

HORIZON

AUTUMN, 1974 · VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 4

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HORIZON

AUTUMN, 1974 • VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 4

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A Few Thoughts on Fame



Jakob Burckhardt, in his classic study of the Renaissance, tells us that the thirst for fame became such a mania during that time in Italy that those who despaired of gaining renown through noble works resorted to evil deeds, preferring some shocking act of infamy to oblivion. Thus, when Lorenzino de' Medici is pilloried for stupidly mutilating ancient statues in Rome, he "broods over a deed whose novelty shall make his disgrace forgotten, and ends by murdering his kinsman and prince," Duke Alessandro of Florence. Progress being what it is, this same longing for even the most transitory fame is still inspiring the mutilation of statues, such as Michelangelo's *Pietà* and Rodin's *The Thinker*, and the senseless assassinations of political leaders.

Some people, however, have been able to enter history without lifting a finger. Edmond de Rothschild, as Walter Karp explains in this issue, stumbled unwittingly into his historic role as the chief financial patron of Jewish settlement in Palestine. Rothschild never really believed in Zionism, nor did he approve of the rugged democratic spirit of the new colonies he was underwriting. Yet, as Karp puts it, the baron "sleepwalked" his way into history. If Rothschild was a benign sonambulist, Paul-Ferdinand Gachet was his evil counterpart—or so Ted Morgan argues in "The Strange End of Vincent Van Gogh." Dr. Gachet attended Van Gogh during his last days—and may well have been responsible for his death.

Once Van Gogh was dead, his enormous posthumous fame was created almost single-handedly by Johanna, his sister-in-law and Theo's widow. She published the voluminous correspondence between Vincent and Theo and even translated the letters into English (though her native language was Dutch). Her son, Vincent's namesake, has continued to foster the Van Gogh legend. Without the effort of these two survivors, would Van Gogh's name be a household word today? An arguable, though decidedly unorthodox, opinion might hold that Van Gogh's paintings are no more (and no less) interesting than the expres-

sionist canvases of Soutine, say, or the fauve works of Vlaminck. But in Van Gogh's case there were all the makings of a great romantic saga: the heartbreaking letters that document every stage of his suffering; the failure of his contemporaries to recognize his genius; the agony of his growing madness and the ecstasy of his last burst of creativity; and, of course, his suicide—doesn't it sound like the perfect scenario for a Hollywood film? One should hasten to add that Van Gogh himself was remarkably modest and went so far as to reproach the single critic who praised his work, advising him that "the part which is allotted to me . . . will remain, I assure you, very secondary."

The desire for—and the desirability of—fame has also had its ups and downs, fluctuations that are often related to politics. Heraclitus wrote: "The best seek one thing above all others: eternal fame. . . . One man is worth more than ten thousand, if he is Great." Karl Popper, whose far-ranging social and philosophical contributions are explained in this issue by Bryan Magee, finds this tangle of associated ideas (the romantic ethic of fame, fate, and the superiority of the Great Man) an "expression of a feeling of drift; a feeling which seems to be a typical reaction to the dissolution of the ancient tribal forms of social life." To long for individual fame, Popper contends, is an antidemocratic tendency. It often appears as a rear-guard action by elitists set in opposition to a new egalitarianism. Thus, Heraclitus celebrated the Great Man precisely at the moment when Athenian democracy was making that awesome figure an anachronism. Similarly, Hegel (Popper's bête noire) revived the concepts of fame and the Great Man in reaction against the American and French revolutions.

Popper regards the hunger for fame as a dangerous appetite, as an aspect of authoritarian ideology. J. H. Plumb, taking a more complex but somewhat related approach, examines the lack of heroes in modern society—a decline he considers (as Popper undoubtedly would) a healthy sign. And yet, and yet. . . . Despite the fact that seeking fame may be an obsolete, reactionary activity, despite the fact that we need no more Great Men in our feminist era, artists and scientists and politicians are still in pursuit of the glamour of immortality. What is the solution? Perhaps the neatest, most logical, most whimsical answer has been proposed by Andy Warhol, a prediction (or injunction) that is at once democratic, true to retrograde human ambitions, and impracticable: "In the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes." —E.W.

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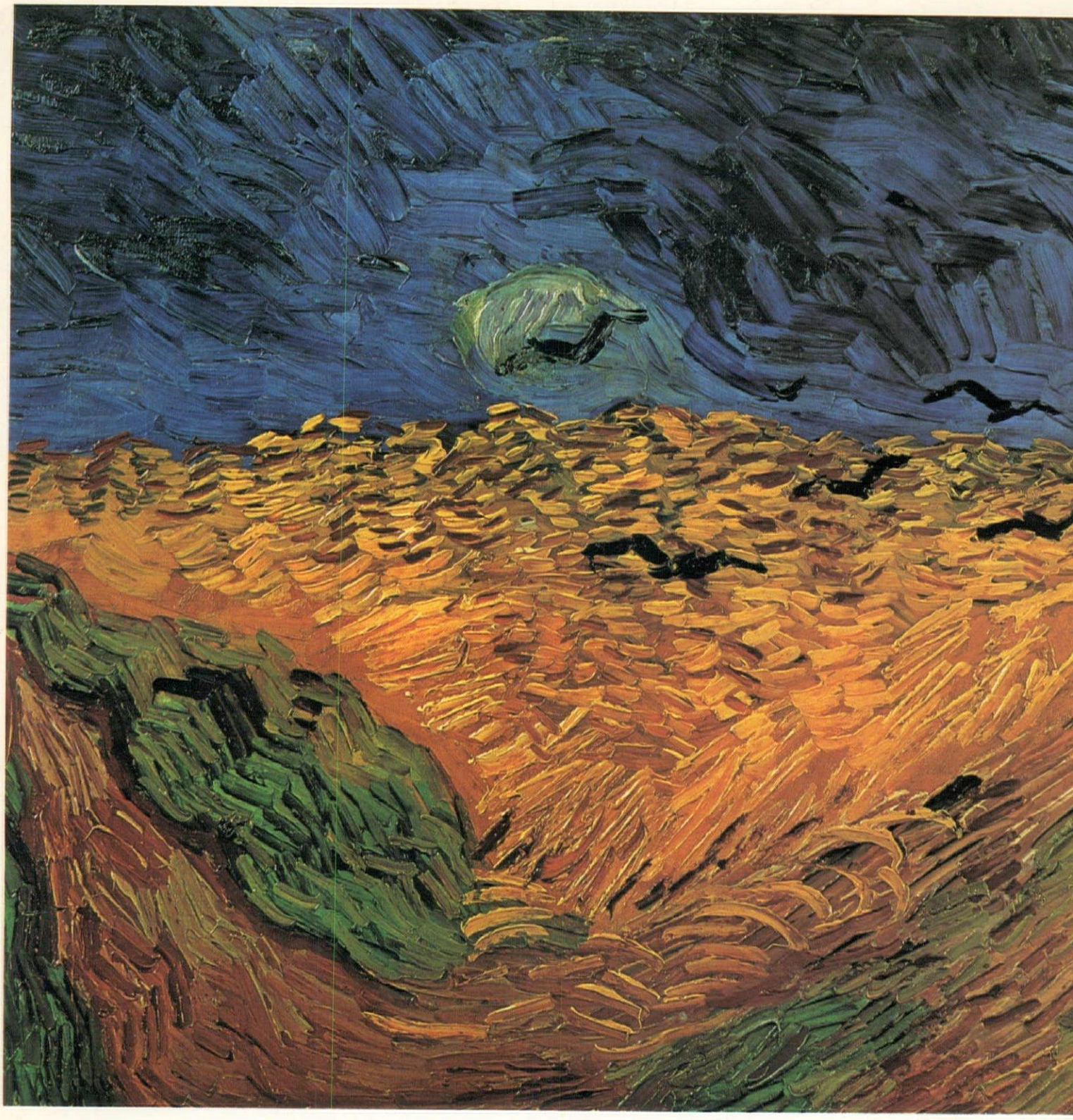
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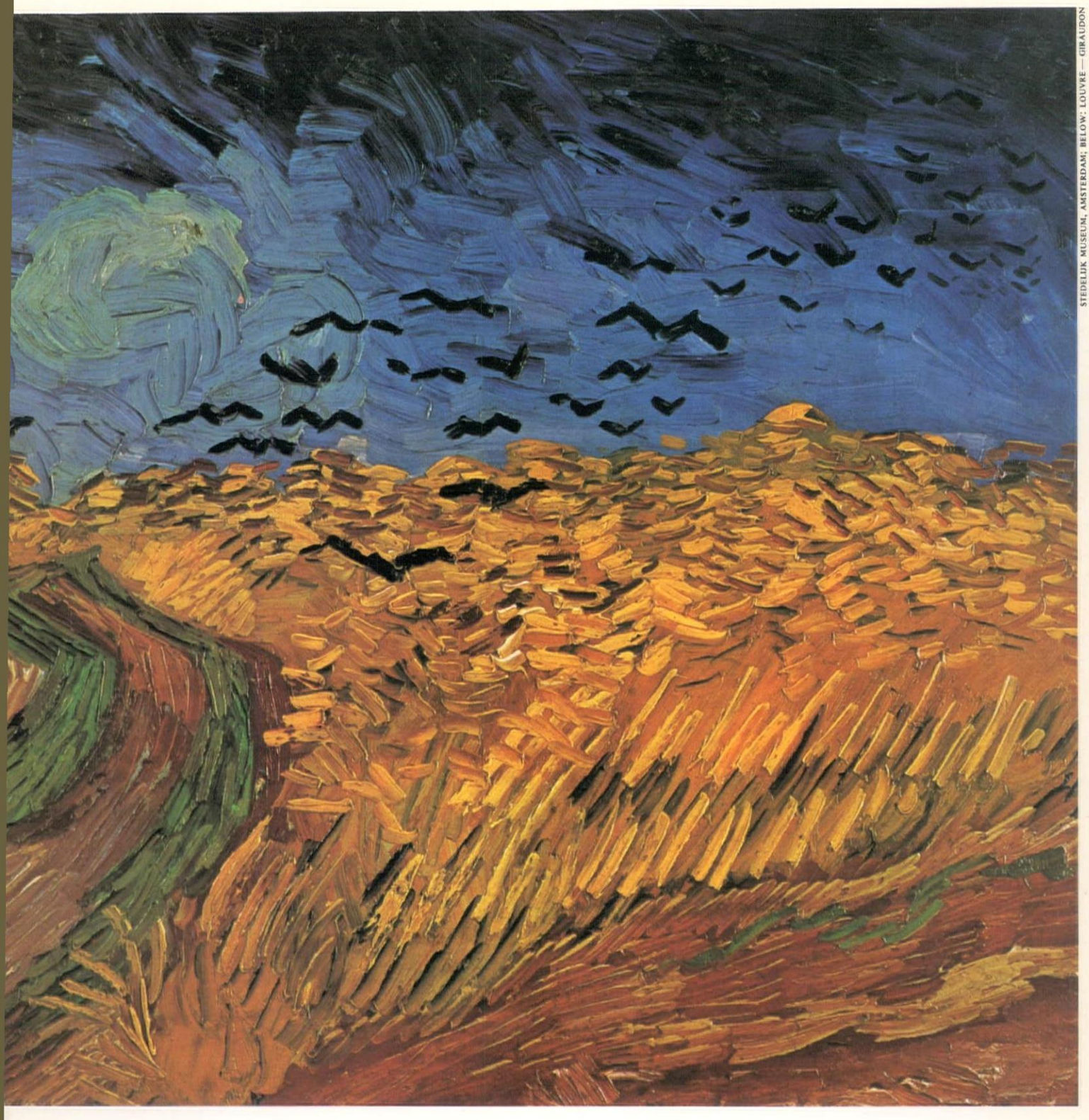
LOUVRE—JOSSE

COVER: Vincent Van Gogh's *Portrait of Dr. Gachet* captures the resignation and despair that characterized his last physician. Gachet touches a sprig of foxglove (a medicinal herb symbolic of his profession) and stares with devastating pathos into the void. As Ted Morgan observes in an article beginning on page 4, the doctor's torment awakened his patient's compassion. But Gachet, through his negligence, may have caused Van Gogh's death.



The Strange End of Vincent

He shot himself, as is well known. But was his ow



STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM; BELOW: LOUVRE — GIRAUDON

Van Gogh

hysician partly to blame for his death?

By TED MORGAN

Crows over a Wheatfield, *menacing and ominous in its great swath of land and sky, was one of the last canvases that Vincent Van Gogh painted. Crows beset him whenever he painted in the countryside around Auvers, and it may have been to frighten them away that he borrowed the pistol he was later to turn on himself. His last doctor, Paul Gachet, drew the pencil sketch at right of Van Gogh on his deathbed, on July 29, 1890.*



In 1947 Antonin Artaud, the French art critic and playwright, whose entire life had been a struggle between the sometimes conflicting and sometimes allied forces of madness and artistic expression, published a slim volume about a kindred spirit. It was entitled *Van Gogh, le suicidé de la société*. The tone of the book, that of barely controlled fury, seemed to derive from Artaud's identification with the dead painter. Both men had suffered from sporadic attacks of mental illness and had been committed to institutions for the insane, Van Gogh voluntarily for about a year, Artaud against his will for nine years. Using Van Gogh's case as an example, Artaud announced that doctors were the natural enemies of artists. Artists were subversives who challenged a society's established values, while the doctors who treated them were the guardians of those values, their unavowed mission to destroy the artist.



THEO VAN GOGH

Theo Van Gogh, Vincent's beloved younger brother, was working for a Paris art gallery when the photograph above was taken, sometime between 1888 and 1890. His wife, Johanna, gave birth to a son, named for Vincent, six months before the painter died.



BOTH: STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

JOHANNA VAN GOGH AND SON

Artaud's rambling indictment named as the villain in Van Gogh's death the last doctor to treat him, Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, who lived in the village of Auvers-sur-Oise, about twenty miles from Paris. "If Van Gogh had not died at 37," Artaud wrote, "I don't need the Grim Reaper to tell me with what supreme masterpieces painting would have been enriched.... Two days before his death, an evil spirit and improvised psychiatrist called Doctor Gachet was the direct, efficient, and sufficient cause of his death.

"I have acquired, in reading Van Gogh's letters to his brother, the firm and sincere conviction that Dr. Gachet, psychiatrist, in reality hated Van Gogh as a painter, and above all as a genius."

Artaud, more than fifty years removed from the event, had never met Dr. Gachet and did not have a shred of evidence to support his accusation. Dr. Gachet was known to have befriended and helped Van Gogh in the last period of his life and, when Vincent shot himself, it was Dr. Gachet who came to his bedside on a Sunday night and dressed his wound. Nevertheless, Artaud had a manic intuition that Dr. Gachet was somehow the cause of Van Gogh's death. Is there any truth to Artaud's theory, or can it be dismissed as the distorted view of a man who had himself been mistreated by doctors?

In 1888 Van Gogh was voluntarily committed to an asylum as the result of a violent scene with Gauguin and the partial mutilation of his left ear. His brother, Theo, arranged his admission to the sanitarium of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole on the outskirts of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, an asylum described as "a private establishment devoted to the treatment of the insane of both sexes." In his letters to his brother, Vincent described the director, Dr. Peyron, as a gouty little widower who wore dark glasses; the treatment he used was based on hydrotherapy, and Vincent had many sessions in the bathtub during the year he spent in Dr. Peyron's institution.

Vincent started working again at Saint-Paul-de-Mausole. First he painted what he saw framed in the window of his cell, without the bars. In July he had a fit, and Dr. Peyron took away his brushes. Vincent asked his brother to tell Dr. Peyron that painting was necessary for him. When he improved, he was allowed to paint in the garden, surrounded by onlooking inmates, and in the countryside, accompanied by a guard. The periods of work were interrupted by fits and other forms of erratic behavior. Once, when the guard was walking behind him, Vincent turned around and kicked him in the stomach. Then he apologized, saying he thought the Arles police were after him. Dr. Peyron, in his report on Van Gogh, wrote: "He tried on several occasions to poison himself, either by swallowing the oil color he needed for painting, or by drinking kerosene which he stole from the boy when he was filling the lamps."

One interpretation of Vincent's fits at Saint-Paul-de-Mausole—that they were connected to events in Theo's life—was advanced in 1953 by the French psychoanalyst Charles Mauron. Theo, who was working in Paris for the art gallery of Boussod and Valadon, had become engaged to a girl named Johanna Bonger. In the year that Vincent spent confined, Theo married Johanna and had a son by her, whom he named after his brother. Mauron established that the dates of Vincent's fits closely followed the arrival of letters from Theo announcing his marriage and the birth of his son. Mauron's explanation was that Vincent, who was totally dependent on Theo financially, had formulated the following unconscious analysis: Theo is getting married, and it is right that he should devote himself completely to his wife and child. But he is diverting part of his resources from his family to keep me going, and part of his affection in his support of me. This is not right, and I must not allow this situation to continue. But how can I change it, except by withdrawing from Theo's life, and how can I withdraw except by destroying myself?

Vincent had one crisis in January, 1890, and another in February, which

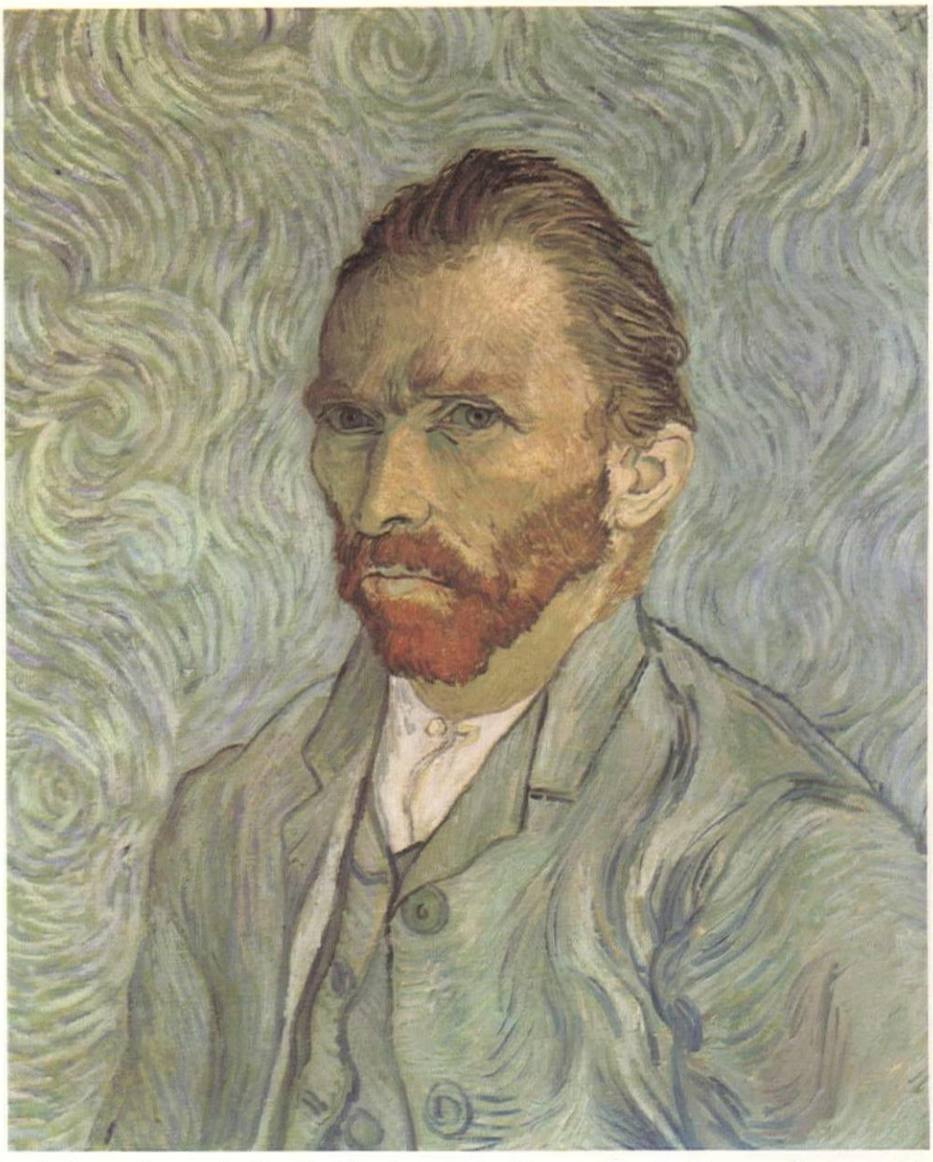
lasted two months. He wrote Theo that he could not improve in the asylum, surrounded as he was by madmen. Their madness, he felt, was contagious. He asked Theo to find some other place where he might go, and Theo went to the painter Camille Pissarro for advice. Pissarro knew a doctor who specialized in nervous ailments and was friendly with the impressionist group. The doctor, Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, had a house in the pleasant village of Auvers-sur-Oise where he had collected the works of Cézanne, Renoir, Manet, and other new painters. He himself painted under the pseudonym of Van Ryssel. Just the man, thought Pissarro, who would understand Vincent's problems.

Theo wrote Vincent on March 29: "I am very happy to be able to tell you that I met Dr. Gachet, that physician Pissarro mentioned to me. He looks like a man of understanding. Physically he resembles you a bit. . . . When I told him how your crises came about, he told me that he didn't believe it had anything to do with madness, and that if it was what he thought he could guarantee your recovery. . . ."

Vincent was delighted at the prospect of leaving the asylum and of being treated by a doctor, who, without even having met him, already thought he could cure his condition. He urged Theo to press for his release.

In May, Theo wrote Dr. Gachet: "You had given me hope that under your care he might recover his normal state. . . . I would be most grateful if you could find out about an inn or boarding house where he could stay if he came to Auvers."

Vincent left Saint-Paul-de-Mausole on May 16 and went to the nearby town of Tarascon to take the train to Paris. Theo, so concerned about Vincent's traveling alone that he had spent a sleepless night, fetched him the next day at the Gare de Lyon and took him home to meet his infant nephew and namesake and his sister-in-law. Johanna was surprised at how healthy and vigorous he looked. She thought he was in better condition than Theo.



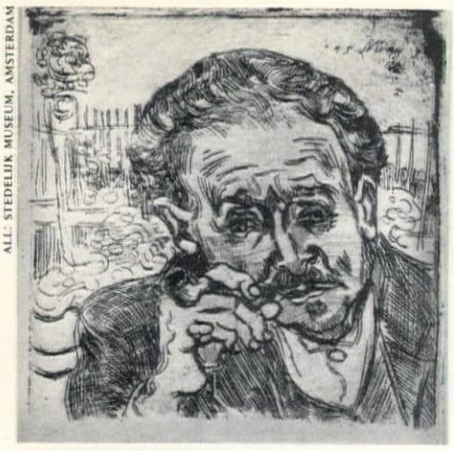
LOUVRE — JOSSE

In his last self-portrait, Van Gogh's grim face is the one still point in a sea of green swirls.

Vincent wanted to leave for Auvers as soon as possible — Paris made him nervous — and, on May 19, with a letter of introduction from Theo, he arrived at Dr. Gachet's house, walking up the twenty-two front steps and waiting in a drawing room crowded with paintings, bric-a-brac, and black antique furniture. Soon Dr. Gachet appeared, a short man of sixty-two with a long nose, a prominent chin, extraordinarily bright and darting eyes, and stiff red hair that stuck out from his head like the bristles in a hairbrush.

Dr. Gachet told Vincent not to think about his illness, to work quietly, keep regular hours, and eat moderately. He was sanguine about Vincent's chances of recovery and prescribed no medication. He sent the patient to a nearby boarding house, but Vincent quickly found a more modest establishment on the Place de la Mairie, Chez Ravoux, where room and board was only three francs fifty a day.

Two days later, Vincent wrote Theo and Jo: "I have seen Dr. Gachet, who gives me the impression of being rather eccentric, but his experience as a doctor must keep him balanced enough to combat the nervous trouble from which he certainly seems to be suffering at least as seriously as I. He piloted me to an inn where they ask 6 francs a day. All by myself I found one where I shall pay 3.50 fr. a day. . . . The impression I got of him was not unfavorable. When he spoke of Belgium and the days of the old painters, his grief-hardened face grew smiling again, and I really think that I shall go



ALL: STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

VAN GOGH'S ETCHING OF DR. GACHET

Dr. Gachet was fond of doing etchings and installed a press in his large house. When Van Gogh discovered the press, he produced his only etching, above. Van Gogh may have had romantic daydreams involving Gachet's daughter, Marguerite, but he never spoke of them. About his portrait of her, opposite, he simply wrote, "It is a figure that I enjoyed painting . . . one fragment of nature."



THE GACHET HOUSE IN AUVERS-SUR-OISE



MARGUERITE GACHET

on being friends with him and that I shall do his portrait. Then he said I must work boldly on, and not think at all of what went wrong with me."

Vincent evidently wanted to show his brother, who in each of his letters enclosed a neatly folded fifty-franc bill, that he had found the cheapest pension possible. He always kept carefully itemized accounts, down to the last sou, to show Theo exactly where all of his money went.

