reproached Robert for denying doctrines which he once ardently held. Robert answers her.]

*Robert:* But do you take me for a turncoat? Do you think that I have returned to you disillusioned, and poisoned with rancor? Look me in the face, Lydia, I can endure your gaze. I do not deny a single souvenir, my ambition seeks no new goal; the same faith consumes me.