Far more interesting, however, was his first impression of Dr. Gachet. In the intervals between his fits, Vincent was completely lucid, and in his letters to Theo he showed a remarkable understanding of the personalities of others as well as his own. He was not in the habit of questioning the mental stability of the people he met, for he knew how precarious the balance of the mind could be. Still, after a single meeting with Dr. Gachet, Vincent was convinced that he, too, was unbalanced.

What was there about Gachet to justify Vincent's judgment? Certainly, he was no ordinary doctor. Born in Lille in 1828, he was an early convert to homeopathy, the school of medicine that believes the cure of a disease is effected by minute doses of drugs capable of inducing symptoms similar to those of the disease being treated. He was outspoken in his low opinion of surgeons and organic medicine, but he completed his studies at the school of medicine in Montpellier, writing his thesis on melancholy. He then practiced in Paris, where he befriended painters, particularly the impressionists. Cézanne was his house guest in Auvers, and Manet, Pissarro, and Renoir were all close friends of his.

In 1883, when Manet's leg became infected and his doctors recommended amputation, Dr. Gachet went to see him and said he could cure him without an operation. But before Gachet had a chance to demonstrate his curative powers, Manet's leg was amputated and he died ten days later. He did, however, treat Pissarro with homeopathic remedies, and Renoir had once asked him to treat a little girl, a model, who was suffering from tuberculosis. Dr. Gachet saw the child, but on February 25, 1889, Renoir wrote him: "Dear doctor, the little girl you were kind enough to look after, unfortunately too late, has died. I am nonetheless grateful for the relief you brought her, although we were both convinced it was in vain."

Homeopathic remedies were no more successful in saving Dr. Gachet's own wife, who died of tuberculosis in 1875, leaving him with a son and daughter. After her death he fell into periodic fits of despondence.

Dr. Gachet seemed drawn to anything that was bizarre or extravagant. He was a free-thinker, a nonconformist, a lover of the new and the original. He founded the Society for Mutual Autopsy, whose members agreed to have their bodies cut open after their deaths and their vital organs examined. He tried in vain to recruit Renoir, telling him how important it would be for science to have a great artist's brain to inspect. He was involved in phrenology and palmistry. He invented antirheumatic and anticonstipation powders, and used electric shock treatment to cure urinary ailments. He thought of himself as an innovator and a specialist in nervous diseases. Perhaps part of his attraction to the impressionist movement was that it was damned by the establishment of the day.

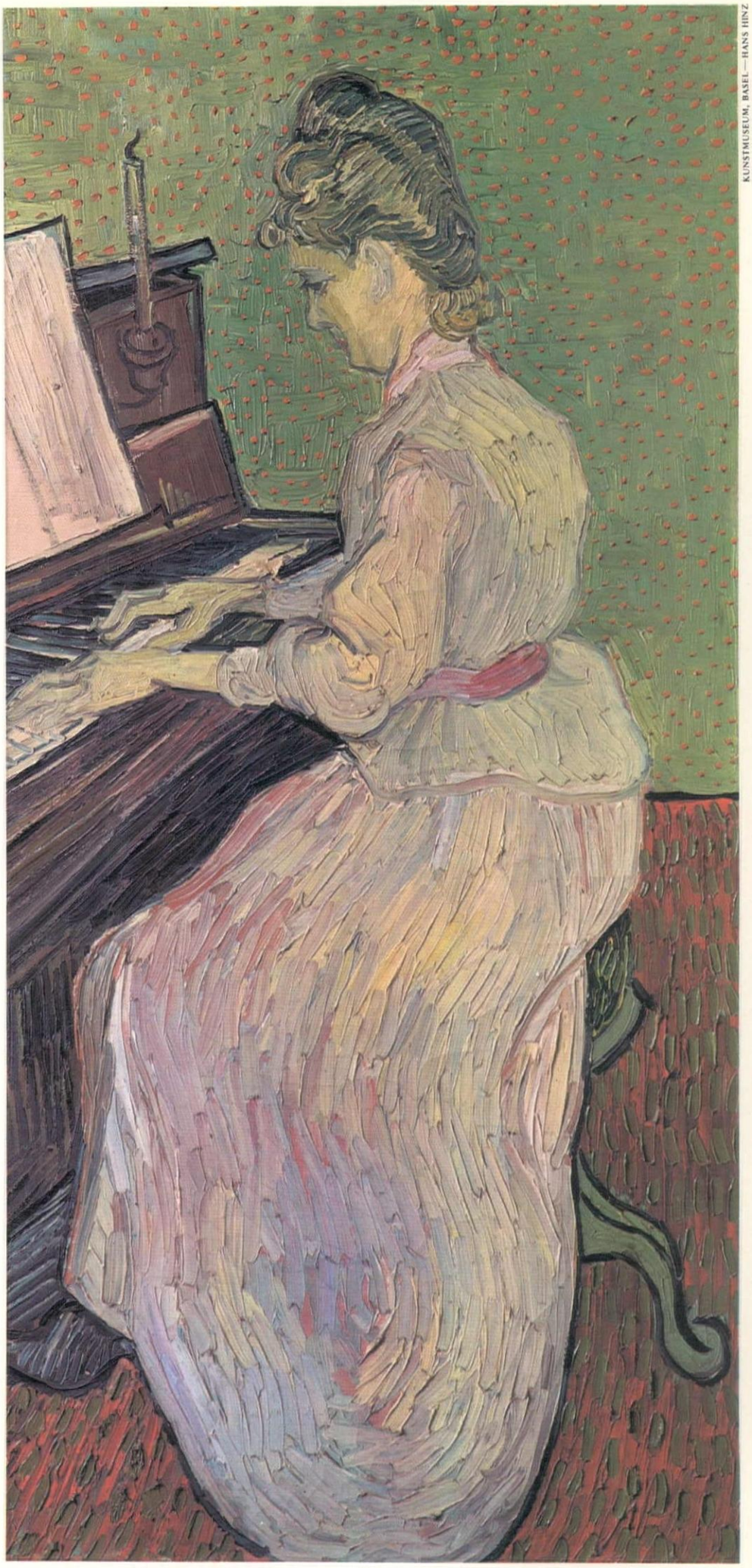
This, in any case, was the man to whom Theo had confided his sick brother. In his second letter to Theo and Jo, around the end of May, Vincent wrote: "Today I saw Dr. Gachet again. . . . He seems very sensible, but he is as discouraged about his job as a doctor as I am about my painting. Then I told him that I would gladly swap jobs with him. He said to me besides, that if the melancholy or anything else became too much for me to bear, he could easily do something to lessen its intensity, and that I must not feel awkward about being frank with him."

Dr. Gachet's treatment, although based mainly on infusions of optimism, seemed to be doing Vincent some genu-

ine good. The doctor was against confinement and sensed that Vincent could best improve by living a normal life among other people and working as well as he could, which was very well indeed. Van Gogh had started painting at the age of twenty-eight and would die at the age of thirty-seven; thus his entire career as a painter lasted only nine years, during which time he produced nine hundred paintings and a hundred drawings and water colors. The seventy days he spent in Auvers, the last seventy days of his life, were his most productive. He completed seventy paintings, an average of one a day, and thirty drawings. He would begin a new canvas before the previous one was dry, rising at dawn and trudging out into the Oise valley with his easel under his arm, returning punctually for meals with the other boarders, and retiring at nine to his whitewashed garret room on the third floor with its one dormer window.

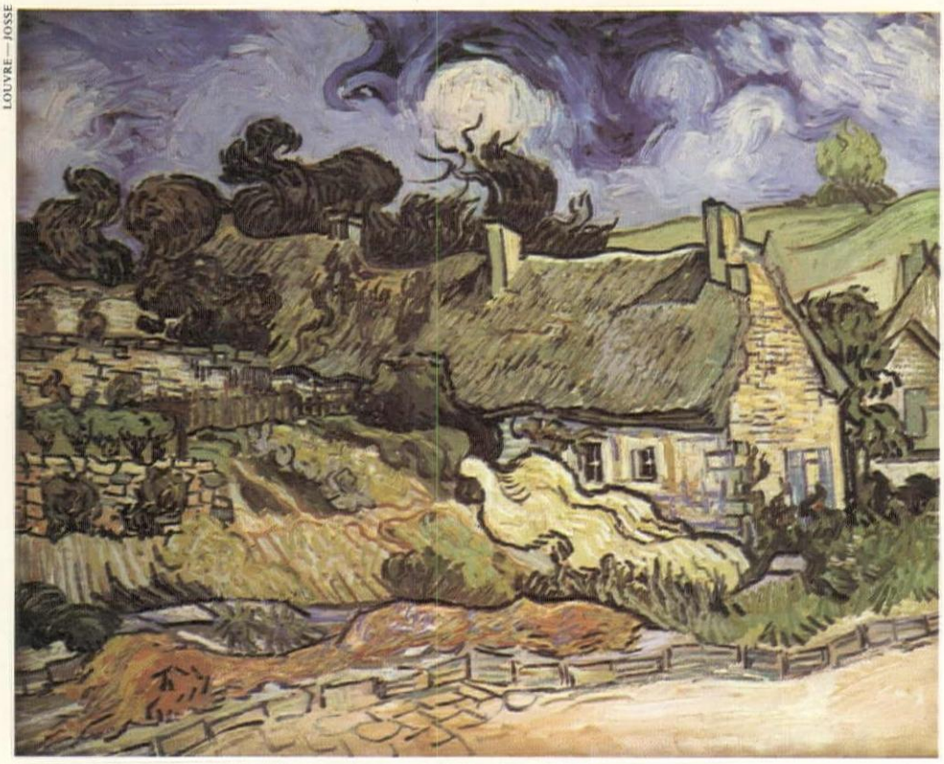
On Sunday, May 25, Dr. Gachet invited Vincent to lunch in the garden, after which the doctor handed him a dry point and a polished copper plate and sat as a model for the only Van Gogh etching in existence, *Portrait of Dr. Paul Gachet*. Two days later, Vincent painted Dr. Gachet's garden. In the beginning of June he wrote his younger sister Wilhelmina in Holland: "I have found a true friend in Dr. Gachet, something like another brother, so much do we resemble each other physically and also mentally. He is a very nervous man himself and very queer in his behavior. . . ." Instead of being put off by the doctor's strange ways, Vincent considered them part of their bond.

On June 4 Vincent wrote Theo, who had been faithfully sending him fifty-franc notes, canvas, sketching paper, and tubes of paint, that he was working on the doctor's portrait. "He certainly seems to me as ill or distraught as you or me," Vincent wrote, "and he is older and lost his wife several years ago, but he is very much the doctor, and his profession and faith still sustain him. We are great friends already. . . . I am working at his portrait. . . ." Dr. Gachet ad-



KUNSTMUSEUM, BASEL—HANS HINZ

MADEMOISELLE GACHET AT THE PIANO, *June, 1890*



LOUVRE—JOSSE

"Auvers is very beautiful," Vincent wrote his brother the day that he arrived in town, and the beauty of its environs inspired seventy paintings in as many days—including Cottages at Cordeville, *above, and the flowers, opposite, that Van Gogh gathered from the Auvers countryside.*

mired the portrait so much that he asked Vincent to make a second version, which was quite different from the first. It had, Vincent wrote Gauguin, with whom he was reconciled after the falling out at Arles, "the heart-broken expression of our time."

The doctor, who had a theory for everything, told Vincent that he understood his work by virtue of his own study of natural history. Vincent, as he saw it, was a Dutch Rousseau who celebrated nature, producing a peasant art made of wooden clogs that was nevertheless as refined as Japanese art. When he saw Vincent's *Arlésienne*, Dr. Gachet, after some hesitation, exclaimed: "How difficult it is to be simple!"

In the June 4 letter Vincent mentioned Dr. Gachet's pretty blonde daughter, Marguerite, for the first time: "I shall most probably also do the portrait of his daughter, who is nineteen years old, and with whom I imagine Jo would soon be friends."

Vincent was feeling good and working well, like a highly volatile substance that a chemist has succeeded in stabilizing. "I also hope that this feeling I have of being much more master of my brush than before I went to Arles will last," he wrote in the same letter. "And M. Gachet says that he thinks it most improbable that it [his illness] will return, and that things are going on quite well. . . . Altogether, father Gachet is very, yes very like you and me. . . . I feel that he understands us perfectly and that he will work for you and me to the best of his power, without any reserve, for the love of art for art's sake." For Vincent, Dr. Gachet had become the indispensable man, the healer who understood him and made his work possible.

As for Dr. Gachet, he too was convinced that his curative powers were at work on Vincent. "Dr. Gachet came to see me yesterday," Theo wrote his brother on June 5, "but at any rate he told me that he thought you entirely recovered, and that he did not see any reason for a return of your malady."

On June 8 Theo, Jo, and their son came to Auvers to spend the day, and the infant Vincent played in Dr. Gachet's yard with the numerous dogs, cats, chickens, pigeons, rabbits, and geese. It was a pleasant Sunday outing, with Vincent relaxed and surrounded by his real and surrogate families. In the days that followed, Vincent was so absorbed in his work that he did not write Theo again until the end of June to describe a new portrait: "Yesterday and the day before, I painted Mlle. Gachet's portrait, which I hope you will see soon; the dress is red, the wall in the background green with orange spots, the carpet red with green spots, the piano dark violet; it is 40 inches high by 20 inches wide. It is a figure that I enjoyed painting—but it is difficult. He [Gachet] has promised to make her pose for me another time at the small organ."

And then this period of intense work and tranquillity ended. Vincent's peace of mind was shattered by a letter Theo sent on June 30. "We have gone through a period of the greatest anxiety," Theo wrote. "Our dear little boy has been very ill. . . . at present we do not know what we ought to do. There are problems . . . the rats Boussod and Valadon are treating me as though I had just entered their business, and are keeping me on a short allowance." Misfortune was piling up on Theo from several directions. He was thinking of setting himself up as an independent art dealer, but that would make his financial situation even more precarious. However, he promised Vincent to keep him going.

Once again Vincent was reminded that he was entirely dependent on Theo's support. The letter, although it did not contain a single word of reproach, reminded Vincent of his great dilemma: the only thing he could do was paint, but he could not sell his paintings; and Theo and Jo had to scrimp and save so that Vincent could continue with his painting.

As Mauron suggested, events in Theo's life tended to precipitate Vincent's crises. And so it was after the June 30 letter.

One of the many works by artist friends that Dr. Gachet kept in disorderly piles in the rooms and corridors of his house was a painting by Armand Guillaumin of a woman, naked to the waist, lying on a bed and holding a little Japanese fan. Vincent admired Guillau-



STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

LITTLE VASE OF FLOWERS, *May–July, 1890*



min. He had visited his studio on the Quai d'Anjou, where once, to emphasize a point in an argument, he had undressed and fallen to his knees. Guillaumin had said that he looked like Delacroix's *Tasso among the Madmen.* Dr. Gachet's Guillaumin nude was unframed, and Vincent told him it was unforgivable to leave a masterpiece without a frame. Gachet promised to have one made by a local carpenter, who was slow delivering it. Shortly after receiving Theo's letter, Vincent, seeing the painting still unframed, stood dumfounded in front of it and then began shouting at Gachet, working himself up into an irrational fury until he was screaming unintelligibly in Dutch, pacing up and down the room. Suddenly he stopped and dug his right hand deep into the pocket of his trousers. Dr. Gachet, afraid that he was armed and remembering the time when he had attacked Gauguin with a razor, managed to remain calm and stared Vincent down until he skulked out of the room.

In forcing his friendship with Dr.



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Gachet to the breaking point, Vincent was following a familiar pattern. With Gauguin, he had formed a close friendship, then, without warning, and without reason, had attacked him. The result of this complicated process of guilt and unrealized aggression was that he had turned the violence against himself, cutting off his ear. Gachet's reaction to Vincent's outburst was like Gauguin's: he avoided him.

Vincent's next letter to Theo was distraught and partly incoherent. "I myself am also trying to do as well as I can," he wrote, "but I will not conceal from you that I hardly dare count on being always in good health. And if my disease returns, you would forgive me." He was

In mid-July, 1890, Vincent wrote Theo that he had painted "immense expanses of wheat," such as The Plain of Auvers under a Stormy Sky, *above. "I did not need to go out of my way to try to express sadness and extreme loneliness," but he also saw, paradoxically, "restorative forces" in his last landscapes.*



ALL: STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

Arthur Ravoux, proprietor of this Auvers rooming house where Van Gogh lived, is seated at the extreme left. His daughter, Adeline, standing in the doorway, modeled for Van Gogh many times.

warning Theo that his decline had already begun. "I still love art and life very much," he went on, "but as for ever having a wife of my own, I have no great faith in that. I rather fear that toward say forty—or rather say nothing—I declare to know nothing, absolutely nothing as to what turn this may take." One wonders what prompted this sudden talk of marriage. Was Vincent thinking of Theo's family situation, or were his thoughts of marriage prompted by Dr. Gachet's daughter, Marguerite?

On July 5 Theo wrote that his son was out of danger and asked Vincent to visit them on the following day, a Sunday. The atmosphere must have been tense, the baby still sick and Theo still quarreling with his employers and afraid of losing his job. Was something said about the burden of supporting Vincent? The slightest hint, a random remark expressed in a moment of impatience, would have been enough to unsettle Vincent in his already nervous and sensitized state. Whatever was said, Vincent's anxiety was evident in the first letter he wrote Theo and Jo after his final Paris visit. "I myself am far from having reached any kind of tranquility," he said. "I very much fear that I too was distressed, and I think it strange that I do not in the least know under what conditions I left—if it is at 150 francs a month paid in three installments as before. Theo fixed nothing and so to begin with I left in confusion. Would there be a way of seeing each other again more calmly? . . .

"I have an interest in my little nephew and am anxious for his well-being: since you were good enough to call him after me, I should like him to have a soul less unquiet than mine, which is foundering."

In this letter Vincent once again revealed his constant preoccupation: was Theo going to continue to support him, to send him fifty-franc notes folded into his letters? And if he was, would Vincent not be diverting resources from his infant nephew and namesake? There was no solution.

At the same time, the other anchor in his life, Dr. Gachet, had abandoned him. Vincent's letter went on: "Now about Dr. Gachet. I went to see him the day before yesterday, I did not find him in. . . . I think we must not count on Dr. Gachet at all. First of all, he is sicker than I am, I think, or shall we say just as much, so that's that. Now when one blind man leads another blind man, don't they both fall into the ditch?" Thus, the friend who had understood him perfectly, who had started him working again, was now a blind man who could not find his way, and who threatened to drag Vincent down with him.

In response to a reassuring message from Jo that their situation had improved, both with regard to little Vincent's health and Theo's job, Vincent wrote: "Jo's letter was really like a gospel to me, a deliverance from the agony which had been caused by the hours I had shared with you, which were a bit too difficult and trying for us all. It was no slight thing when we all felt our daily bread was in danger, no slight thing when for reasons other than that we felt that our means of subsistence were fragile.

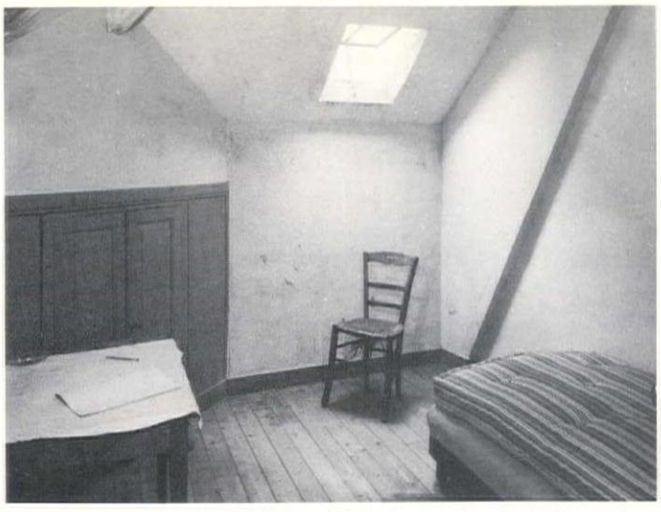
"Back here, I still felt very sad and continued to feel the storm which threatens you weighing on me too. What was to be done—you see, I generally try to be fairly cheerful, but my life is also threatened at the very root, and my steps are also wavering.

"I feared—not altogether but yet a little—that being a burden to you, you felt me to be rather a thing to be dreaded, but Jo's letter proves to me clearly that you understood that for my part I am as much in toil and trouble as you are. . . . I have painted three more big canvases. They are vast fields of wheat under troubled skies, and I did not need to go out of my way to try to express sadness and extreme loneliness."

Vincent, so he said, was delivered from his suffering by Jo's letter, and now he went back to work, painting more sweeping landscapes, as well as the flag-covered Auvers town hall on July 14 and the funereal *Crows over a Wheatfield.* The last letter he sent Theo, dated July 23, avoided the subject of his emotional state and dealt with his work and practical matters like obtaining paints.

On Sunday evening, July 27, 1890, the Ravoux family, monsieur and madame and their two young daughters, sat down to dinner with all their boarders but Vincent, who was usually punctual at meals. They wondered where he was. They were taking the air outside the café in the warm summer evening when Vincent passed them and climbed the twisting staircase to his whitewashed garret room. Adeline Ravoux, whose portrait Vincent had once painted, could still

remember the scene in vivid detail more than sixty years later. "It was so dark only my mother noticed he was holding his side like a man in pain," she recalled in a 1953 interview for the Paris literary weekly *Les Nouvelles Litéraires*. "She said to my father: You'd better have a look, I don't think M. Vincent is well."



Van Gogh died in this airless cubbyhole on the third floor above the Café Ravoux. Here he had lodged for about seventy cents a day.

Through the door of Vincent's room, M. Ravoux could hear him moan. The door was locked. When Ravoux let himself in, Vincent showed him a red stain on his shirt. "But what have you done?" M. Ravoux asked. "I've shot myself, I only hope this time I've succeeded," Vincent replied.

Ravoux sent for Dr. Mazery, who came twice a week to Auvers to attend to the villagers, but he was not at home. Someone went to get Dr. Gachet, who had just returned from a day of fishing with his son on the Oise River. He arrived with his emergency medical bag and, being an advocate of electric shock treatment, his little electric coil.

The Ravoux had never met Dr. Gachet before. "He did not practice in Auvers, and had never come to our house," Adeline Ravoux said in her interview. "When he arrived we had the impression that he and M. Vincent did not know one another. . . . My father always maintained that they never exchanged the slightest word."

Dr. Gachet examined Vincent's wound by candlelight. He saw that Vincent had shot himself too low and too far to the side to touch the heart. The wound, at the edge of the left side of his rib cage, formed a small, dark red circle, surrounded by a purple halo. A thin stream of blood came from it. No vital organ seemed to be affected. The bullet appeared to have stopped somewhere in Vincent's back, probably near the spinal column.

Vincent, unlike a man suffering from a serious chest wound, did not seem to be in a state of shock. He was lucid and composed, sat up in bed, and asked if he could smoke, pointing to his pipe and tobacco in a pocket of his blue blouse. It was out of the question for Dr. Gachet to try to extract the bullet. He had only candlelight to operate by, and surgery of the thorax was, in any case, fairly crude.

The obvious thing to do was hospitalize Vincent, if only to prevent him from doing further damage to himself. The town of Pontoise, which had a hospital, was less than six miles away. But Dr. Gachet did not do the obvious thing. After dressing the wound, he left Vincent in his airless room. Anton Hirschig, a Dutch painter who was also staying at the boarding house, visited Vincent's deathbed and reported: "It was swelteringly hot up there under the roof."

Later that night, two gendarmes arrived to question Vincent. Adeline Ravoux recalled in her interview that Vincent would not answer their questions. " 'What I have done is nobody else's business,' he said. 'I am free to do what I like with my own body.' " The gendarmes were unable to learn where Vincent had gone to shoot himself or how he had come into possession of a gun.



L'ÉCHO PONTOISIEN

— AUVERS-SUR-OISE. — Dimanche 27 juillet, un nommé Van Gogh, âgé de 37 ans, sujet hollandais, artiste peintre, de passage à Auvers, s'est tiré un coup de revolver dans les champs et, n'étant que blessé, il est rentré à sa chambre où il est mort le surlendemain.

Nine days after Van Gogh died, the district newspaper ran this small item saying that "someone named Van Gogh, aged 37, a Dutch painter staying at Auvers, shot himself. . . ."

When Dr. Gachet had asked for Theo's current address in Paris, Vincent had refused to give it to him, but the doctor had managed to send Theo a note via an art dealer: "I am terribly sorry to trouble your rest. However, I feel it is my duty to write you immediately. I was summoned at nine o'clock at night today Sunday by your brother Vincent. When I came to him, I found him very badly off. He has shot himself."

Theo arrived in the morning of July 28, and Vincent told him: "Don't cry, I did it for the good of all of us." When he saw Vincent sitting up in bed calmly puffing on his pipe, Theo hoped he would recover. Thus, no more was done to save Vincent, who died in Theo's arms at one-thirty on the morning of July 29, some twenty-eight and a half hours after Dr. Gachet had been to see him. He was thirty-seven years old.

Dr. Gachet did a deathbed charcoal drawing of Vincent, signed with his pseudonym, Van Ryssel. Vincent's body was placed in a coffin that had been lifted onto the Ravoux billiard table, and he was buried on July 30 in a corner of the Auvers cemetery. Dr. Gachet spoke, but his words were drowned in his own sobs. After the funeral, according to Adeline Ravoux, "M. Theo asked Dr. Gachet to take the remaining paintings. He didn't have to be asked twice, and with his son's help he rolled up canvas after canvas."

Dr. Gachet had written Theo that Vincent had asked for him, which was untrue. He had been called because the first doctor, Mazery, was not at home. In any case, he did nothing to save Vincent. Although he called himself a specialist in nervous diseases, nothing in his behavior suggests that he understood that a bungled suicide is a cry for help. He left Vincent to die in his garret room, grossly underestimating the gravity of his wound and not bothering to have him hospitalized, an act of negligence



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In Van Gogh's view of the Gothic church at Auvers, opposite, the road on the right leads to the graveyard above, where the two Van Gogh brothers now lie side by side. To paint the picture, Van Gogh stood at the point where the paths parted—a fact that symbolized neatly the life-or-death choice he was unconsciously confronting.

that would at best be called malpractice. And, once Vincent was dead, he threw himself into the role of the grieved friend and gathered up Vincent's canvases with greedy dispatch. All in all, Dr. Gachet leaves a distasteful impression.

We should not, however, accept Artaud's view of Gachet as "the direct, efficient, and sufficient cause" of Van Gogh's death. For it seems clear that we are dealing here with two unbalanced men. One was the patient, while the other, unfortunately, was the doctor.

When Vincent became angry over the unframed Guillaumin, Dr. Gachet abandoned his patient. A mercurial, often thoughtless person, perhaps Gachet did not realize how grave it is for a doctor, who embodies the promise of health, to ignore the person he is supposed to be helping. If he did realize how dependent Vincent was on him, then his neglect of his patient was criminal—in the moral if not the legal sense. In any case, it is a fact that at the very moment that Vincent was taking upon himself all of Theo's problems, Dr. Gachet was divesting himself of the problem Vincent represented in his life.

The problem may have been more than that between patient and doctor, if we are to believe one of the foremost Van Gogh experts, Marc-Edo Tralbaut, who has devoted his life to the study of the painter and who personally knew Dr. Gachet's son and daughter. He suggests that Vincent had formed an attachment to Dr. Gachet's daughter and was told by the doctor that he must stop seeing Marguerite. When Vincent abruptly brought up the topic of marriage in his letter to Theo, he was thinking of Marguerite and his last chance to found a family—only to be rebuffed by her father, a man he considered his friend and helper. When I talked to M. Tralbaut, who lives in Van Gogh country, near Arles, he told me that he believed Marguerite Gachet had returned Vincent's feelings. He said he had been told by a girlhood friend of Marguerite's "that she had fallen in love with Van Gogh."

All this is getting perilously close to *True Confessions*, and it is impossible to verify. We do know, however, that Marguerite Gachet suffered a serious depression after Vincent's death, that she never married, and that she lived as a recluse in Auvers, where even her own neighbors seldom saw her.

And we do know that when Dr. Gachet came to Vincent's side on July 27, he was no longer a friend. The two men, according to Adeline Ravoux, did not exchange a single word. Whatever there was between them, whether it was Marguerite or simply an accumulation of mutual ill will between two unstable men, died with Vincent. Dr. Gachet would not discuss it.

Vincent left Theo three things: his Auvers paintings and drawings, many of which Theo gave to Dr. Gachet; an unmailed letter found on his person, in which Vincent said, "I tell you again that I shall always consider you to be something more than a simple dealer in Corots, that through my mediation you have your part in the actual production of some canvases, which will retain their calm even in the catastrophe. . . . Well, my own work, I am risking my life for it and my reason has half foundered because of it"; and his madness. For without Vincent as a mediator, Theo's mind snapped. It was as if the true nature of their pact had been that Theo assumed the financial burdens for both brothers while Vincent dealt with their demons. So interwoven were their lives that it was not only his own mental balance that Vincent was struggling to keep, it was Theo's.

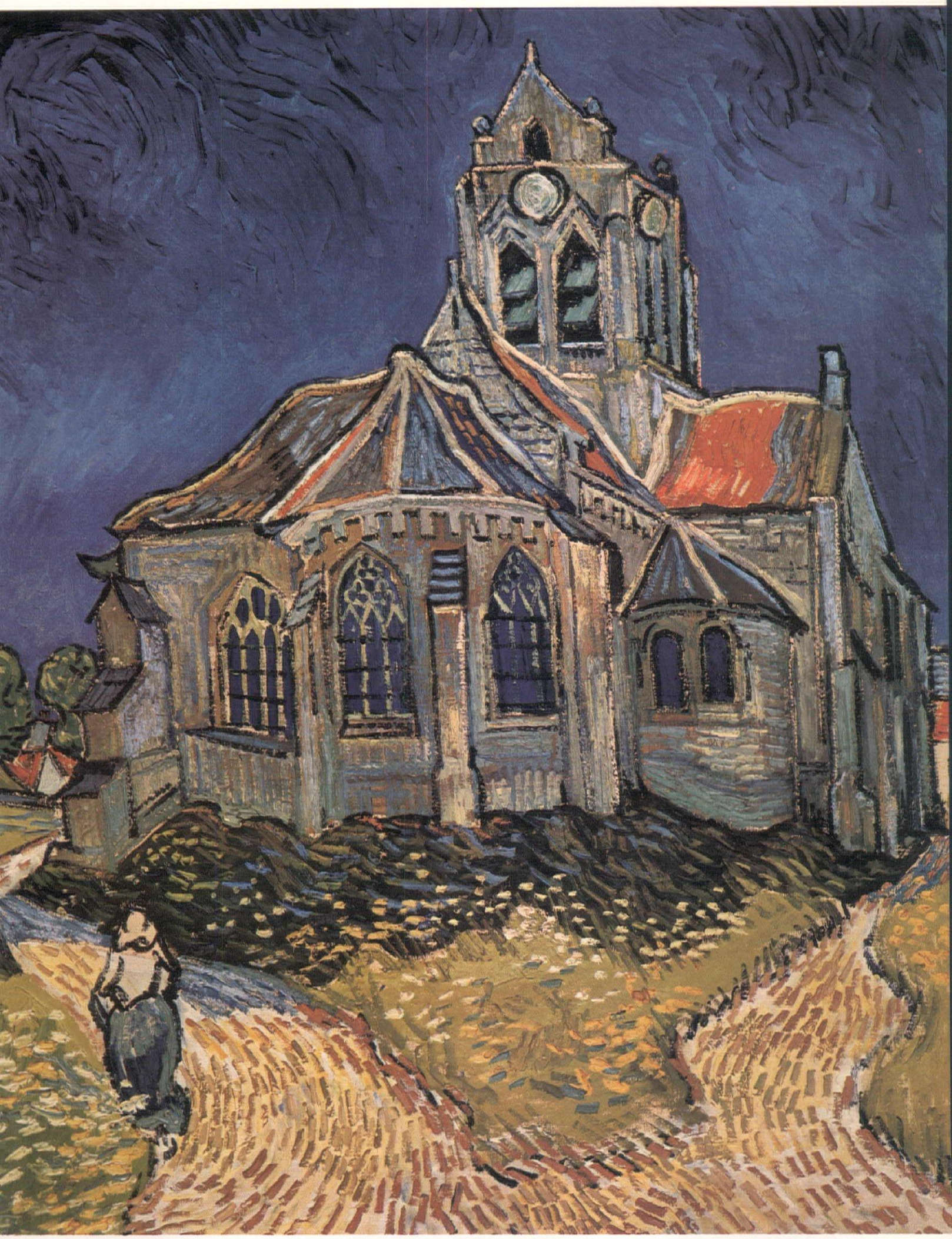
Theo remained on excellent terms with Dr. Gachet. They exchanged several friendly letters. It never even crossed Theo's mind that Dr. Gachet was in any way responsible for his brother's death—in fact, Theo and Johanna still considered Gachet the Van Gogh family doctor.

On October 10, 1890, almost two and a half months after Vincent's death, Dr. Gachet received a letter from Johanna Van Gogh's brother: "Since yesterday, my brother-in-law Van Gogh has been in a state of overexcitement that has us seriously worried. . . . The overexcitement is due to a quarrel with his employers, as the result of which he wants to set himself up independently without delay. The memory of his brother haunts him to such a point that he quarrels with all those who disagree with him."

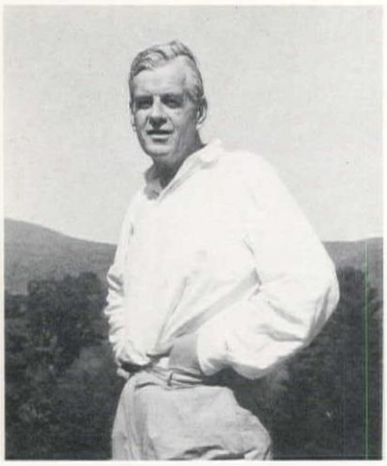
Two days later, with Dr. Gachet's consent, Theo was committed to a private asylum, the Maison Dubois, at 200 Faubourg Saint-Denis. He improved and was allowed to go to Holland and see his family. But the illness had attacked his body as well as his mind, and he died in Utrecht of general paralysis on January 25, 1891, at the age of thirty-three. He was buried there, but his body was later exhumed and reburied in Auvers beside his brother's. Their remains lie under identical tombstones, as close as their psyches had been in life.

Dr. Gachet continued practicing and exhibiting his canvases, signed Van Ryssel, at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris. He took part in a signboard contest, submitting a picture of a pig for a *charcuterie*. He died in 1909 at the age of eighty.

Journalist-novelist Ted Morgan was born on the same day, March 30, as Van Gogh.



THE CHURCH OF AUVERS, *June, 1890*



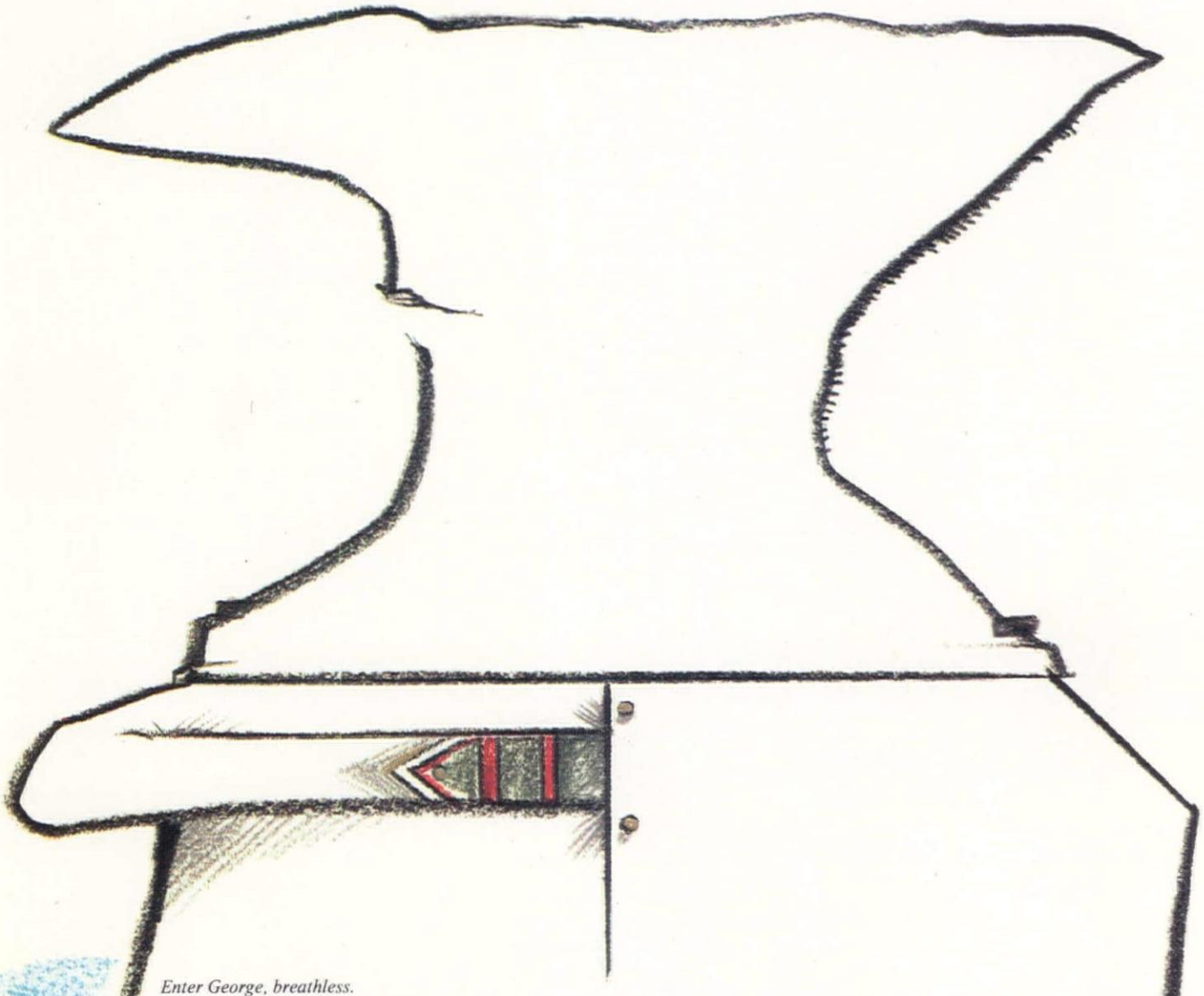
Robert Osborn

ONE ROGUE'S GALLERY OF POETS

As Robert Osborn explains, he enjoys translating "word men into pictured feelings." His search for clear visual analogies to all the talk that washes over us has made Osborn an indispensable observer of American mores—and sometimes a gently malicious satirist. In his eight books of social and political drawings he has dived through clouds of suburban chitchat or Pentagon newspeak, leaving his victims pinned and wriggling on the page.

Poetry, however, is a use of language Osborn likes to honor, not deflate. In these drawings he has transformed his feelings about six poets into color and line. From the pictures and verses quoted, can you identify the poets? The answers are printed below, upside-down, in case you would like to double-check.

1. Johann Wolfgang Goethe; 2. Ogden Nash; 3. Carl Sandburg; 4. Homer; 5. e. e. cummings; 6. Marianne Moore



Enter George, breathless.

GEORGE: My lord, my lord, I hear horses in full gallop—two of them—'Tis they for certain.

GOETZ: Bring out my steed; let Hans mount. Farewell, dear brother, God be with you. Be cheerful and patient. He will give you ample scope.

1. MARTIN: Let me request your name.

GOETZ: Pardon me—Farewell! (*Gives his left hand.*)

MARTIN: Why do you give the left?—Am I unworthy of the knightly right hand?

GOETZ: Were you the Emperor, you must be satisfied with this. My right hand, though not useless in combat, is unresponsive to the grasp of affection. It is one with its mailed gauntlet—You see, it is *iron*!

Consider the case of Mr. Suggs.

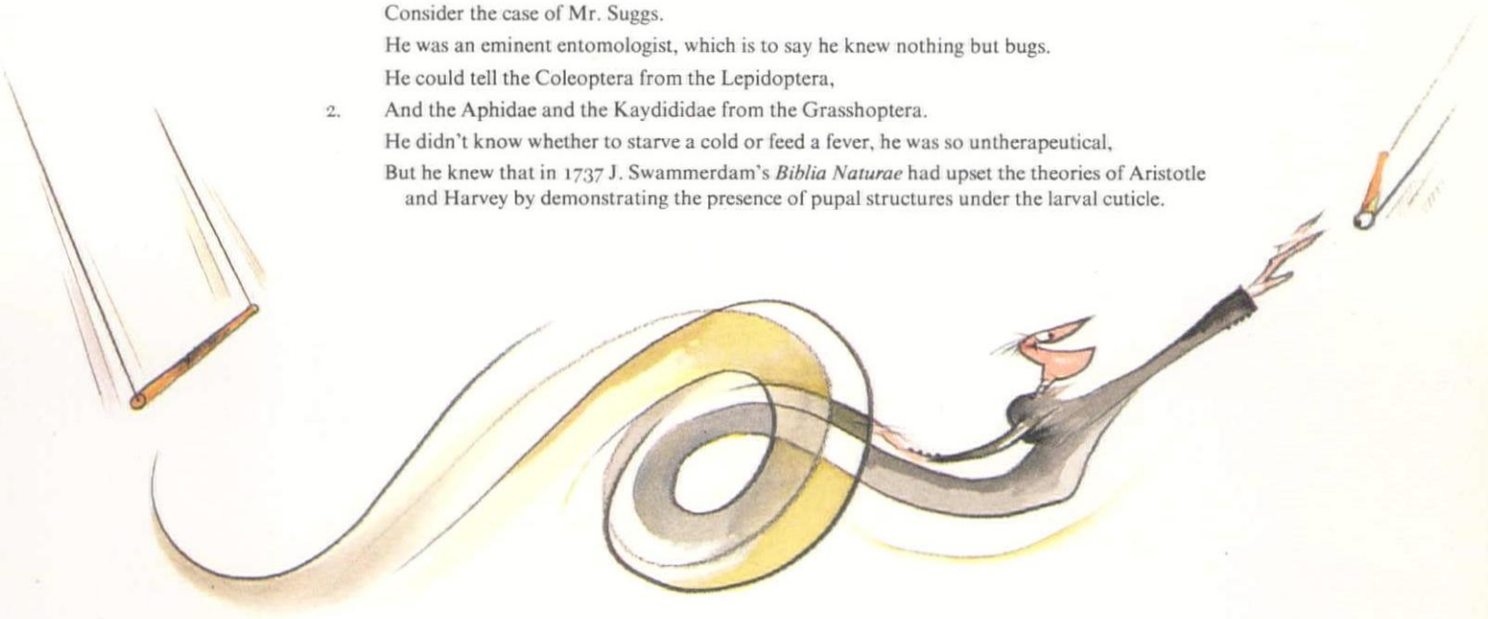
He was an eminent entomologist, which is to say he knew nothing but bugs.

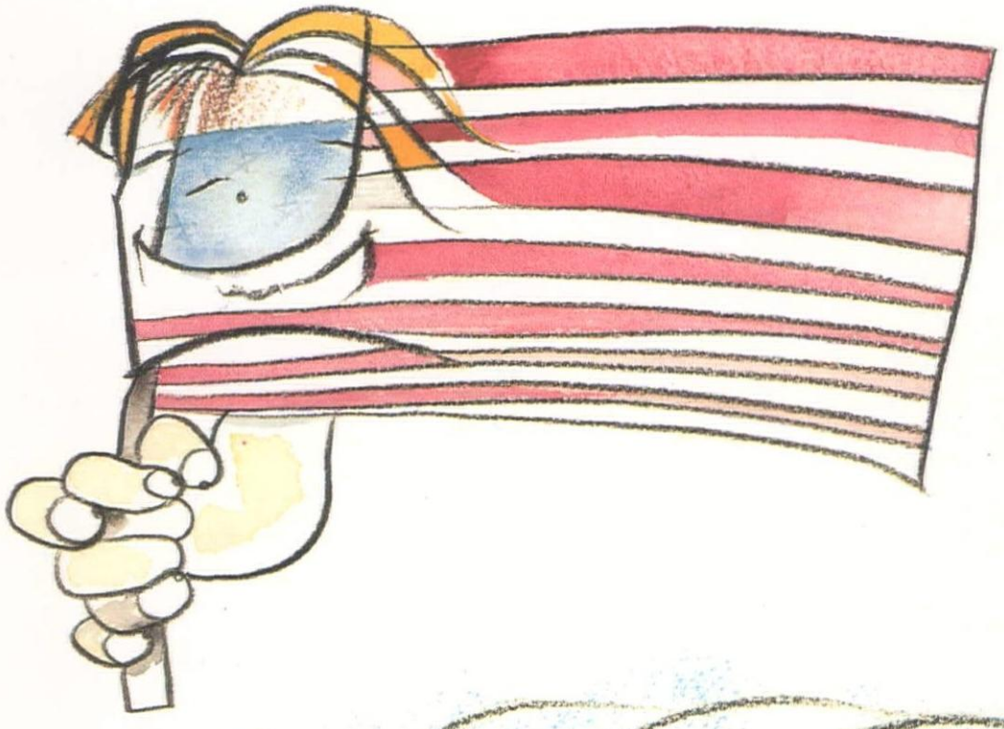
He could tell the Coleoptera from the Lepidoptera,

2. And the Aphidae and the Kaydididae from the Grasshoptera.

He didn't know whether to starve a cold or feed a fever, he was so untherapeutical,

But he knew that in 1737 J. Swammerdam's *Biblia Naturae* had upset the theories of Aristotle and Harvey by demonstrating the presence of pupal structures under the larval cuticle.





I am the people—the mob—the crowd—the mass.

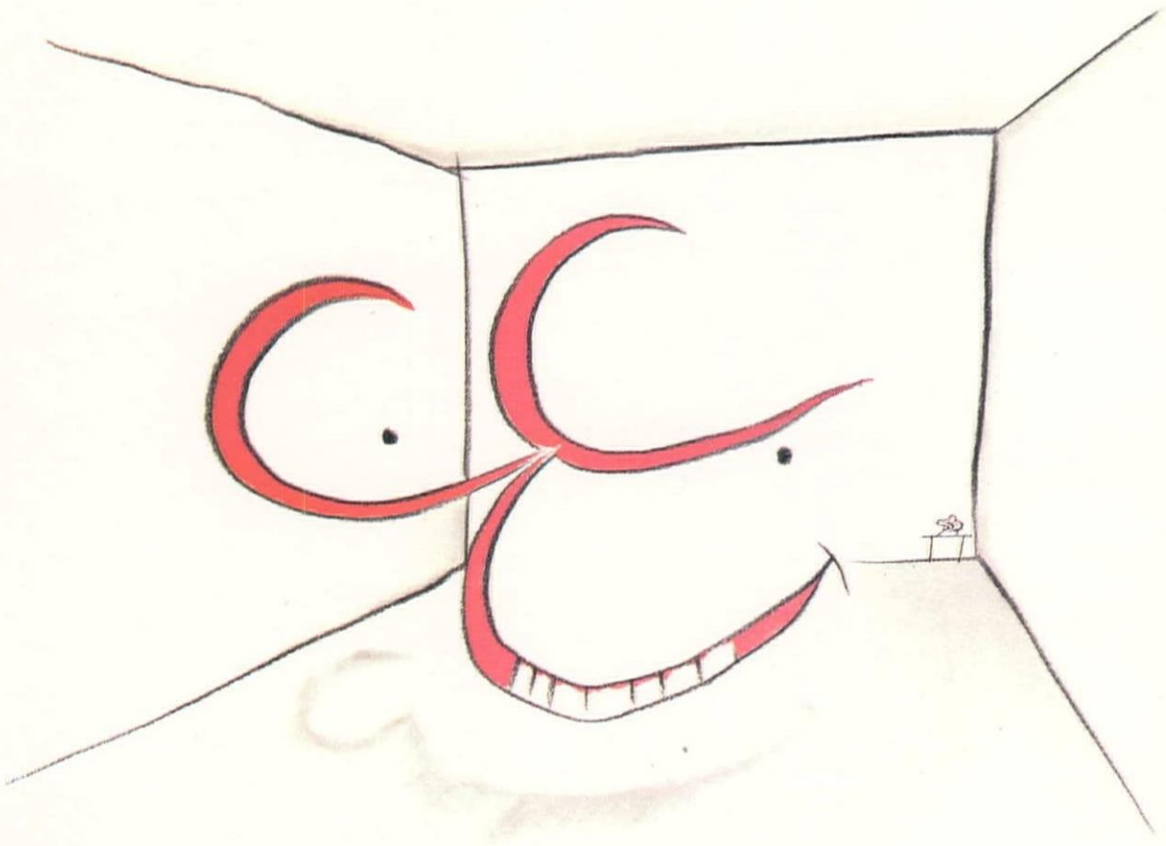
3. Do you know that all the great work of the world is done through me?

I am the workingman, the inventor, the maker of the world's food and clothes.

I am the audience that witnesses history.



And the anger came on Peleus' son, and within
his shaggy breast the heart was divided two ways, pondering
4. whether to draw from beside his thigh the sharp sword, driving
away all those who stood between and kill the son of Atreus,
or else to check the spleen within and keep down his anger.



pity this busy monster, manunkind,

not. Progress is a comfortable disease:
your victim (death and life safely beyond)

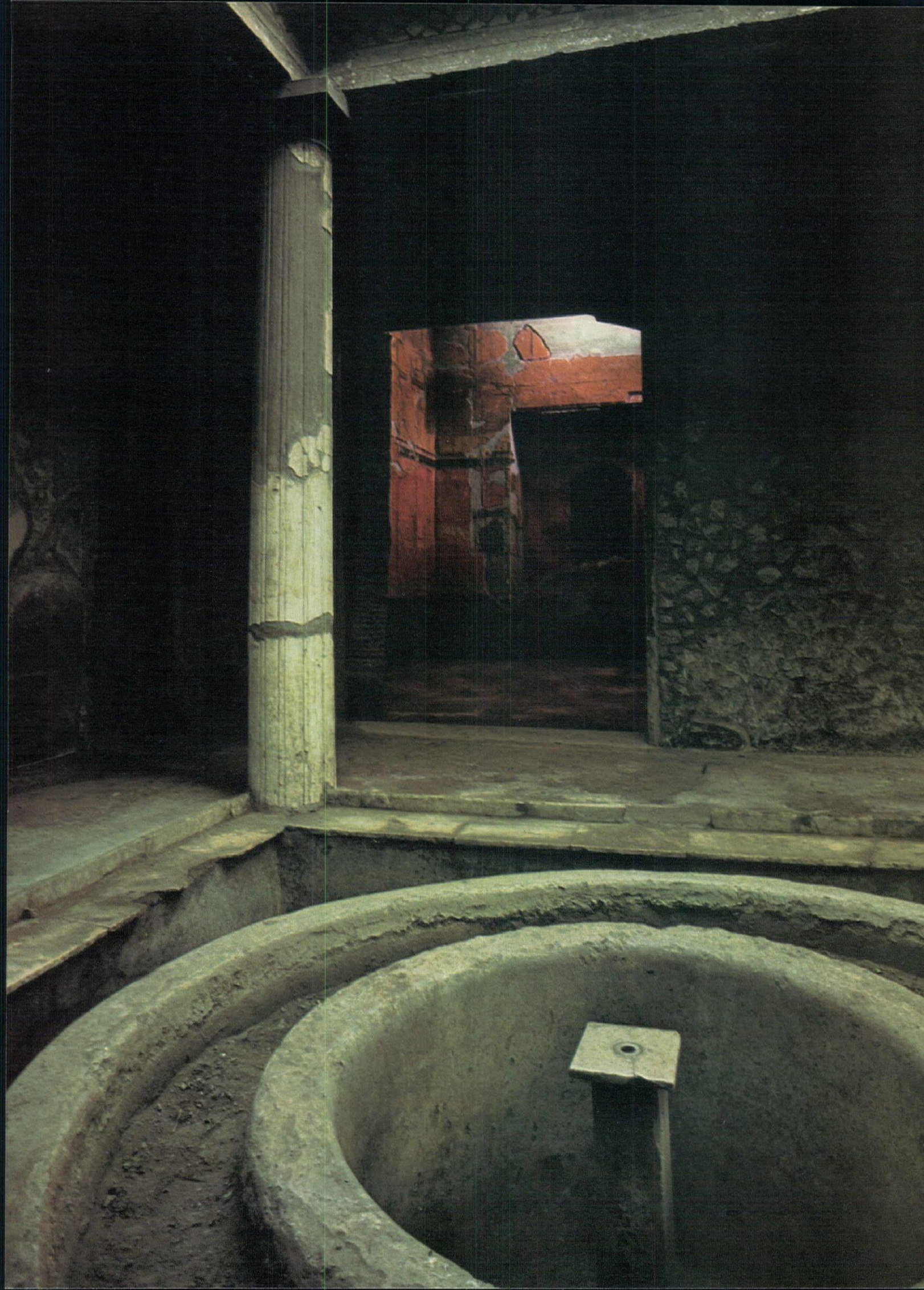
5. plays with the bigness of his littleness
—electrons deify one razorblade
into a mountainrange; lenses extend

unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish
returns on its unself.



6.

Fanaticism? No. Writing is exciting
and baseball is like writing.
You can never tell with either
how it will go
or what you will do;
generating excitement—
a fever in the victim—
pitcher, catcher, fielder, batter.



The Splendors of a Newly Discovered Roman Villa

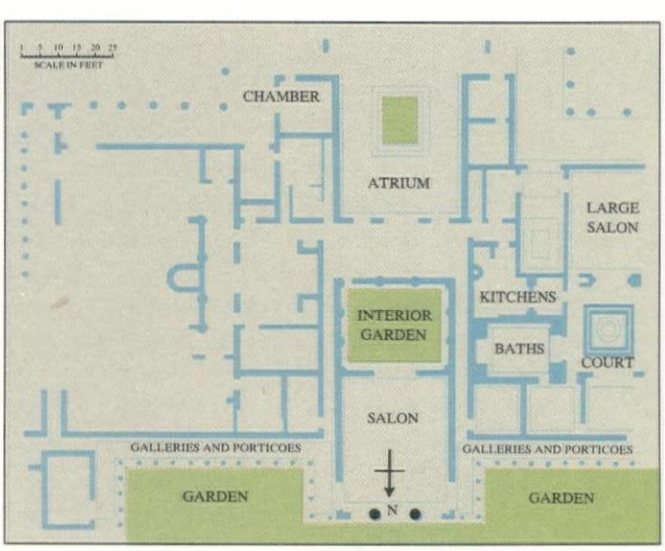


ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN ROSS

The pillared rear entrance to the villa, above, leads from an outside formal garden into the grand salon, and from there to an interior garden. Inside (as the ground plan below shows), a covey of kitchens and baths opens onto the court and pool basin opposite.

One of the most luxurious villas built by the ancient Romans is slowly emerging from the dirt, rubble, and ashes that rained down on it when Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79. This southern Italian villa was apparently part of a residential community called Oplonti, which, unlike nearby Pompeii and Herculaneum, seems to have had no markets, shops, or forums. Oplonti —it lies beneath the modern town of Torre Annunziata—was a cluster of country retreats for the rich, a resort on the Bay of Naples so discreet that until recently it was only a puzzling name found on an old map of the Roman Empire. As the excavation and reconstruction proceeds, however, the reality behind the ancient name is being filled in with opulent detail.

After six years of digging, Alfonso de Franciscis, superintendent of antiquities for the Naples region, has pieced together much of the ground plan and some forty-eight rooms. Half the house, on the left side of the central corridor, was servants' quarters. In the much posher half on the right, the owner (who may have belonged to the family of Poppaea, Nero's wife) ate, slept, bathed, entertained, ambled through an inner garden—or sat, perhaps, reading a book on the edge of the pool in the open-air court opposite. At the villa's northern end, above, covered galleries led to formal gardens. From the letters of Pliny the Younger, whose Tuscan villa was about the same size as Oplonti, we get a vivid picture of life in these country mansions. The great attraction, Pliny wrote, "is the solid comfort of the place—nobody needs to bother to dress, the neighbors do not call, it is always quiet and peaceful." An account of Pliny's gentlemanly life begins on page 26.

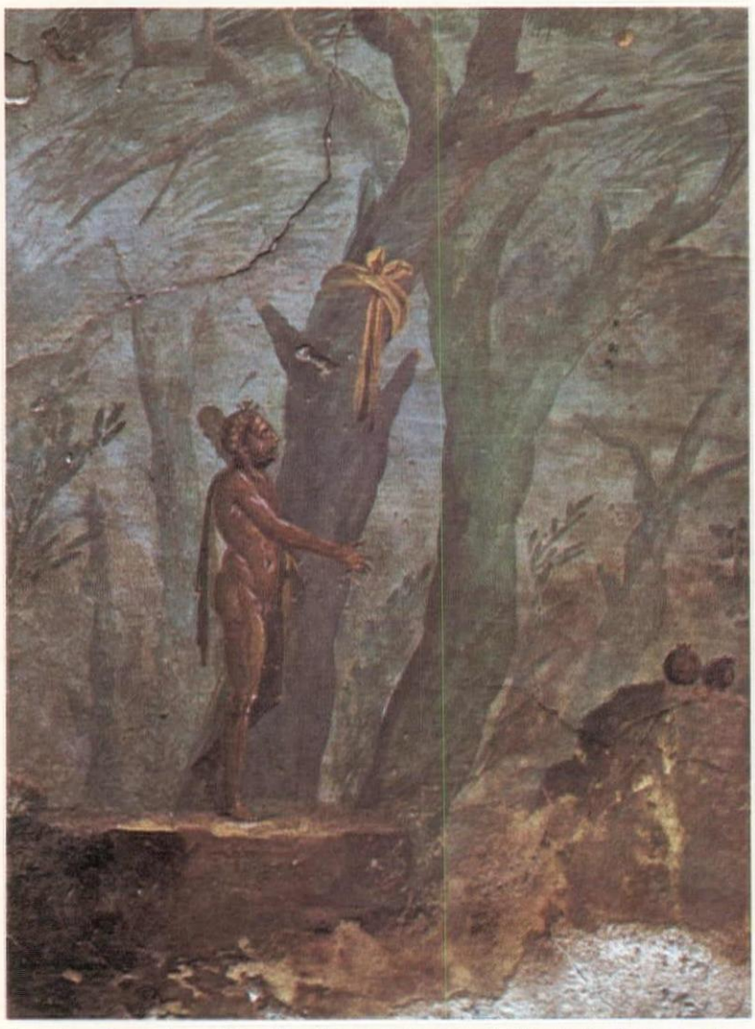


FRANCIS AND SHAW

Excavation of the villa, 180 feet long on each side, has concentrated on the master's quarters, at right in the ground plan above.

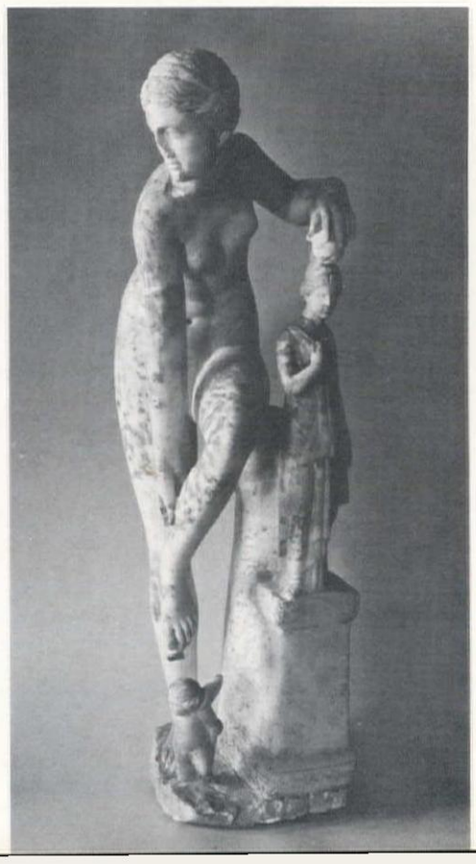


The marble centaurs above were discovered in an underground storeroom and may once have formed the base of a fountain.

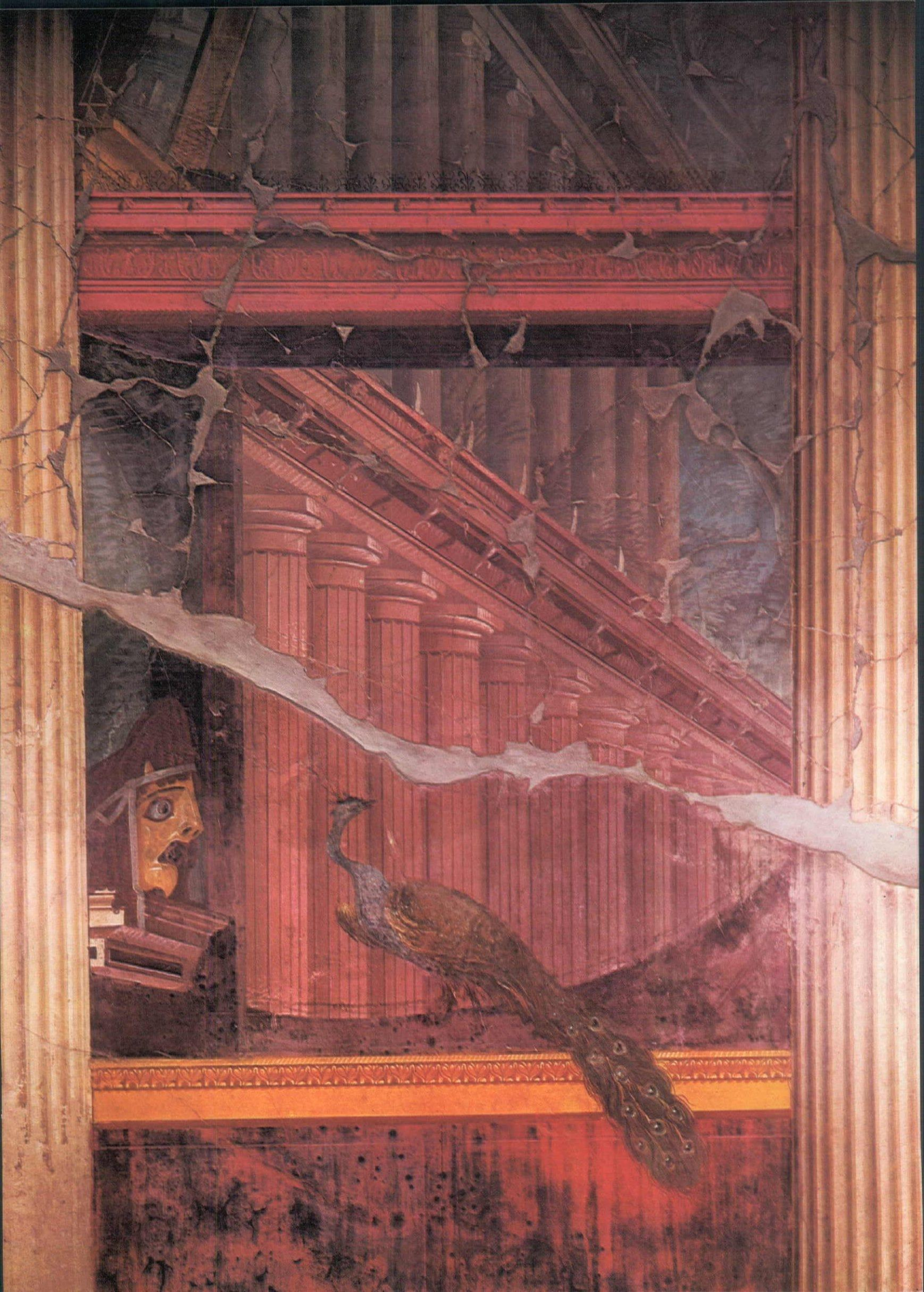


A nude male, perhaps Hercules, decorates a painted niche in the bath chamber.

The villa at Oplonti was built about the middle of the first century B.C. *and stood for more than a century before Vesuvius destroyed it. As a result, its sumptuous wall paintings represent several successive styles, including the gentle pastoral scene at left and a later theatrical vista of columns, opposite. When the end came, no one was living in the villa—or at least no human remains have been found yet—and all the pieces of sculpture had been removed from the gardens and courtyard and placed in a subterranean storeroom for safekeeping. Archaeologists have suggested that the villa was damaged in the earthquake of* A.D. *62 and was being restored when the holocaust occurred.*



Aphrodite adjusts a sandal and leans on Peitho, the goddess of persuasion. In the painting opposite a peacock confronts an actor's mask.

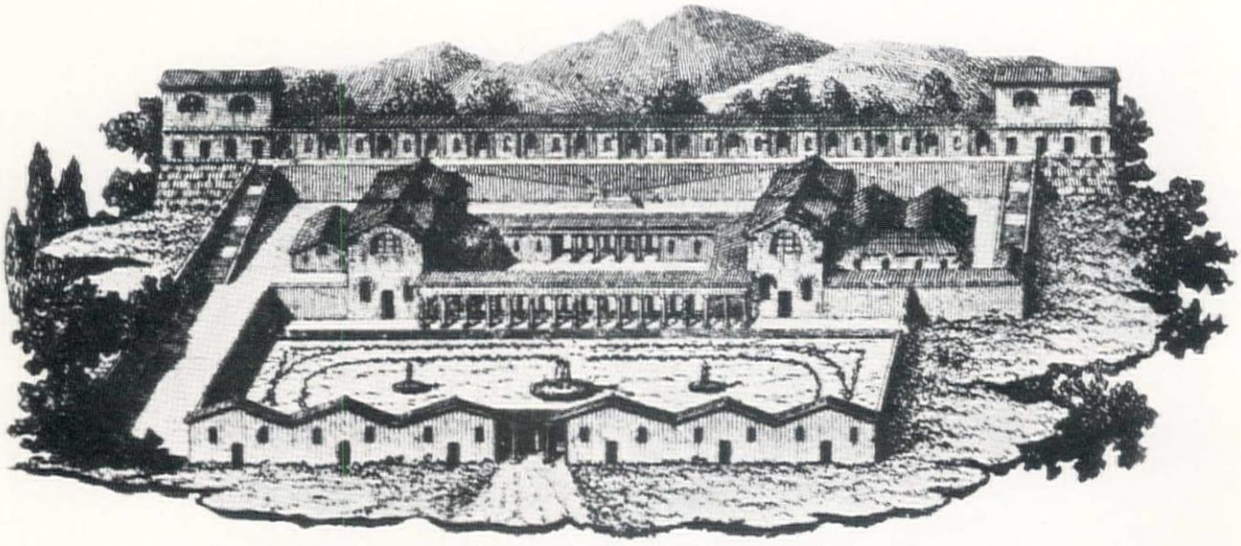


A Roman Gentleman

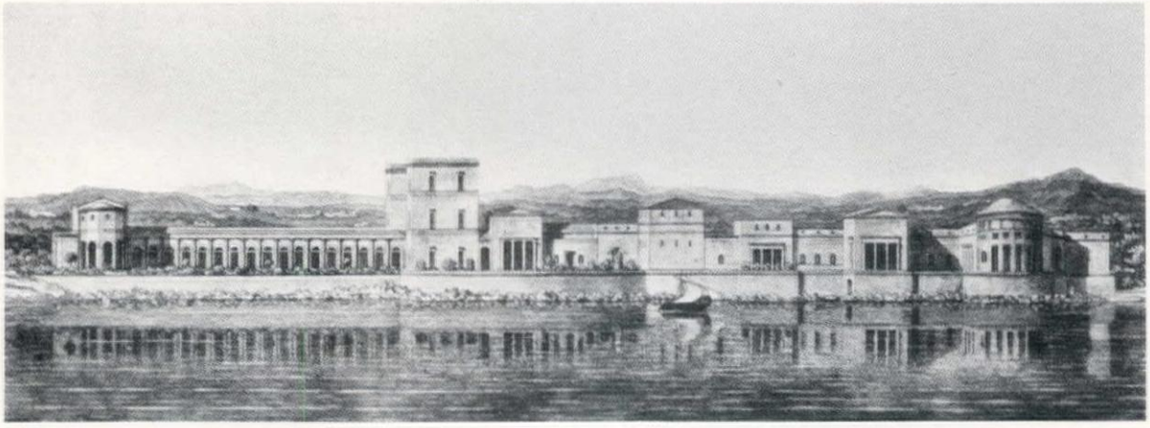
Pliny the Younger found immortality
not so much in his orations as in his letters,
which reveal his charm,
his humanity, and his delight in country living



The villa simple: the clay model of a twentieth-century attempt to reconstruct Pliny the Younger's winter retreat at Laurentum, not far from Rome



The villa magnificent: an Italian effort of 1796, based on Pliny's own description, but dubiously vast



The villa splendiferous: a nineteenth-century idea; in fact, the villa on the preceding pages is probably closer to the mark

On the twenty-fourth of August in the year A.D. 79, a Roman matron named Plinia looked across the Bay of Naples from her brother's house at Misenum and saw a cloud, shaped like an umbrella pine, over Mount Vesuvius. She called to her brother and her son, both of whom were reading books as usual, and pointed out the strange sight. Her brother, Pliny the Elder, was best known, then and now, as the author of that prodigious compendium of fact, lore, and wild surmise, the *Natural History*, but he was also, at that time, commander of a Roman fleet stationed at Misenum. He ordered a boat to be made ready at once and invited his nephew to come along. Young Pliny declined, preferring to go on with his studies.

That night, the seventeen-year-old boy and his mother tried to sleep but soon got up because the house was shaking so badly from earthquake tremors. When a friend of his uncle's stopped by about dawn, young Pliny was back at his books. The friend denounced the boy for such frivolous behavior in the face of disaster and scolded his mother for allowing it. Young Pliny went on making extracts from Livy.

At last, when flames began leaping up from Vesuvius, when the sea ran out from shore and carriages began rolling crazily around the courtyard, the Plinys decided it was time to leave. They spent the night on the road under a shower of ashes, and then, as the eruption died down, returned to Misenum. There they learned that the elder Pliny had died on the beach at Stabiae, suffocated by the gas and falling ash.

The reason we know all this is that years later the historian Tacitus asked Pliny the Younger for an account of his uncle's death. His two letters of description prove that Pliny was a keen observer and reporter. They also tell us what kind of youth he was—too wrapped up in his books to take, or at least admit to, an interest in the greatest natural disaster of his lifetime.

Pliny grew up in a Rome that was stable enough and rich enough to indulge such a boy in his intellectual vanity. After the nightmare of misrule in the first century (Nero killed himself to avoid execution when Pliny was six), two solid, martial emperors of the Flavian house, Vespasian and Titus, restored a stability that lasted through Pliny's adolescence. As the scion of a landed family and the sole heir to his uncle's considerable estate, the boy had the best education that Rome offered. After studying rhetoric with Quintilian, he embarked at eighteen on the *cursus honorum*, or sequence of offices designed to prepare a young aristocrat for a career in public life. In Pliny's case this began with the magistracy of a lower court, included a stint with the army as quaestor, or financial officer, and led to the offices of praetor, consul, and augur, as well as to membership in the Senate.

But Rome was not to achieve lasting civil peace without one more convulsion. Midway through his reign, the third Flavian emperor, Domitian, turned into a despot who killed or banished all suspected enemies and reduced the Senate to cringing impotence. Pliny deplored the return of tyranny: he tells us with pride that, when Domitian expelled the philosophers from Rome, he visited one of them outside the gates at some risk to himself. But he was not cut out to be a martyr, and he did not so antagonize the emperor as to lose any of his wealth or his lands or his steady succession of public offices. Nevertheless, the excesses of Domitian cast such a shadow over his young manhood and that of two contemporaries, Tacitus and Juvenal, that they later spent a great part of their intellectual energies on invective against imperial tyranny.

At length Domitian was assassinated, and the Senate, having had enough of hereditary rule, arrived at an understanding with the army and the rest of the Roman power structure that each emperor should adopt as his successor the best younger man available. This principle gave Rome what Gibbon called "the period in the history of the world during which the human race was most happy and prosperous." It became Pliny's duty, as consul in the year 100, to deliver an address of welcome on behalf of the Senate to the new emperor, Trajan, a strong, fair-minded soldier from Spain. His florid *Panegyricus*, contrasting Trajan's virtues with Domitian's vices, served the purpose not only of praising the new ruler for what he was but also of letting him know what Rome *expected* him to be. Trajan was henceforward Pliny's fast friend.

Pliny took great pride in his orations, which he modeled on those of Cicero, but, except for his *Panegyricus*, all are lost. His claim to immortality—something he sought with unconcealed and almost embarrassing passion—lies rather in the letters to friends, which he wrote and published in successive volumes. They reveal a Roman aristocrat of charm and urbanity, conscientious about his official and professional duties but eager to shed them, whenever possible, for the life of a country gentleman and scholar.

The Senate and the law courts were Pliny's professional world. When the new emperor encouraged the Senate to resume its old role in government, Pliny was overjoyed but at the same time uncertain about some points of parliamentary procedure, and had to apply to a famous constitutional lawyer:

To Titius Aristo

You will wonder why I am asking a question I should have been able to answer for myself. The fact is we have forgotten our knowledge of senatorial procedure, as of other honest practices, in the servitude of former times; . . . So, now that Liberty is restored, she finds us awkward and inexperienced; carried away by her charms, we are compelled to act in certain ways before we understand them. . . .

Pliny's greatest court cases were those trials in which he appeared as prosecutor or defense counsel for provincial governors. Such governorships, plums in Roman politics, were at times practically invitations to steal, but if a governor went beyond the customary bounds of self-enrichment, the provincials had the right to accuse him before the

Senate. Twice Pliny prosecuted proconsuls on behalf of the Baetici in southern Spain, and in 100 he and Tacitus together represented the great province of Africa in the trial of Marius Priscus, over which Trajan himself presided. In the nature of the charges, the solemnity of the setting, and the length of the orations, the proceeding bears comparison with the trial of Warren Hastings before Parliament in the eighteenth century for high crimes and corruption as governor general of India. Pliny gives us a personal sidelight:

To Maturus Arrianus

... The Emperor did indeed show such an attentive and kindly interest in me . . . that more than once, when he fancied I was putting too much strain on my rather delicate physique, he suggested to my freedman standing behind me that I should spare my voice and my lungs. . . .

But Pliny went on for nearly five hours. Priscus was found guilty and exiled.

Most of his working day in Rome was taken up with less fateful but no less time-consuming chores:

To Minicius Fundanus

It is extraordinary how, if one takes a single day spent in Rome, one can give a more or less accurate account of it, but scarcely any account at all of several days put together. If you ask anyone what he did that day, the answer would be: "I was present at a coming-of-age ceremony, a betrothal, or a wedding. I was called on to witness a will, to support someone in court or to act as assessor." All this seems important on the actual day, but quite pointless if you consider that you have done the same sort of thing every day, and much more pointless if you think about it when you are out of town. It is then that you realize how many days you have wasted in trivialities. . . .

These "trivialities" were all duties that a responsible Roman had to fulfill, along with choosing a tutor for a friend's children, asking citizenship for his doctor's family, or finding a husband for a dead friend's daughter. No wonder Pliny could hardly wait to get away from Rome, get out of his toga, and settle down to the routine of country life:

I wake when I like, usually about sunrise. . . . My shutters stay closed, for in the stillness and darkness I feel myself surprisingly detached from any distractions and left to myself in freedom, my eyes do not determine the direction of my thinking, but, being unable to see anything, they are guided to visualize my thoughts. If I have anything on hand I work it out in my head, choosing and correcting the wording, and the amount I achieve depends on the ease or difficulty with which my thoughts can be marshalled and kept in my head. Then I call my secretary, the shutters are opened, and I dictate what I have put into shape. . . . Three or four hours after I first wake (but I don't keep to fixed times) I betake myself according to the weather either to the terrace or the covered arcade, work out the rest of my subject, and dictate it. I go for a drive, and spend the time in the same way as when walking or lying down; my powers of concentration do not flag and are in fact refreshed by the change. After a short sleep and another walk I read a Greek or Latin speech aloud and with emphasis, not so much for the sake of my voice as my digestion, though of course both are strengthened by this. Then I have another walk, am oiled, take exercise, and have a bath. If I am dining alone with my wife or with a few friends, a book is read aloud during the meal and afterwards we listen to a comedy or some music; then I walk again with the members of my household, some of whom are well educated. Thus the evening is prolonged with varied conversation, and, even when the days are at their longest, comes to a satisfying end. . . .

Pliny had two villas—one at Laurentum on the shore not far from Rome for winter use, and one in the Tuscan hills for summer—as well as a home on Lake Como, his birthplace. In the heyday of classical studies it was an exercise for architectural students to reconstruct these villas from Pliny's descriptions. But to twentieth-century eyes, these reconstructions seem to have been done under the influence of Palladian monumentality. They are far too grand to fit the gracious premises that Pliny loved.

Still, the villas were not simple residences. The one in Tuscany had at least fifty rooms, formal gardens with hedges clipped in topiary shapes, indoor baths, outdoor swimming pools, a ball court, and a riding course. Strollers in the gardens would find marble seats conveniently placed for rest, with a tiny fountain by each seat. Standing ready to receive Pliny's guests, the villas also had to house scores of slaves and freedmen. The master speaks of his modest bedroom, off in one wing to spare him the noise of the household, "especially at Saturnalia."

Meals were simple. Pliny chides a friend for passing up an invitation to dine with him on "one lettuce each, three snails, two eggs, wheat-cake and wine with honey chilled with snow," and going instead to a house that offered "oysters, sow's innards, sea-urchins and Spanish dancing girls."

Yet Pliny had his own amenities, including a carved reclining seat of white marble, faced by a basin on which food "floats about in vessels shaped like birds or little boats."

Pliny's idea of a pleasant evening is a simple dinner, elegantly served, a brief reading or comic play, and an hour or so of philosophical discussion. Yet he counsels tolerance of other tastes:

To Julius Genitor

You complain about a dinner party, a grand affair which filled you with disgust at the jesters and clowns and the male "dancers" . . . . Please don't be for ever frowning—I have nothing of that kind in my own house, but I can put up with those who do. The reason why I don't have them is that I find nothing novel or amusing to attract me in that sort of "dancer's" charms, in a jester's impudence, or a clown's folly. But you see I am not pleading my principles but my personal taste; and think how many people there are who dislike the entertainments which you and I find fascinating, and think them either pointless or boring. How many take their leave at the entry of a reader, a musician, or an actor, or else lie back in disgust, as you did when you had to endure those monstrosities, as you call them! Let us then be tolerant of other people's pleasures so as to win indulgence for our own.

No one would guess from Pliny's letters that Roman society was filled with the vain, scheming, vicious women who made Juvenal wonder why any man would get married "when there are bridges handy to jump from." It may be

presumed that Pliny did not move in the same circles. The women who appear in his letters are without exception ladies of modesty, virtue, and readiness, in time of crisis, to follow their husbands to exile or death.

Pliny was married three times, but the only wife who appears in his letters is his third, Calpurnia, to whom he shows great devotion. When she was at Laurentum and he at Rome, private couriers brought her news of his court trials, along with letters like this:

To Calpurnia

So I stay awake most of the night thinking of you, and by day I find my feet carrying me (a true word, carrying) to your room at the times I usually visited you; then finding it empty I depart, as sick and sorrowful as a lover locked out. . . .

When Calpurnia's pregnancies end in miscarriage, he takes it stoically, but his letter of condolence to his father-in-law on the loss of a grandson shows what a blow it must have been to Pliny himself. Roman society was based on the handing down from father to son of wealth, power, skills, and status. Lacking sons of his own, Pliny is full of advice to others: "Every man has in his father a model for his own conduct," he counsels a friend. And again: "Remember that he is a boy and you have been a boy yourself, and use your rights as a father without forgetting that you are only human and so is your son."

By the age of fifty, Pliny was the center of an influential literary circle. To be sure, Juvenal, his brilliant, bitter contemporary, never mentions him; but Juvenal had his own circle, and, as Gilbert Highet conjectures, may have been jealous of Pliny's wealth or his ability to get along under Domitian while he himself was banished. (Pliny never mentions Juvenal, either.) Martial, the epigrammatist, was a client of Pliny's, the recipient of favors that he repaid in laudatory verses. Most of all, Pliny treasured the friendship of Tacitus:

To Maximus

Never have I felt such pleasure as I did recently at something Tacitus said. He was describing how at the last Races he had sat next to a Roman knight who engaged him in conversation on several learned subjects and then asked if he came from Italy or the provinces. "You know me," said Tacitus, "from your reading." At which the man said, "Then are you Tacitus or Pliny?" I can't tell you how delighted I am to have our names assigned to literature. . . .

In about 111 Pliny's enjoyment of his pleasant life was interrupted by Trajan, who sent him out to the province of Bithynia in Asia Minor. There, his principal job was to straighten out the tangled financial affairs of the province. But before he could attempt this, one of the first problems he had to deal with was that of the Christians.

Christians were perceived, accurately enough, as enemies of the state. When they refused to worship the emperor's image, they were committing a capital offense; and Pliny, as a pillar of the established order, did not question that that was what it should be. His most famous letter reported his policy in this regard:

To the Emperor Trajan

I have asked them in person if they are Christians, and if they admit it, I repeat the question a second and third time, with a warning of the punishment awaiting them. If they persist, I order them to be led away for execution, . . . I considered that I should dismiss any who denied that they were or ever had been Christians when they had repeated after me a formula of invocation to the gods and had made offerings of wine and incense to your statue . . . and furthermore had reviled the name of Christ; none of which things, I understand, any genuine Christian can be induced to do.

It may be that Pliny felt some grudging admiration for the Christians. At any rate, he scotched some of the more outrageous charges, satisfying himself that in the Eucharist they "took food of an ordinary and harmless kind" (not human flesh and blood, as was sometimes alleged). With Trajan's backing Pliny also dismissed all anonymous accusations against Christians. ("Quite out of keeping with the spirit of our age," the emperor advised.)

With financial and administrative problems Pliny felt more at ease:

Pliny to Trajan

The citizens of Nicomedia, Sir, have spent 3,318,000 sesterces on an aqueduct which they abandoned before it was finished and finally demolished. Then they made a grant of 200,000 sesterces towards another one, but this too was abandoned, so that even after squandering such enormous sums they must still spend more money if they are to have a water supply.

I have been myself to look at the spring, which could supply pure water to be brought along an aqueduct, as originally intended, if the supply is not to be confined to the lower-lying parts of the town. There are very few arches still standing, but others could be built out of the blocks of stone taken from the earlier construction, and I think some ought to be made of brick, which would be easier and cheaper.

But the first essential is for you to send out a water-engineer or an architect to prevent a third failure. I will add only that the finished work will . . . be well worthy of your reign.

Trajan to Pliny

Steps must be taken to provide Nicomedia with a water supply, and I am sure you will apply yourself to the task in the right way. But for goodness' sake apply yourself no less to finding out whose fault it is that Nicomedia has wasted so much money up to date. It may be that people have profited by this starting and abandoning of aqueducts. . . .

There are sixty such letters from Pliny to Trajan and almost as many replies. They reveal Pliny as a thoughtful and conscientious, if not entirely self-reliant, public servant; Trajan as an able administrator. At times the emperor shows impatience when asked for advice ("As for the bath at Claudiopolis, which you say has been started in an unsuitable site, you must decide yourself what advice to give") but he never loses his temper.

Pliny's last letter begs Trajan's forgiveness for using the imperial courier service to convey his wife back to Rome on urgent family business. It would seem that he died at his post, in the corrupt, bothersome little province, still fussing over the most graceful way to phrase each letter, still wishing he were back at one of his beloved villas.

RICHARDS MEDICAL RESEARCH BUILDING, PHILADELPHIA. PHOTOGRAPH BY YUKIO FUTAGAWA © RETORIA

"Brick is Stingy, Concrete is Generous"

So said Louis Kahn, the poet-philosopher of American architects



HANS NAMUTH

Kahn, above, peers across his drawing board. His Richards Laboratories, opposite, derived from his feeling for medieval hill towns and announced his idea of "servant" and "served" areas. The soaring towers serve the people in the glass-walled laboratories at left.

He was not, at first glimpse, an impressive person. If one expects an architect to resemble his own structures, then Louis Kahn would certainly have been taller, thicker, and more athletic-looking than he was. One did not expect the white-thatched corncrake with that hoarse, shrill voice and those shrewd, kindly eyes—nor did one expect the master of pure form to nest on a litter of old Beaux-Arts tomes and black crayon sketches in a small office above Walnut Street, Philadelphia. His office was more like a loft or a studio than the forbidding corporate hives in which the celebrated architectural firms, like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, conduct their weighty affairs. One could not imagine the president of a conglomerate feeling at home here. It was too messy, a ramshackle sequence of spaces cobbled together from unfinished sheet rock and raw two-by-four studs, old filing cabinets, cubbyholes, and trestles. It was of a piece with the rumpled, ready-made suits that hung, distended by wads of notepaper, from Kahn's birdlike frame. Apart from his throat and chin—a pleated embroidery of ancient scar tissue left from a childhood burn—Kahn was not in the least conspicuous. So on the night of March 17, 1974, after he was found dead on the floor of Pennsylvania Station in New York, his corpse was shunted down to the city morgue and remained there unclaimed for three days; only after his wife, Esther, made frantic calls to the New York police did the news finally surface that the body belonged to the man who had been widely regarded as the world's foremost living architect.

"L'architecture," wrote Le Corbusier, *"c'est le jeu—savant, correct et magnifique—des formes sous la lumière"*: architecture is the skillful, correct, and magnificent play of forms under light. No modern American architect has fulfilled the demands that lie half-hidden in that aphorism more completely than Louis Kahn. Construction that has any other purpose, Le Corbusier was implying, is just building. The architect is a mediator. He mediates between substance and the light that manifests it. The building must proclaim substance at its fullest density: solid, articulate, incontrovertible—*monumental,* to invoke that much-abused word whose meaning Kahn did so much to restore. That is but half of the equation. The other half is light, that fugitive, unpredictable energy by which space and surface become apparent. To open up the box, to pierce it and slice it, to release inside it a shifting pattern of gloom and illumination that will keep the eye (and the mind's sense of scale) busy from dawn to dusk: such is the traditional enterprise of architecture.

Now, Kahn was by instinct a monumentalist. But there is irony in the fact that some of the best buildings of his career, such as the Phillips Exeter Academy Library in New Hampshire and the Kimbell Museum in Forth Worth, were both completed in 1972, just as a strong

By ROBERT HUGHES



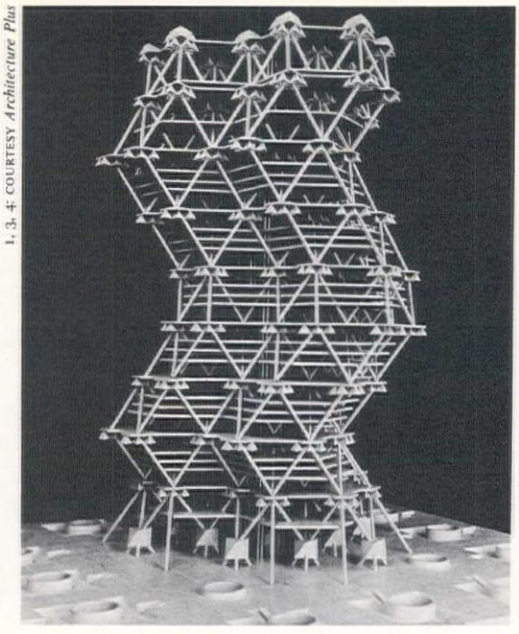
1. Sketch, Florence, 1929

JOHN EBSTEL

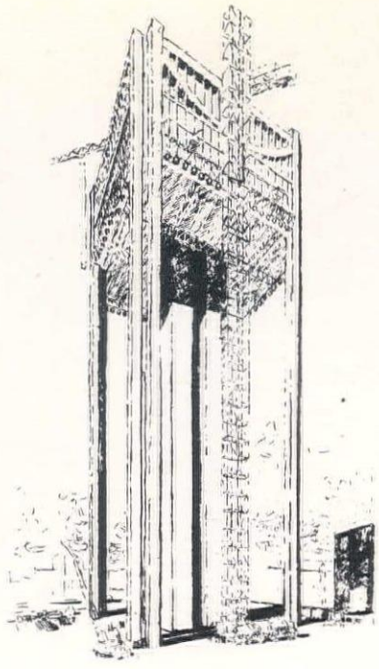


2. Trenton bathhouse, 1956

1, 3, 4: COURTESY *Architecture Plus*



3. Project: a city tower, 1957



4. Project: Kansas City tower, 1965

antimonumentalist sentiment crested. This new sentiment had many spokesmen, at odds with one another but united in their rejection of sleek and massive urban buildings. Some critics attacked monumentalists for ignoring the problems of housing the poor. Others proposed the idea of an architecture without architects, tribally or communally evolved, free from the authoritarian hand of the architect as master-planner. Another kind of antimonumentalism was propounded by Robert Venturi and his disciples: a pop architecture, "ugly and ordinary," derived from American commercial vernacular—Levittown, strip building, the exuberant and tinny vulgarity of Las Vegas.

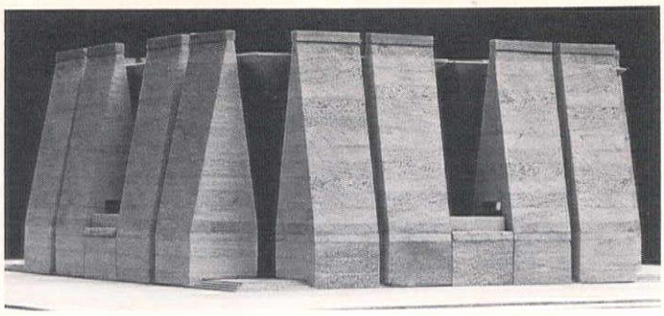
The monuments that all these critics opposed were products of the International Style, that glass-box idiom inherited from the Bauhaus and, by the sixties, in a pathetic decline. Kahn, too, was searching for an alternative to so-called "serious" monumental architecture in America, but he went back, beyond the origins of "modernist" architecture, to the ritually despised tradition in which he had been brought up—Beaux-Arts design. His achievement was to reinstate the Beaux-Arts philosophy—minus the caryatids, the scrolls, and volutes, of course—as a creative proposition. What Kahn made of the Beaux-Arts tradition now seems to constitute one of the most brilliant of all contemporary meditations on the history of design.

The opposition between the Beaux-Arts mode, which was the basic academic form of the nineteenth century, and the International Style, which would become the same thing for the twentieth, is central to Kahn's work. When you confront an International Style building—whether a work by the Bauhaus's founding fathers, Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, or one of the innumerable versions of their basic glass box that have so irrevocably determined the look of the American cityscape in the last forty years—you are aware, first, of skin: the glass curtain wall, hung from the floors. The wall carries no load. Its divisions are unobtrusive: slender mullions, thin metal transoms. It is a two-dimensional web, and the interior structure is veiled by its glitter and reflections. The steel columns carry all the weight, so the floors don't need stationary supporting walls and the space can be partitioned at will.

It was once a startlingly economical way of making large buildings. Today it is not, because enormous amounts of energy are needed to heat and cool the people behind the glass epidermis. And it lacks soul: the neutrality of International Style space, a blandness written into its very flexibility, needs immense fastidiousness in proportioning and detailing to overcome the boredom. Unfortunately, the grave and hermetic elegance that Mies designed into the Seagram Building on Park Avenue, or Philip Johnson into the Museum of Modern Art in New York, is rare. "Form follows function" is the catchword of rationalist design. When function, however, is diffused or homogenized (and in decay the International Style became the visible emblem of the corporate notion that even employees are interchangeable parts), reason sleeps and monsters are born—usually in the shape of the new McGraw-Hill building in New York.

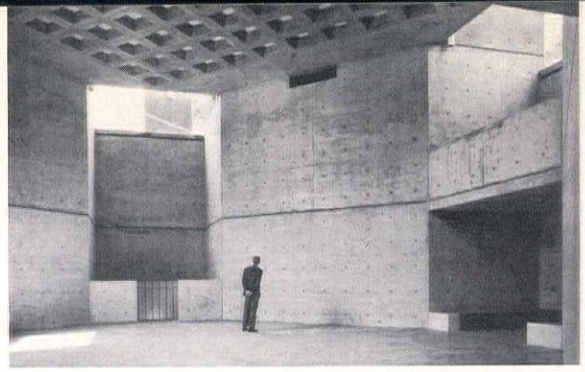
Kahn liked to correct the form-and-function cliché. "Form," he insisted, "*evokes* function." There is no strictly functional difference between the Spanish Steps in Rome, the flight of steps that leads to the top of a Mayan pyramid, and the staircase of the Paris Opera. All are stairways, but the sensation of using them is, in each case, radically different. For Kahn, expression was a legitimate "function" of architecture, and one that helped determine use. "I don't believe in constructing a large space and then making partitioned areas within it and calling them rooms. A room should be an extension of self. In a large commercial auditorium I'd speak one way, but if I gave a talk in the Baptistery in Florence I think I would say something I'd never said before."

Kahn's aesthetic of very specific

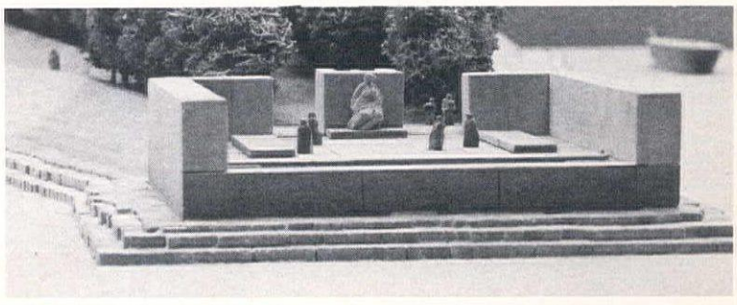


GEORGE POHL; RIGHT: JOHN EBSTEL

5. Project: Hurva Synagogue, Jerusalem, 1965



6. Bryn Mawr dormitory interior, 1965



GEORGE POHL

7. Model for Roosevelt memorial, accepted 1974

A KAHN SAMPLER: While "learning about order" on an early trip to Europe, Kahn sketched the Duomo and Campanile of Florence (1). Yet it took another thirty years before he could say: "I discovered myself after designing that little concrete bathhouse in Trenton" (2). His large-scale office towers (3, 4) were never constructed, nor was the synagogue he planned for a war-ravaged Jerusalem (5). But his dormitory for Bryn Mawr College (6) now houses students, and one of his last designs, a memorial to Franklin D. Roosevelt (7), will be built in New York.

spaces, each expressive of its own qualities, derived from what would have seemed, to any young architect of advanced views practicing in the 1920's, a dangerously *retardataire* and discredited system—the academic Beaux-Arts theory of design, as it had come down from such nineteenth-century exponents as Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, who led the Gothic Revival in France and restored the medieval town of Carcassonne. Beaux-Arts style, as art historian Vincent Scully put it, was "a masonry architecture of palpable mass and weight wherein clearly defined and ordered spaces were to be formed and characterized by the structural solids themselves." The Beaux-Arts wall was not a light skin: it was the thick extended skeleton of the building. This perception does not, in itself, sound remarkable. But it was to have radical consequences.

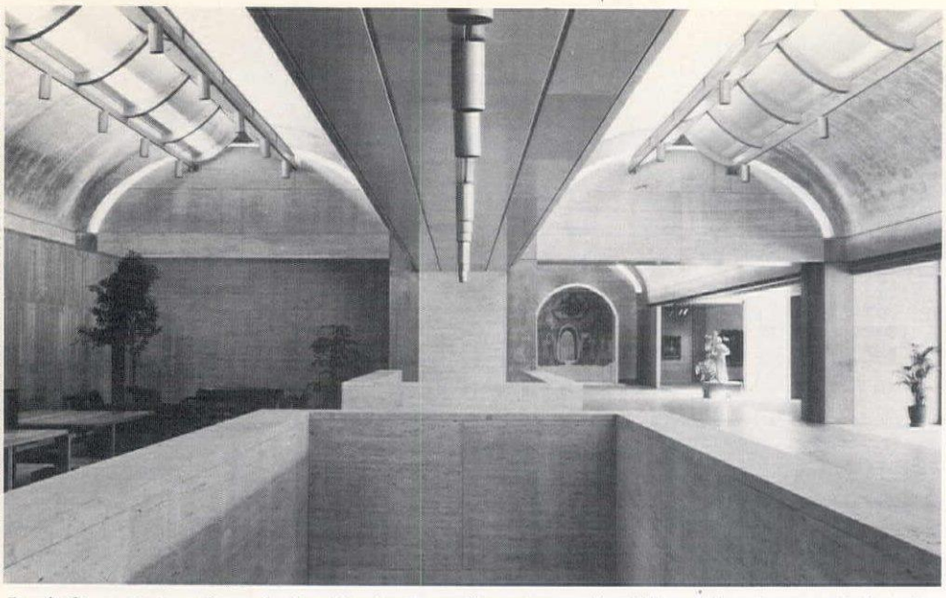
Kahn, in fact, was by training a product of Beaux-Arts discipline. In 1905, at the age of four, he had come to America from the Estonian island of Osel off the Russian coast. Decanted into Philadelphia, the family lived in deep poverty for years, and Kahn grew up an urban creature. Armed with a plethora of scholarships, he entered the Architecture School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1920 and studied under a solidly Beaux-Arts teacher, the architect Paul Cret, who designed—among other curiosities of neoclassical revival architecture—the ponderous Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

He did not, apparently, become aware of the modern movement until 1928, when he first read some of Le Corbusier's essays. But in that same year Kahn made his first trip to Europe, where his enthusiasm for Le Corbusier's ideas was tempered by his interest in great buildings from the past. What particularly impressed him was "primitive" architecture: the squat, dark, declarative columns of the temples at Paestum, their plain Doric order filled with irresistible mass; and the early Romanesque architecture of Siena and San Gimignano.

His European trip gave Kahn motifs that would recur in his designs for years. The massive brick stair towers and service stacks that cluster around the main block of Kahn's Richards Medical Research Building at the University of Pennsylvania (1957–1961) ultimately refer back to the square, brick lookout towers, which, in the thirteenth century, rival nobles in San Gimignano competed with one another to build, turning their Tuscan hill town into a medieval prophecy of New York. The intricately cut spaces and curving orange walls of Kahn's Institute of Management in Ahmadabad look backward, with the kind of homage that only originality can pay tradition, to the vaults, crooks, and arches made by the Sienese bricklayers.

One could multiply such instances, but not usefully unless one grasps an equally important aspect of Kahn's thinking. Kahn's sense of tradition was, so to speak, metaphysical and beyond style. Unlike other Beaux-Arts architects, he was not interested in copying historical styles. Nor was he primarily concerned with inventing a "look" of his own, a recognizable trademark. Rather, he was obsessed by materials. In them lay the germs of discipline from which a mature architecture, in all its ramifying parts, could evolve: consciousness of material was, in Kahn's eye, the genetic code of form. The Beaux-Arts background had freed him because, he insisted, it had suggested an organization of substance below the threshold of visual style. "I learned about order, order itself. That the brick wanted to be brick and nothing else, the stone stone, the concrete concrete. I just learned it all so thoroughly, the orders and the elements. And from there I learned that a stair isn't just something you get out of a catalog, but a very important event in a building. I never forgot such principles. From this I sensed the eternal qualities of architecture. In the beginning lies eternity." Once the raw stuff of stone, brick, and concrete was understood, architecture—real architecture, arrayed in a kind of encyclopedic density of experience—had to follow.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: MARSHALL D. MEYERS; PLAN: COURTESY *Architecture Plus*



Daylight, entering through the slits in the ceiling, is evenly diffused by the rounded vaults.

Kimbell Art Museum

Kahn wanted his buildings to be "read" and their methods of construction fully understood. In the Kimbell Art Museum at Fort Worth, Texas, the open portico exposes his basic design unit—a hundred-foot-long cycloid vault, set upon four piers (far right). Any number of these units can be brought together, and Kahn used sixteen here. To Director Richard Brown, Kahn's structure offers "what every museum man has been looking for . . . a floor uninterrupted by piers, columns or windows, and perfect lighting, giving total freedom and flexibility to . . . install art exactly the way you want."

But Kahn's architecture is derived not only from a respect for materials. Another key principle is the concept of "served" and "servant" spaces. International Style architects concealed the structural members, the support system, the plumbing, the air conditioning; Kahn constructed buildings so that everything could be easily "read." The Richards Medical Research Building, for example, houses laboratories (the "served" spaces) between seven-story towers that contain stairwells, elevators, and ventilating systems (the "servant" spaces). In some buildings electrical conduits and plumbing pipes have been left clearly visible—indeed, they function as decorative elements. Architect and critic Peter Blake once said of Kahn: "He's the only man I know with the genius to make poetry and new forms from air-conditioners and toilets."

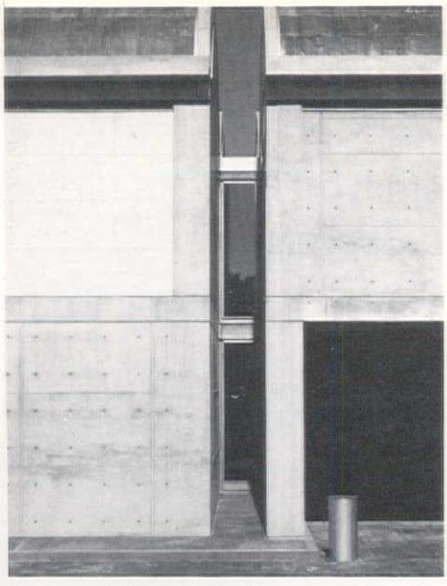
Kahn did not have the opportunity to put up an "important" building until 1951. He was fifty years old. That first commission, the Yale Art Gallery extension, was completed in 1953 and still reflected the International Style in its undefined interior spaces; three years later, when he built a bathhouse in Trenton, New Jersey, Kahn had already devised his servant-served strategy—the "servants" in this case, the twelve columns that supported the roofs, containing chlorination equipment and dressing rooms. By 1965, when he was designing what he regarded as his masterpiece in America—the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California—he had perfected a way of sandwiching layers of complex equipment between the "served" floors of laboratories.

Kahn had spent so much time reflecting during his years of complete obscurity that, when an audience of professionals began to surround him, his precepts tended to come forth in a manner that inexorably suggests Saint Francis apotheosizing Brother Brick and Sister Stone. The students at the University of Pennsylvania, where Kahn taught for the last sixteen years of his life, loved that; he embodied not only the air and presence of a guru, but the diction too, especially when (as happened now and then) his discourses were written as *vers libre:*

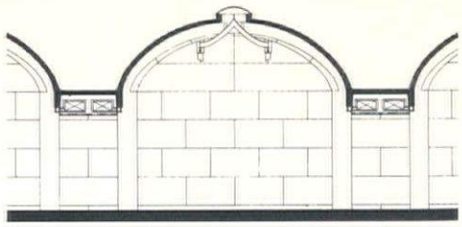
> The wall did well for man.
> In its thickness and strength
> it protected him against destruction.
> But soon, the will to look out
> made man make a hole in the wall,
> and the wall was very pained, and said,
> "What are you doing to me?
> I protected you, I made you feel secure,
> and now you put a hole through me!"
> And man said, "But I will look out!
> I see wonderful things,
> and I want to look out."

It would be a mistake to dismiss such passages as an acute rash of the pathetic fallacy. Kahn was obsessed with the question of origins. How did architecture begin? His first subject was the primal drama of materials. "The brick was always talking to me," he told the architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, while explaining the design of the Exeter Library, "saying: 'You're missing an opportunity.' The weight of the brick makes [the wall] dance like a fairy above and groan below. Arcades crouch. But where brick is stingy, concrete is tremendously generous. The brick is held by the concrete restraining members. Brick likes this so much, because it becomes modern." Kahn believed that the architect who understood his materials could transcend historical style; any masterpiece of the past, from the Parthenon to the Baths of Caracalla (the Baths are the remote origin of Kahn's sweeping brick arcades at the Dacca National Hospital) to Brunelleschi's dome in Florence, could enter the modern vocabulary, without the sharp tang of eclecticism. The sight of Kahn chewing over the blockish, embrasured plan of the ancient Comlongan Castle in Dumfriesshire in order to arrive at a design for the Bryn Mawr College dormitories (completed in 1965) seems curiously akin to Cézanne's project, to "do Poussin again from Nature."

It may be that our century has not produced a master of materials to rival Kahn. He had his limits, and acknowledged them; steel was one. "Concrete



Narrow windows join (and separate) two vaults.



Inverted V reflectors bounce light to the walls.



The portico at the right is a skeleton of the repeated vaults, revealing arch and piers of concrete.

columns are better, they're real columns! Of course, steel is a marvelous material, you can do wonderful things with it, build great machines, but in architecture you're not building airplanes after all, are you?" In emphasizing—or, as he would have said, releasing—the plain and unconcealed nature of materials, Kahn endowed his buildings with primal authority. As Vincent Scully brilliantly remarked: "In that sense Kahn . . . was constructing a landscape, 'ageless and unwearied,' physically expressive of Law." But also of force. The ceiling in the Yale Art Gallery and Design Center—with its interlocking concrete tetrahedrons mottled like an elephant's hide—is so impressive it could test any work of art set beneath it and reduce the minor ones to insignificance.

His chief material, however, was light. ("I believe light is the maker of all material," he said aphoristically. "Material is spent light.") It was impossible for Kahn to believe in the reality of any space unless it received natural daylight; no room could "be" without it. "The plan of a building should read like a harmony of spaces created in light," he stated in 1960. "Even a space intended to be dark should have just enough light from some mysterious opening to tell us how dark it really is. Each space must be defined by its structures and the character of its natural light." Obviously this proposition need not apply to designing broom closets; nevertheless, he went on:

> It cannot be a space when carved out of a greater structure meant for a greater space, because the choice of a structure is synonymous with light. . . . Artificial light is a single tiny static moment . . . and can never equal the nuances of mood created by the time of day and the wonder of the seasons.

The triumph of this conviction came in 1972, in Kahn's best-known (because most publicized) building: the Kimbell Art Museum.

Museums have become the new ecclesiastical architecture in the United States. The similarity between museum and temple (awed hush, supplication of the ancestors and tutelary gods, reverent demeanor, descent of grace) has taken a beating of late, but, until the last museum becomes a drive-in filled with art-historical Muzak, it will linger. One basic request an instructed museum audience is entitled to make of its temple is that contemplation should be possible in it. Another is that the architecture should not smother its contents.

Kahn's design for the Kimbell Museum granted both at once, and with supreme grace. Its basic form is a group of barrel vaults, but they are not barrels; they are concrete cycloids, or extended curves, and the top of each vault is opened by a long slit. Light—the harsh, powdery light of East Texas—pours in through this slit and is washed down the polished concrete surface of the cycloids by an aluminum diffuser. Muted by reflection, softened by the texture of the concrete, and changing all the time, the light endows Kahn's simple space with subtle vitality. The space passes the vitality along to the paintings.

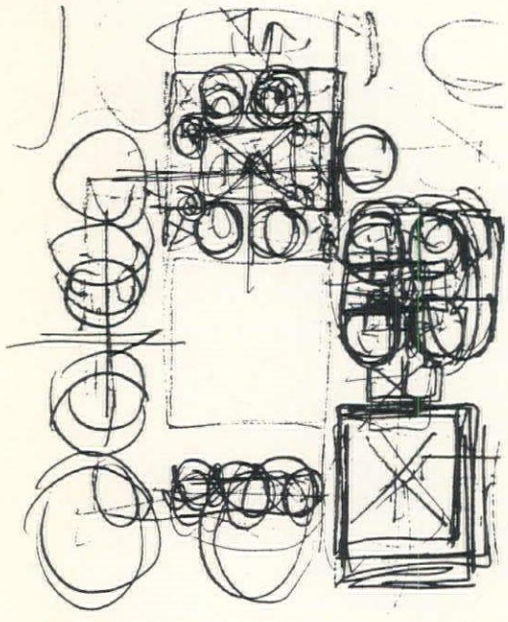
In the projects at Dacca and Ahmadabad, Kahn used light in a very different fashion. In order to extract the last iota of sculptural intensity from the arcs and silos, shallow Roman arches, and open colonnades, he banished glass from the outside walls of his buildings. There is no reflection. The sun travels over the geometries of plain local brick, leaving voids that are as flat and as black and as final as the voids in a Chinese ink rendering.

Bulge and hole, presence and absence, binary form instructed by monumentality: small though the canon of Louis Kahn's work is, it has rendered a fundamental seriousness back to American architecture, one that will survive his death. Kahn once said, "The creation of art is not the fulfillment of a need but the creation of a need. The world never needed Beethoven's Fifth Symphony until he created it. Now we could not live without it." Nor could the world now live without Kahn's exemplary art.

Robert Hughes, an Australian pithy cuss, writes art critiques for Time. *He writes for us on art and matters multifarious.*

YUKIO FUTAGAWA © RETORIA; BELOW: COURTESY *Architecture Plus*

A double stairway leads from sculptured chairs and a waterfall to a court bordered by private studies whose windows face the Pacific Ocean.

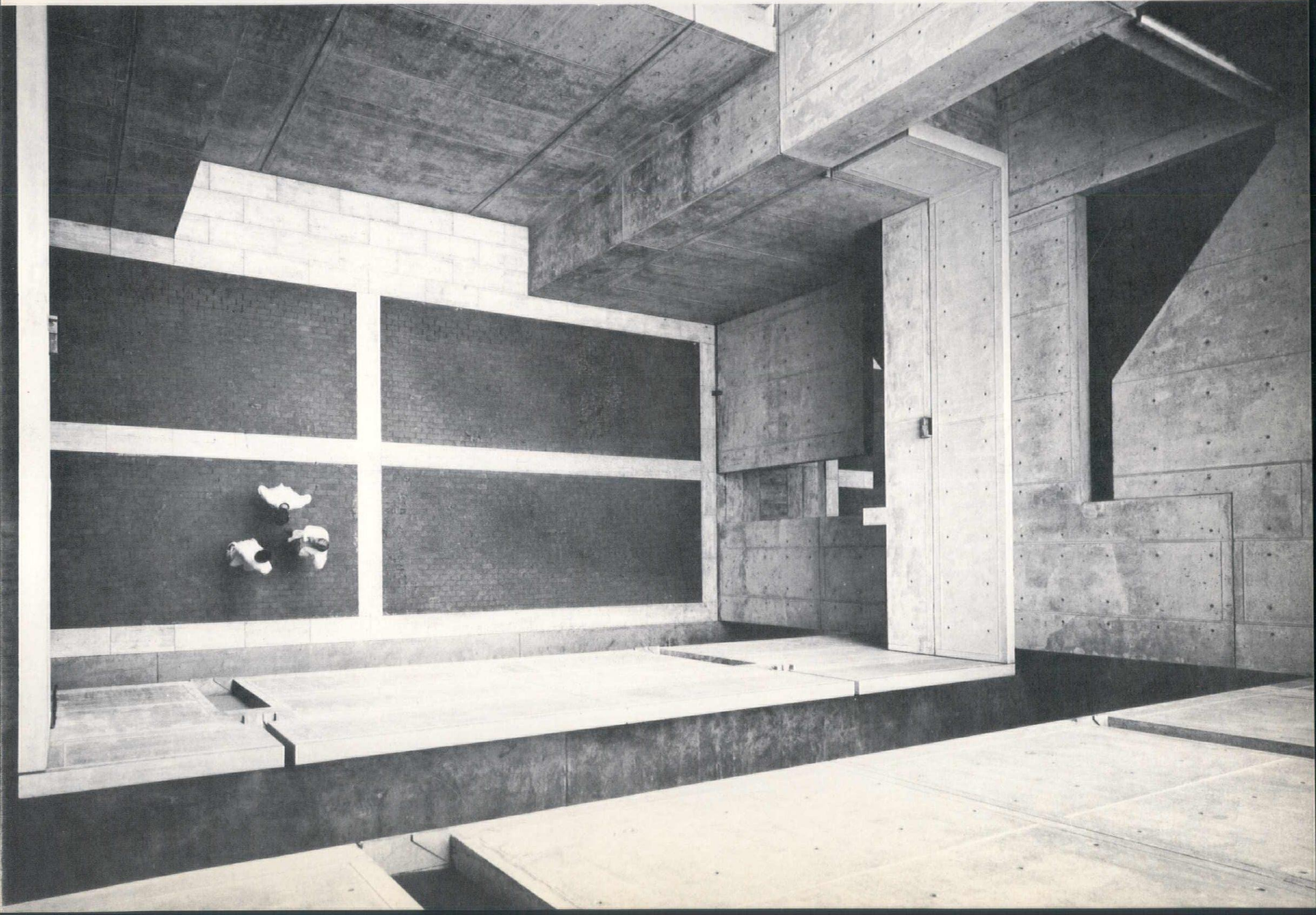


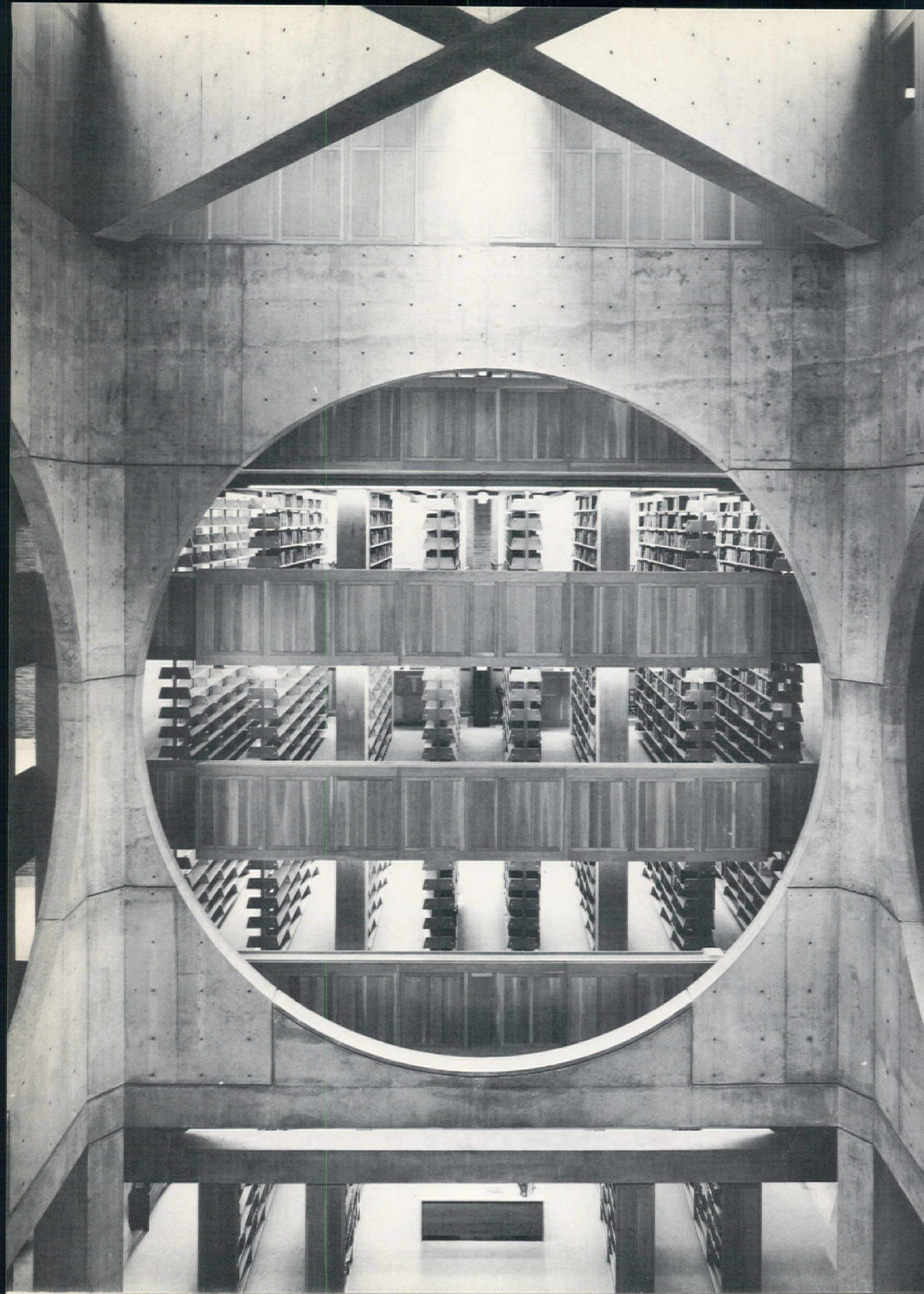
Kahn's sketch for a meeting house, never built.

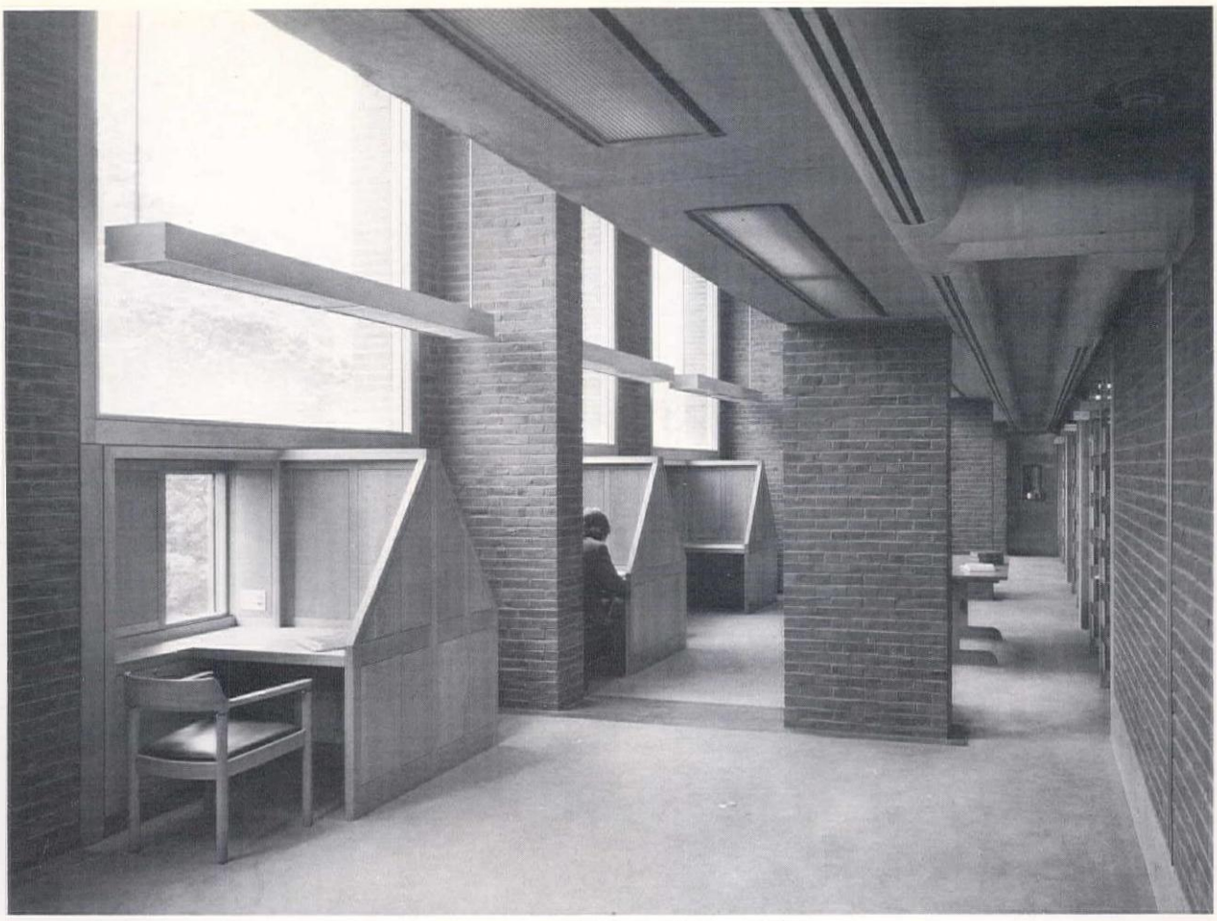
Salk Institute

The world-famous microbiologist Jonas Salk told Kahn, "I would like to invite Picasso to the laboratory," and Kahn responded by creating one of his masterworks, the Salk Institute for Biological Studies at La Jolla, California. This twenty-seven million dollar complex takes the form of two mirror-image rectangular blocks that face each other across a court, above. Their façades are angled so that the windows of private studies look out on the nearby Pacific. Behind these retreats, out of sight, open passageways lead to the laboratories. Between the three floors of laboratories are sandwiched "servant" spaces for pipes, ducts, cables, and other necessary equipment; another "servant" unit yokes the buildings together below ground. The prohibitive cost of research technology has, however, restricted laboratory work to a single wing, at left above, leaving its twin a shell that is used for other purposes. Lack of funds also ruled out Kahn's plans for a meeting house (sketch at left) and for housing for research fellows. Nonetheless, Kahn succeeded brilliantly in designing a research institute with "a sense of 'beyond the need.'" Its powerful geometry is enhanced by rough concrete surfaces, opposite, that still bear the marks of their wooden molds. In Salk, Kahn found the ideal client: "one who knows not what he wants, but what he aspires to."

Scientists chat in a sunken cou





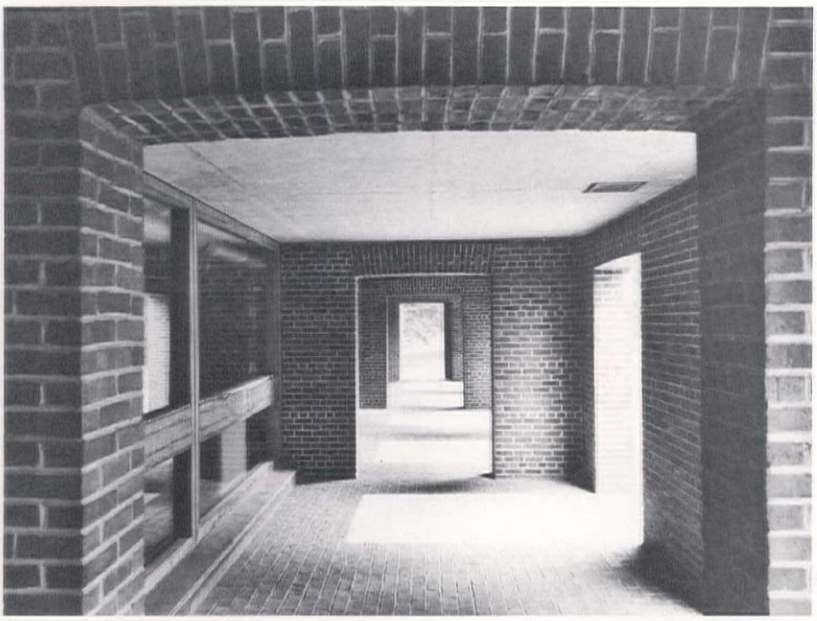


JOHN EBSTEL

Study carrels, reminiscent of a medieval monastery, are flooded with natural light—but are also close to the open stacks.

Exeter Library

Kahn made a mystery of the entrance to the library of Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire by setting it unobtrusively within the ground floor arcade, below. Just inside the building, the elegant staircase (overleaf) leads to the main floor, from which an interior shaft rises to mighty crossbeams, opposite. Pierced by huge, round openings, the shaft defines a superb space that invites the performance of plays and music. Behind these openings are the stacks, lounges, seminar rooms, and offices, as well as the study carrels, above, whose zones of privacy replace the traditional open reading rooms. Exposed in the ceilings, above, are sleek air ducts, suggestive of sculpture. With its open stacks and quiet nooks, the Exeter Library communicates what its architect called "the invitation of books."



JOSEPH MOLITOR

This brick-faced ground floor arcade provides a way into or around the library.

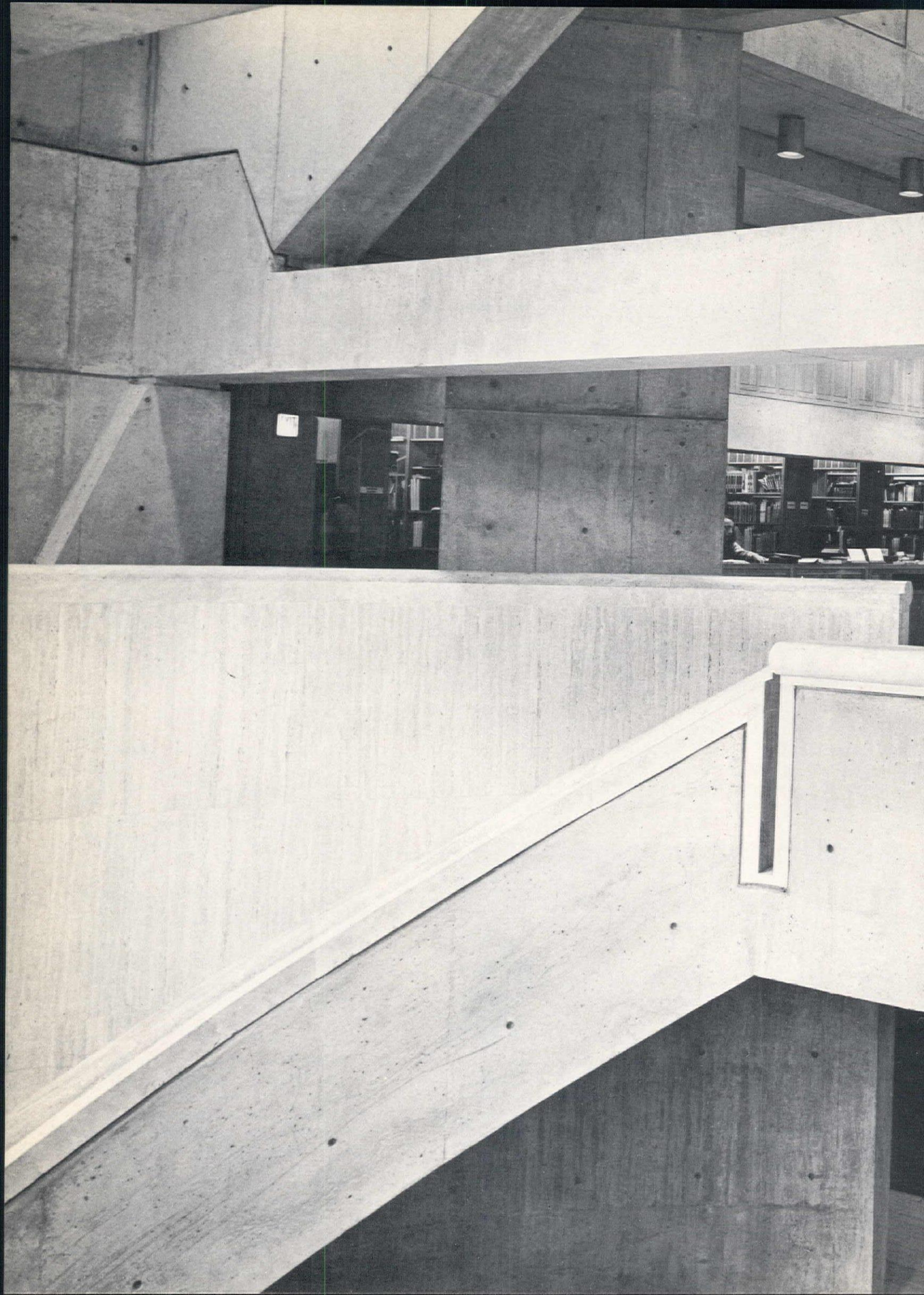
Library stacks behind the pierced inner shaft.

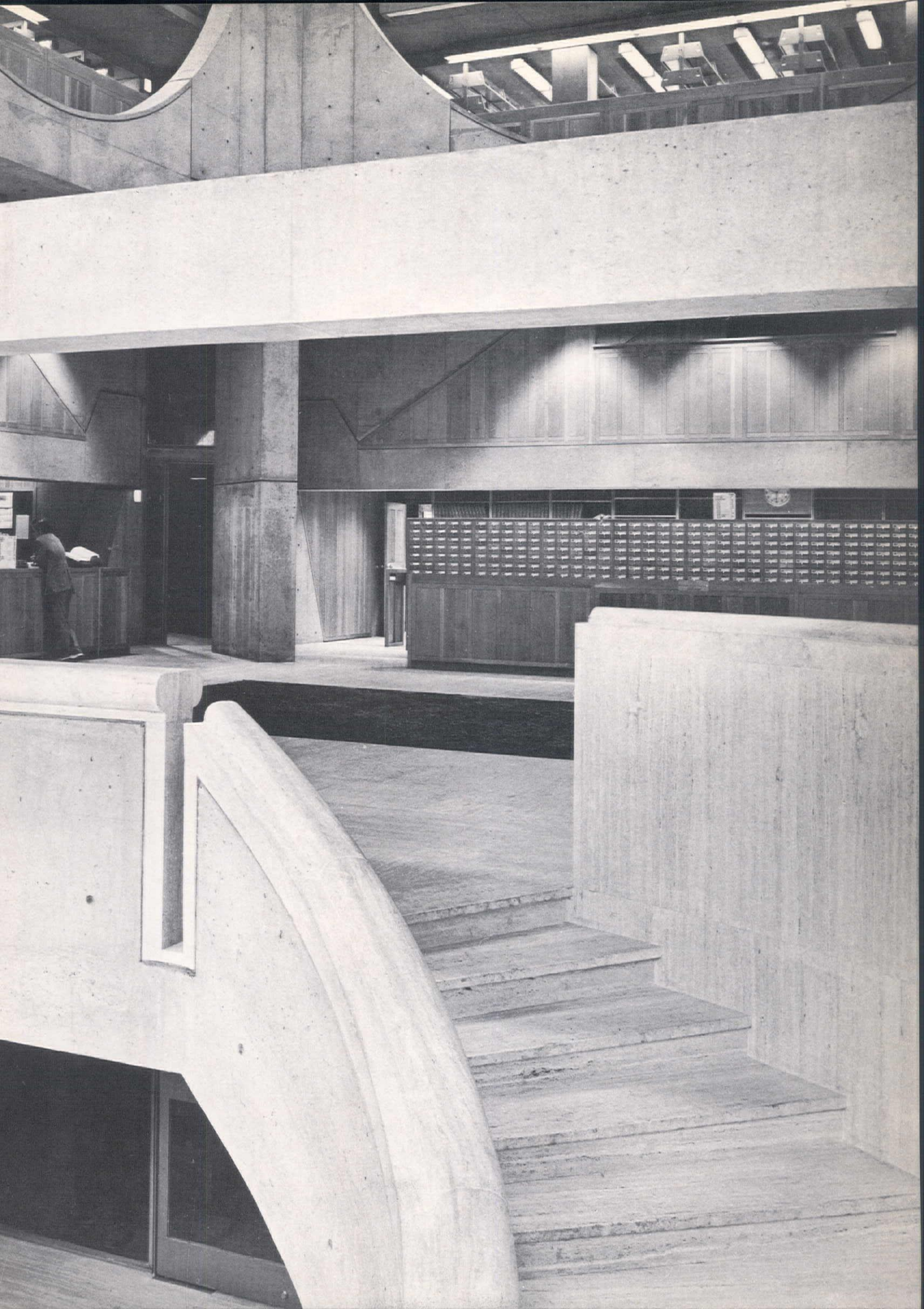


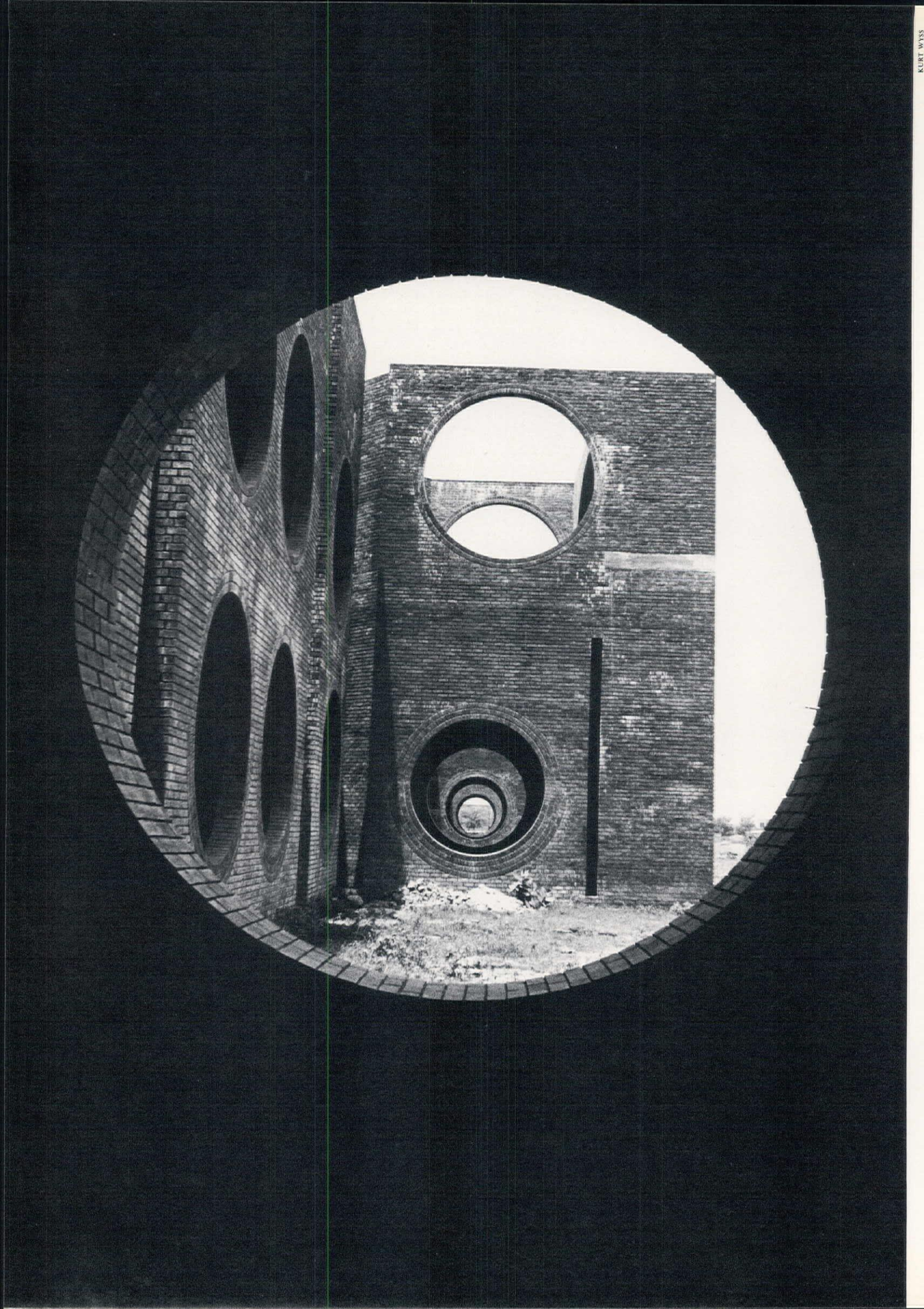
JOSEPH MOLITOR; OVERLEAF: JOHN EBSTEL

Blunted corners punctuate the library's exterior.

OVERLEAF: "A stair isn't just something you get out of a catalog, but a very important event in a building," said Kahn. Here the graceful curve of the double stairway is outlined by travertine handrails. The powerful horizontal beam of concrete serves to tie together the interior shaft.

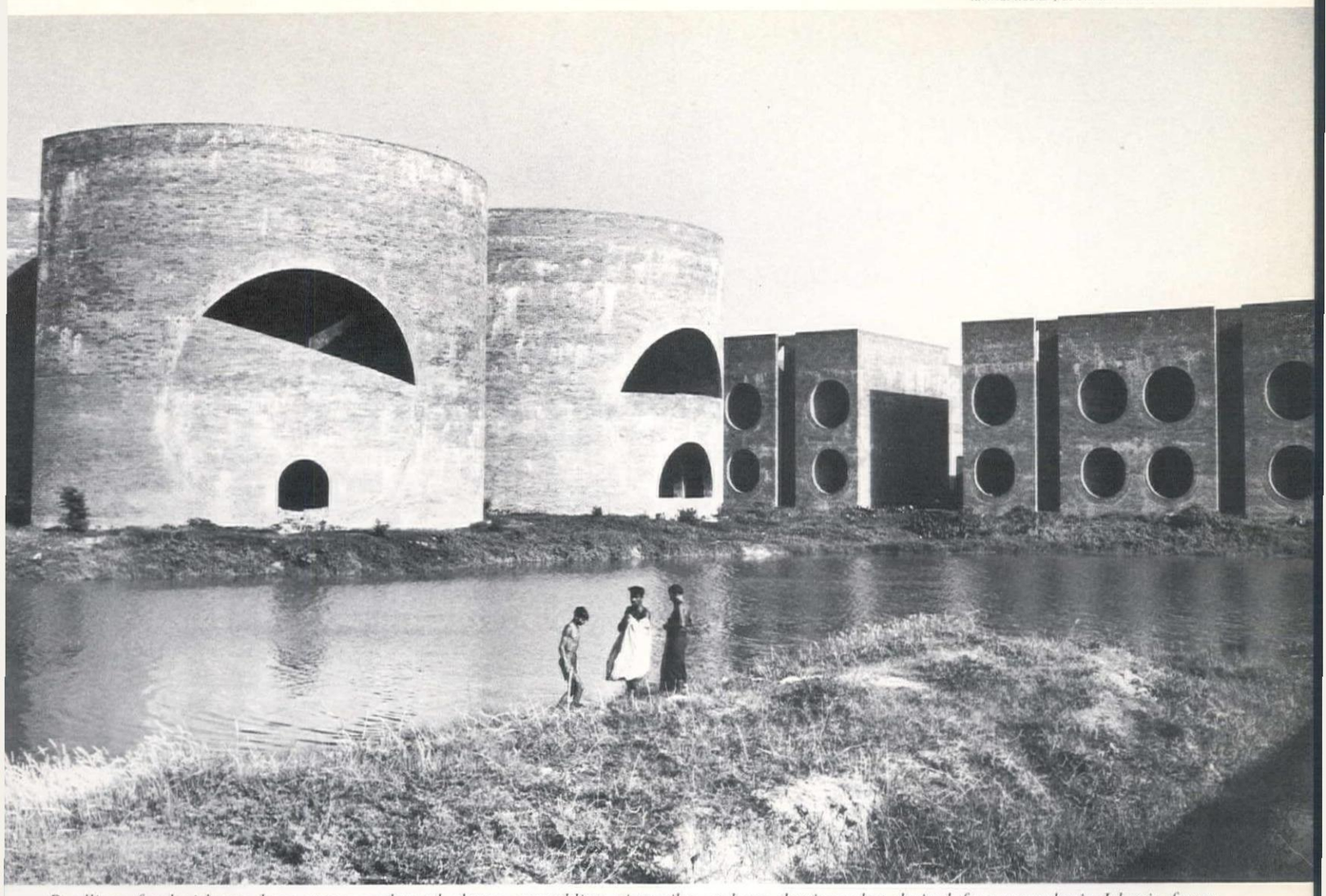






KURT WYSS

ANWAR HOSAIN, COURTESY *Architecture Plus*



Dwellings for legislators have strong sculptural shapes resembling giant silos or large dominoes but derived from some basic Islamic forms.

Dacca, Bangladesh

Two of Kahn's major commissions came from the Indian subcontinent, where his poetic philosophy and powerful visions evoked a strong response. In India, at Ahmadabad, he built the vast Institute of Management, and in Pakistan, at Dacca, he designed a massive administrative center for what is now the capital of independent Bangladesh. Plans for the Dacca complex evolved slowly while Kahn worked through at least six preliminary concepts. His willingness to agonize over solutions was a source of strength, but it also caused delays and cost him many commissions, leaving him, at his death, hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt to employees and engineers. At Dacca, Kahn built the Citadel of the National Assembly (right) with its mosque and its residences. There, too, he grappled as nowhere else with problems of light in a tropical climate, arriving at solutions that grew out of his claim that "the sun never knew how great it was until it struck the side of a building."

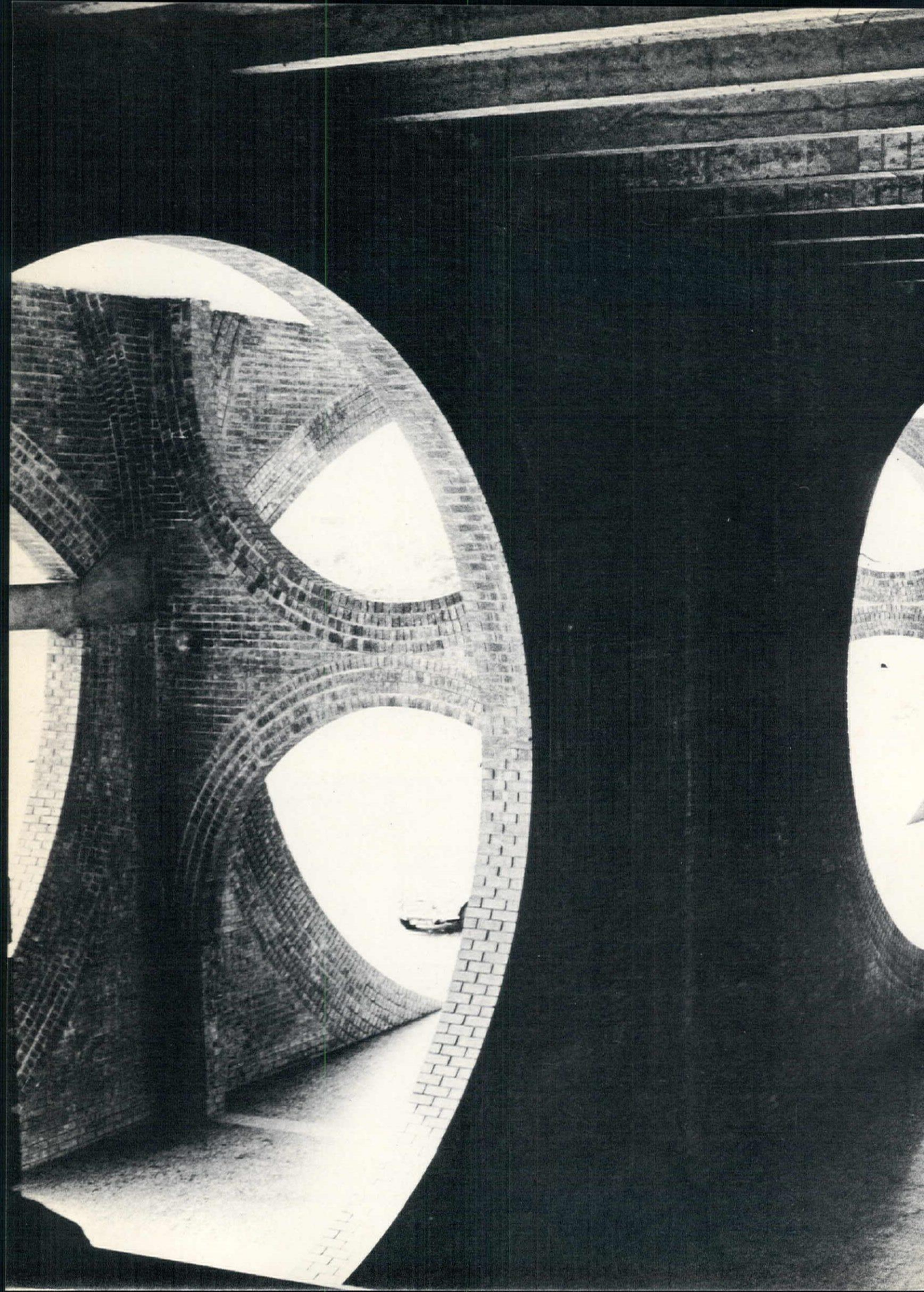


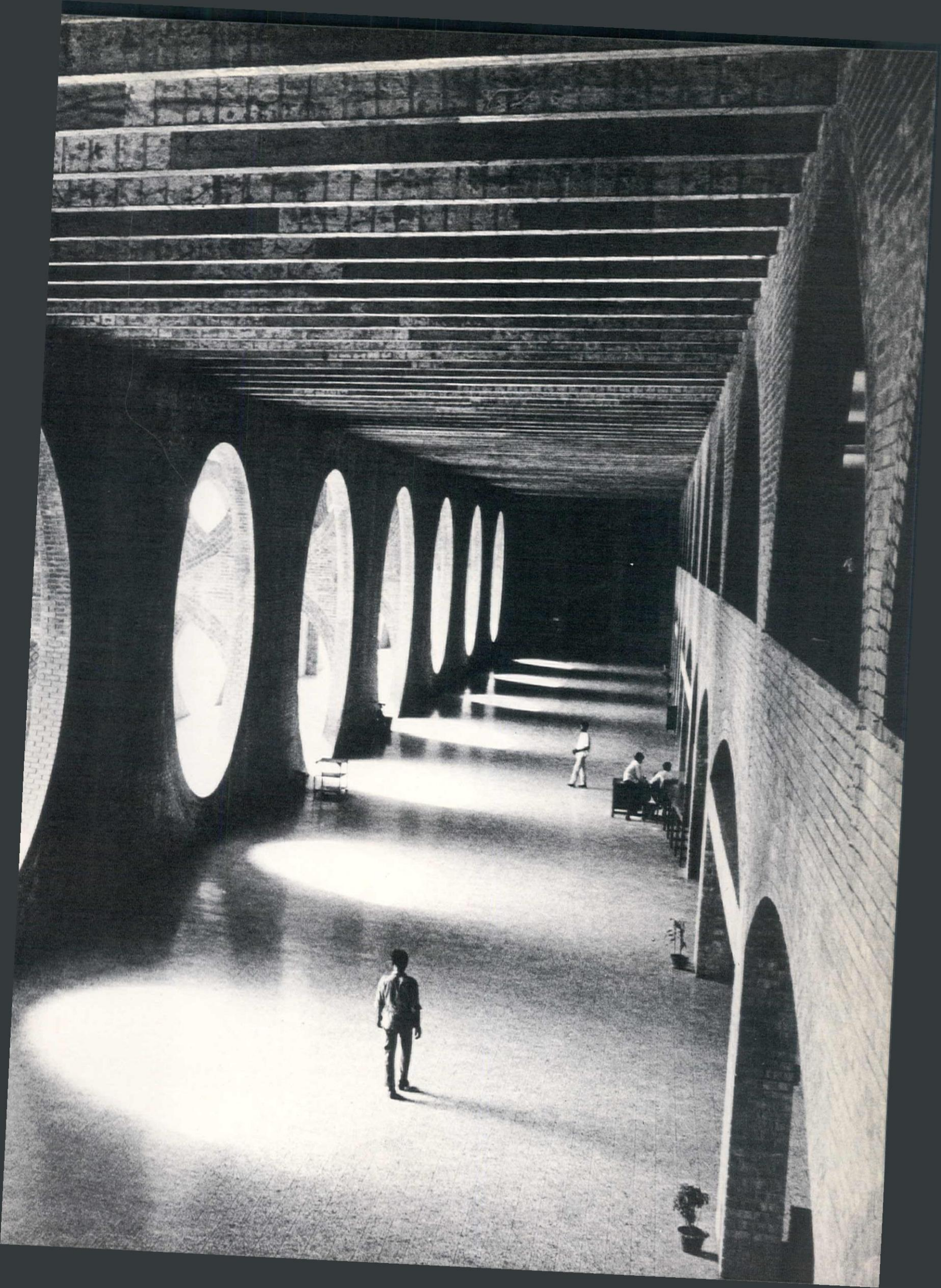
ANWAR HOSAIN, COURTESY *Architecture Plus*; OVERLEAF: SAME

Residences radiate out from the National Assembly complex in Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh.

OVERLEAF: At the outpatient clinic of the National Hospital at Dacca, Kahn created multiple brick ambulatories that provide shelter and shade for families who come to wait with their sick.

Bold geometry characterizes housing for officials.





Who Was Peter Abelard?

An impudent nuisance to his contemporaries, a romantic figment later, and perhaps our first free man

In the year 1117 a thirty-eight-year-old logician named Peter Abelard seduced with no difficulty whatever an ardent teen-aged girl named Héloïse, and the world has never forgotten them. The reason, however, is far from apparent. For one thing, their love affair lacked the most essential ingredient for immortality: namely, an immortal lover, a man who, for his love, throws away an empire, like Antony, or pollutes his honor, like Tristan. Abelard's infatuation with Héloïse began cooling the moment it began causing him trouble. His affection was so dubious that it inspired in Héloïse the most common doubt; years after their separation she was still asking if Abelard loved her for herself or her body. He set her doubts to rest: "I satisfied my wretched desires in thee, and this was all that I loved. . . . Weep for thy Saviour, not for thy seducer." And he meant every word.

By any conventional historical reckoning, Abelard was not even a figure of the first rank. He was certainly the best logician of his day, but he founded no philosophical school: it was the men whom he bested in debate who set scholastic philosophy on its future course. Nor was he one of those great twelfth-century spirits who labored to reform and strengthen a shaky, if universal, Church; the greatest of such reformers, Bernard of Clairvaux, later canonized, was the greatest of Abelard's many enemies. In their eyes he was an impudent adventurer, a self-vaunting troublemaker who spoke for no established order and served no established institution.

On the whole, they were right. Here was a private man who, without position or warrant, presumed to win personal fame and influence to satisfy nobody but himself. Little wonder the foremost men of his age disliked Abelard so intensely. He was a genuine spiritual anomaly, and therein lies his significance. He was the first (and for some time he would be the only) truly free individual in postclassical Europe: the first, that is, whose personality expressed with superb force and clarity not class, caste, code, or office, but itself.



GIRAUDON



ROGER-VIOLLET

Partial views: a fourteenth-century artist remembered Abelard simply as Héloïse's tutor, left; by the time the nineteenth-century engraving on the right was made, he had become her anguished lover.

From the moment he swaggered into Paris, a handsome, well-born Breton youth who endeavored to refute the opinions of his teachers, personal fame was Abelard's chief spur. As if to underscore the personal nature of his quest, he bore a name of his own devising: his family name was not Abelard but Du Pallet. What made that most unmedieval ambition possible, what indeed made Abelard possible, was the fundamental fact that Europe in 1100 was more free, more open and untrammeled than it had been for centuries past or would be for centuries to come. The old feudal order of the Dark Ages was crumbling, and what historians often call the High Middle Ages had not yet been pieced together. The Church was not yet the vast, centralized hierarchy it was soon to become, and the pope was not yet its majestic autocrat. (In Abelard's day there were often two popes at once, each seeking to prevail over the other in the lively court of public opinion on which their authority then rested.) There was as yet no Inquisition to efficiently extirpate heresy and no Church-controlled universities directing intellectual life; there were only quasi-independent schools, often as ephemeral as their chief teacher's reputation and as movable as gypsy encampments. Men were beginning to cluster in towns, but they were not yet walled into exclusive guilds or ruled by tight merchant oligarchies. In 1100 towns were, on the whole, unruly colonies of tradesmen, peddlers, and adventurers. These were utterly new men, disturbingly ardent in their religious faith, ripe for every heresy, and inclined to look on the indolent Church, an organization adapted to serfs and rude warriors, with a less than worshipful eye.

In that short-lived ferment, young Abelard made his way rather like a politician seeking the main chance. He distinguished himself at once—for bravado—by adopting a philosophical position not only opposed to the orthodox scholastic view but one whose last exponent had been forced to recant. To his own rationalistic views and his own dashing personality, Abelard gave the widest currency by seeking out and

By WALTER KARP

vanquishing in public debate whatever champions of the prevailing view he could corner. For a number of years, on and off, his chief steppingstone to fame was one William of Champeaux, the leading upholder of orthodoxy. To the surprise of the onlooking scholars, Abelard refuted William in Paris, crushed him at Châlons, and then set up a rival school to take away his students. "So much did my name in the art of dialectics begin to be magnified that not only the reputation of my fellow scholars but that of the master himself [William] began to decline and was gradually extinguished. Hence it came about," Abelard recalled in an autobiographical letter, "that, presuming more largely upon myself, I made haste to transfer my school to the town of Corbeil, which is nearer the city of Paris, so that there opportunity might furnish more frequent contests of disputation." Abelard appraised William's enmity with a fortune-seeker's eye: "The more openly his jealousy pursued me the more widely it increased my authority."

By the time he decided to seduce Héloïse, the orphaned ward of the canon of Notre Dame, Abelard had "come to regard myself as the only philosopher remaining in the whole world." He was the acknowledged leader of Europe's young *moderni*, as contemporaries called the Abelardians, a pied piper with all of Europe's restless youth in his train. As an admirer recalled to him when those halcyon days were over: "Neither distance nor mountains nor valleys nor roads infested with brigands prevented the youth of the world from coming to you. Young Englishmen crowded to your classes across a dangerous sea; all quarters of Spain, Flanders, Germany sent you pupils; and they were never tired of praising the power of your mind." It was more than sheer mental power, however, that drew "the youth of the world" to Abelard. There was a magnetic freshness about a logician who sang songs like a troubadour and strutted like a prince. There was freshness, too, in his belief that the truths of faith must be true to reason, freshness in his hatred of mystagogues, in his scorn for orthodox reputations (who but Abelard could attend a few lectures of the great and saintly Anselm and pronounce them "contemptible and devoid of reason"), and in his exuberant self-assurance, which, more marvelous yet, owed nothing to wealth or birth or office. When the swarming students of Paris (they must have made up nearly half the population) learned that their champion was making love to the canon's ward, they sang his praises even louder, seduction having completed the portrait of a personality more vivid, more expressive, more unfettered than any they had ever seen.

Héloïse rejoiced in her public role as Abelard's "whore"—her word—but her guardian was hardly overjoyed, despite Abelard's efforts to placate him. His grisly vengeance is well known. He gathered some kinsmen together, surprised Abelard in his sleep, and had him castrated. Abelard's reaction is particularly revealing: "In truth I felt the disgrace more than the hurt to my body and was more afflicted with shame than with pain. My incessant thought was of the renown in which I had so delighted, now brought low, nay utterly blotted out, so swiftly, by an evil chance."

Unmanned and ashamed, Abelard joined a monastery and forced Héloïse to become a nun. That was the end between them, and if his life were a tale of romance, it should have ended right there—but it did not. During his remaining twenty-three years Abelard largely ignored Héloïse, but he himself was far from done. If anything, his fame grew greater, his followers more formidable, while his own intellectual ambitions became more lofty, more courageous, and, in a sense, more serious. Chiefly a logician before, he now turned to theology and began with his usual presumption to elucidate rationally that mystery of Christian mysteries, that Pandora's box of heresy, the doctrine of the Trinity. And worse, from the ecclesiastical point of view, he set down his conclusions in writing.

From then on Abelard's enemies, led by the awesome Bernard, began their long effort to blot him out and suppress his pernicious influence. In 1121 a church council condemned and burned his theological treatise. Even that did not silence him. He retired to a wilderness not far from Nantes and swore to take up a hermit's existence (the discipline of the monastic life was not for Abelard); but inevitably young men from all over the Continent gathered around him again.

In 1125 leaders of the Church forced Abelard to become the abbot of a monastery in the wilds of Britanny, a form of banishment they hoped would quiet him without unduly offending his followers. Not until 1140 did Bernard feel strong enough to deliver the final blow to Abelard and his *moderni*. In a savage letter to the pope, the great churchman accused Abelard, not of teaching heresy—which in truth he had not done—but of being something far worse, a heretic in spirit, a "man, suspicious of God [who] had no mind to believe what his own reason has not previously argued." That was Bernard's accusation and the Pope concurred. Abelard and his works were formally condemned and his defenders excommunicated.

The makers of the medieval world order had at last triumphed over Abelard, and their triumph was astonishingly complete. In the final two years of his life he was so broken, abject, and shriveled that the Abbot of Cluny, who had sheltered him, professed himself "astonished that a man of so great and famous a name could thus belittle himself."

More than a century later, when French writers began to revive Abelard's memory, they scarcely knew what to make of him, for in the new medieval order a free spirit such as Abelard's was unknown. So they absorbed him into the romantic tradition and cast him in the role of star-crossed lover. He does not fit the part. In life Abelard had played only himself—that was his sin and his glory.


ESTO PERPETUA
chas b Stackman

Disappearing Heroes

Does the current shortage
of charismatic leaders mean that history
has fallen on fallow times
—or simply that we are growing up?

How often we hear that we lack heroic leaders. Where are the Churchills and the Roosevelts, or the Gladstones and the Lincolns? Even the Communist world, at least in the West, has given heroes up and denounced the cult of personality. Yet some men and women still hunger for an authority that they can idolize, for a personality that they can transform into someone greater, someone finer than a common mortal. They are having a hard time with the present run of politicians. After all, is it possible to imagine chain-smoking, handbag-clutching, grandmotherly Golda Meir as Jeanne d'Arc? How would a sculptor place her on a monument? Or Harold Wilson with his baggy trousers and homely pipe? Could one wrap him in a toga or set him astride a prancing stallion in bronze or stone? Can we bring ourselves to contemplate Richard Nixon by Canova—the sculptor who made Napoleon look heroic in the nude? Today's statesmen are simply not cast in the heroic mold; many of them have lives as brief as butterflies': who can name, for instance, the last ten prime ministers of Italy?

Even the heroic gesture is at a discount: the assassins of our time are nondescript psychopaths—mad and motiveless except in their own wild dreams. Terrorists blow up the anonymous and the innocent. Sarajevo is no more. And yet, only a generation ago heroes abounded—though the few of them that remain are now aging and fading: Tito and Mao, Haile Selassie and Chiang Kai-shek.

And were the World War II heroes really heroes? Stalin was a paranoid madman. De Gaulle, the male incarnation of Jeanne d'Arc, founded the most chauvinistic and disruptive foreign policy pursued by any nation since the war. Many of Churchill's acts were petty, stupid, and dangerous. His faults were small, of course, compared with those of Hitler, Napoleon, and Alexander the Great. Each of these men was in pursuit of a dream too large for human life. Each had a heroic vision of himself that he persuaded his countrymen to share, visions leading to genocide, slaughter, endless war and carnage. No—better to have tough men of limited vision, pursuing the possible. Men lost in a dream of power or drunk on the thought of loyalty to their Leader are politically and socially dangerous.

This fear of heroes is very recent. Only a hundred years or so ago Thomas Carlyle was trumpeting the virtues of heroes and hero worship, extolling Cromwell and Robespierre. Maybe in this present age we are watching, as with so many aspects of the past, the death of the hero. Is that a blessing or a tragedy? Are heroes part of the dream life of mankind from which we cannot and should not escape? Or will they disappear for good?

The hero has always been a strange phenomenon, not only in our personal lives, but in society. Obviously the worship of heroes is keenest in adolescence; we have discovered that our parents have feet of clay but still we yearn to identify with someone. Adolescents today are as idolatrous as their fathers and grandfathers were: they worship Walt Frazier, Jane Fonda, Bob Dylan, or perhaps Noam Chomsky, just as their parents worshiped Joe DiMaggio, Betty Grable, Frank Sinatra, or perhaps Bertrand Russell. Heroes and heroines will never die for adolescents—they merely change their names.

We tend to assume that the need for heroes dies with adolescence, and we look upon an adult who is prone to hero worship as childish or retarded. It may not be fair to do so, however. Daniel Levinson and Roger Gould, American psychologists, have recently made some very subtle studies, stemming from Erik Erikson's work, on the stages of adulthood, which they believe to be full of crises every bit as violent and disturbing as adolescence.

One of the most fascinating of these studies touches on the hero. Males (we know less as yet about females) tend to acquire mentors in their late adolescence—men older and more experienced than themselves. Often the need for these mentors, who receive confidences and give advice, continues into early adulthood. At about forty, however, the need suddenly vanishes. At that

By J. H. PLUMB

The one cruel fact about heroes is that they are made of flesh and blood.

—Henry Arthur Jones, *The Liars*, Act I

Hero-worship is strongest where there is least regard for human freedom.

—Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*

age most men stop growing—or, rather, realize with an intense and shattering personal vision that they are growing old. At thirty, life's possibilities are still almost infinite; for most men at forty, the rut, whether rough or well-upholstered, is as unalterable as the Grand Canyon. For most men life henceforth has one direction, leading inevitably to aging and death. Without the soaring possibilities of adolescence and early manhood, what need is there for a hero or even a mentor?

Now the importance of this goes far beyond the psychology of the individual. It throws great light on social psychology as well, and may even help to explain some odd but recurring historical manifestations. Mentors, of course, are not necessarily heroes. Far from it. Yet there may be a psychological relationship between mentor and hero: given the right personal and social circumstances, the desire for a mentor may easily be transmuted into the worship of a hero. This might help to explain why societies have regularly been swept by hysterical tornadoes of hero worship. And why—since this trait appears to be more deeply embedded in the masculine psyche than the feminine one—male-dominated societies, particularly those with a powerful warrior class, are more prone to hero worship than others. One has only to name a few heroes—Julius Caesar, Augustus, Washington, Napoleon, Hitler, Mao, Lenin—to realize that war is often linked with them. Indeed, they seem sometimes to seek it: Napoleon's desire for a heroic destiny for France, symbolized in his own person, drove him to battle, and finally to the disastrous campaigns in Spain and Russia.

Of course, not all national heroes lead their countries to disaster. At times of crisis, national heroes can help a society achieve a sense of identity. Hence it is natural that societies, and minorities struggling for freedom, should crave heroes through whom they can acquire confidence and identity. It is not surprising that when the blacks began to struggle free in America during the fifties and sixties, they wanted their own black history, and their own black heroes. No more surprising, indeed, than that a crowd of heroic martyrs, with their heads severed, their bodies scarred by red-hot gridirons, should populate the early history of Christianity. Nor should it astonish us that after the Reformation in England, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* should be read as keenly as the Bible. The fortitude of these martyred men and women, heroes of the Protestant faith, helped fortify and strengthen Protestantism, as well as breed example. But who reads, or needs, Foxe now? Who but some scholarly monk turns to the *Acta Sanctorium*? Religious revolutions, the great crisis of faith and belief, are probably a thing of the past.

Yet in distant ages heroes were abundant. Indeed, the further one goes back in time, the more the world is peopled with demigods. They struck so deep a chord in the human psyche that they lived not only for generations, but for centuries. Hercules is still strangling serpents in the statuary of sixteenth-century Italy; the infant Hercules is still being modeled in bronze in eighteenth-century France. Only in the nineteenth century does he begin to fade, and in the twentieth century he vanishes. Hercules portrayed the physically heroic side of man; not a symbol merely of virility and sexuality, but of man's muscularity, his capacity to dominate the animal world, to kill lions, to strangle serpents. But the deep social need for Hercules and his like has faded into the heroes of the football field, or been transmogrified into Tarzan for small boys. His social base has evaporated.

Because the heroic is so deeply involved in personal fantasy, there has usually been a subculture of antiheroes, or, rather, heroes of the poor and deprived. Robin Hood, as far as English society is concerned, has been one of the most persistent. Century after century he has deprived the rich and insensitive, avenging the poor for their bad luck in the lottery of life. He was a hero to the wretched poor of the Middle Ages, to the stern Puritans, and to the Levellers and the Diggers of the English revolution in the seventeenth century, sects that wanted social justice. And he was still a hero in the days of the Luddites, when craftsmen struggled to push back the oncoming tide of the Industrial Revolution. But, Robin Hood has gone the way of Hercules—or, rather, he has joined Disneyland. He entertains small children. His social force, his heroic stature, have vanished with the forests that gave him birth.

Almost all the heroes of antiquity symbolized deep social, as well as individual, needs. It is hard for us, bred on science and rationalism, to grasp how fearsome, how magical, the universe ap-

Heroes are created by popular demand, sometimes out of the scantiest materials . . . such as the apple that William Tell never shot, the ride that Paul Revere never finished, the flag that Barbara Fritchie never waved.

—Gerald White Johnson
American Heroes and Hero-Worship

Every hero becomes a bore at last. —Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Uses of Great Men*

peared to earlier societies, how full of wonders and portents it was. It could only be controlled by men and women larger than life. Heroes were necessary both as gods and as a part of the ritual that kept the external world secure and tolerable.

Heroes were closely linked with the unknown. The earliest hero in recorded literature was Gilgamesh, the Sumerian whose desire to fathom the mysteries of life plunged him into heroic conflicts with the monsters of the sea. The epic poem that tells his story is a masterpiece of poetic literature because his words as well as his actions touch the deepest springs of human hope and despair. Does good triumph over evil, can the wall of death be breached and hope of a future given to men and women fearful of the brevity of their lives? Time and time again, in epic literature, the hero goes through the darkness to the gates of death, though rarely emerging with the secret in hand.

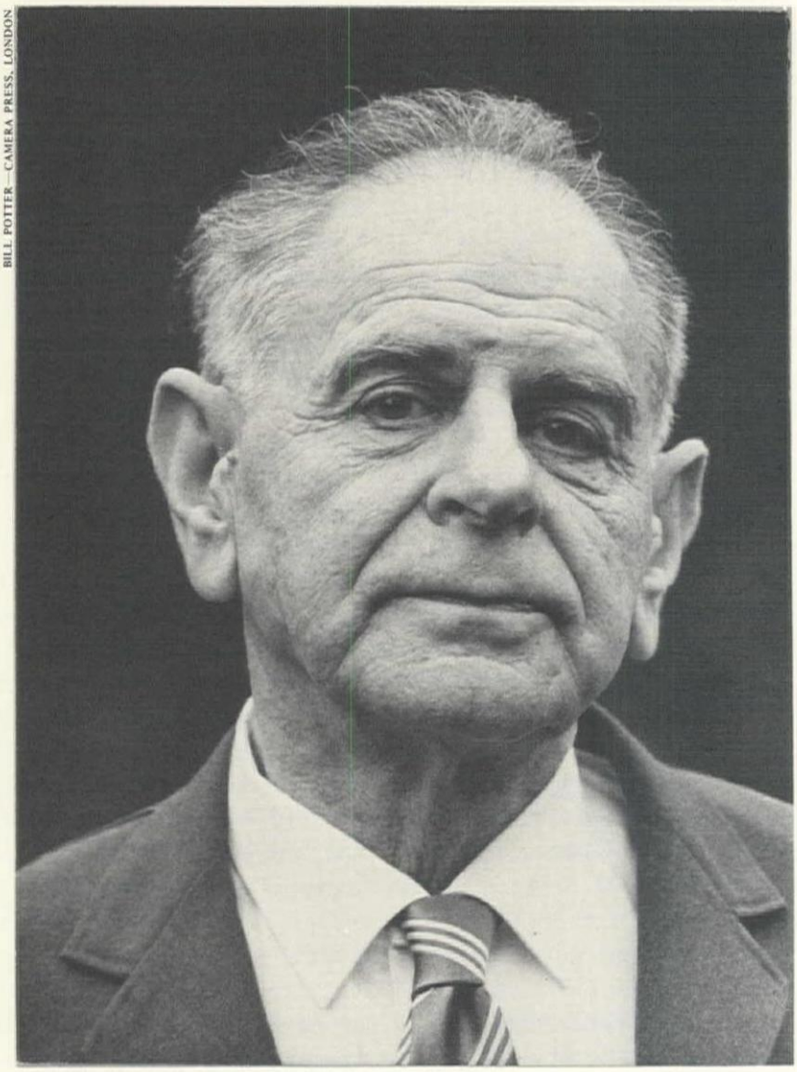
Danger, tribulation, success in the face of monsters—this is the heroic world of epic poetry and legend. And we need not seek far for the reasons, though they are not easy for us today to grasp. How can we understand the fears that haunted people who lived on the edge of great primeval forests and swamps, or the loneliness of small communities isolated in the gray and treeless coves of the wild Icelandic shores. Into these coves sailed high-prowed ships filled with ferocious men hungry for women and cattle. Or the gray rocks could split and erupt in the volcanic outbursts that spoke of the anger of cruel gods. No wonder people sat by their fires in the endless nights of winter, listening to tales of their heroes—of Grettir, who fought and killed monsters yet died a cruel death; of the boundlessly courageous Njal, who was burned alive with his sons; of Aud the Deep-Minded, heroine of sagas, who triumphed over all tribulation. These tales not only offered comfort and a kind of hope, they also strengthened the will to survive in a wild, bleak world. Hope and heroes were close relations: in all epics—whether in the tale of Gilgamesh exploring the underworld, or Odysseus wandering from peril to peril over the waters, or Eric the Red braving the arctic seas—they return, and so long as they are greater in spirit than ordinary men, they triumph.

But epic heroes such as these essentially belong to rural worlds, to societies living near the wilderness. And no wonder then that they are dying, particularly in the Western world, where nature has become benign. In Western Europe and the United States there is very little untamed nature left—scarcely room for a goblin, let alone a giant, even in the well-patrolled national parks. The control of natural forces; the conglobulation of humanity in metropolises, cities, towns; the end of isolation through newspapers and television; the elimination of personal and tribal vendettas; the abolition of hand-to-hand, face-to-face war—these are the reasons for the dwindling role of the hero. But are there deeper causes at work too? Apart from the occasional antihero, like Robin Hood, heroes have usually belonged to ruling aristocracies and the warrior class. They were exemplars of the ruling castes of noblemen, mandarins, and Brahmins. Odysseus, Beowulf, Grettir, Roland—all are aristocratic images. And they decline as aristocracy declines. King Arthur of legend lives on in the Camelot of musical comedy. They are a part of an aristocratic past that Western society has rejected.

Further, the age structure of society may also be a determinant of the social role of heroes. After all, early societies —Homeric Greece, Vedic India, the Vikings of Iceland—were young societies where men were old at forty. France was a young man's world during the Revolution and the Napoleonic era. The hordes who worshiped Hitler were not the aged but the idolatrous young. As social psychologists have revealed, men need mentors until they step across the threshold of middle age. In societies like our own, where the mature and the aging outnumber the young, the need for heroes may be weaker.

The history of social processes—the decline of the family, the change of attitudes toward animals or children—is always difficult to understand; indeed, they present perhaps the most difficult problems that an historian has to face. And so, too, with the decline of the hero. Our grandfathers read Plutarch; we do not. How rarely now do our leaders have the charisma of a Napoleon or an Alexander the Great—Kennedy for a moment, Churchill for a few years. Yet how quickly they fade. And we should not regret it: there may have been less romance in a Truman or an Attlee, but there was also more hardheaded realism. And that is the stuff that heroes were never made of.

Karl Popper: The Useful Philosopher



BILL POTTER—CAMERA PRESS, LONDON

At seventy-two, Karl Popper looks at the world with a shrewd, unblinking eye.

Whether defending liberal democracy or working out the logic of scientific discovery, Karl Popper has clarified the thinking of physicists, art critics, historians, politicians—and brought philosophy back to broad human concerns

By BRYAN MAGEE

Since the death of Bertrand Russell there has been no philosopher writing in English who can match Karl Popper in the range or in the quality of his influence. Popper's book *The Open Society and Its Enemies* contains what Isaiah Berlin has described as "the most scrupulous and formidable criticism of the philosophical and historical doctrines of Marxism by any living writer." Yet Popper is not only, or even primarily, a political philosopher. Last year Peter Medawar, a winner of the Nobel Prize for medicine, described him in a radio talk as "incomparably the greatest philosopher of science that has ever been." What is perhaps the outstanding work in art criticism of recent years, Ernst Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*, contains in its preface the sentence: "I should be proud if Professor Popper's influence were to be felt everywhere in this book."

Politics, science, art . . . ; in fact, few broad areas of human thought remain unillumined by Popper's work; even in technical controversies now going on simultaneously in sociology, probability theory, the interpretation of the pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece, and quantum physics, he is an important figure. The mere fact that one man can span such a range explodes a lot of myths about our so-called Age of Specialization and reveals something about the underlying unity of culture.

Popper seems surprisingly unself-confident when you meet him—hunched, worried-looking, diffident, quiet-voiced, restless, almost jumpy. His little body supports a large head with immense Mephistophelean ears, bright eyes, and a jowled muzzle like an elderly lion. He is always preoccupied. As soon as you cross the threshold of his house he seizes your arm and leads you straight through his living room to the garden, where in heavily accented English he plunges into immediate discussion of whatever problem is absorbing him. Every once in a while—for he is at least *entertained* by his problems—the corners of his mouth shoot up into the barbed V of a Harpo Marx grin and his

eyes dance. And then he is absorbed in the problem once again.

His adopted country is England, and he lives, improbably, in the heart of stockbroker territory about an hour's drive from London—near few of his closest friends. The isolation is, if unconsciously, motivated. For decades he has done little but work, and obvious temptations to do otherwise are excluded from his home: no newspapers are delivered; there is no television set or record player, just a small transistor radio for news and a grand piano that is seldom played. Almost every day, day after day, he and his wife, Hennie, are at home together alone—they have no children—working: reading, writing, thinking, discussing.

But their lives were not always so one-track and self-denying as this. As a young schoolteacher in Vienna in the 1920's, Popper was an active Social Democrat, a junior helper in the organization of Schoenberg's famous Society for Private Concerts, and an enthusiastic part-time social worker with handicapped children. During the day, he taught mathematics and physics to boys in secondary school. Vienna in the twenties was a thrilling place to be young in. Whether in psychology, music, architecture, or politics, it afforded a sense of living on the world's most rapidly advancing frontier. In philosophy, the avant-garde was the Vienna Circle, whose revolutionary innovation was logical positivism. One of the most distinguished members of the circle, Otto Neurath, conferred on Karl Popper the nickname "the Official Opposition." And it was, in a sense, *against* the views of the Vienna Circle that Popper's first published book was written. This was *Logik der Forschung*, published in 1934 (dated 1935—and not to appear in English until a quarter of a century later, under the title *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*).

The logical positivists regarded themselves as bringing scientific method to bear on philosophical problems. Popper argued—and in the end his arguments have carried the day—that their conception of scientific method was fundamentally in error. But the importance of his work went far beyond them or anything they were concerned with. For the conception of science he was repudiating, and trying to replace, had an ancestry of centuries behind it.

The first thinker to attempt a fully explicit formulation of the logic of scientific discovery was Francis Bacon. The extension, criticism, and refinement of this analysis became the ever-developing mainstream view of scientific method. Almost all readers of this article with any sort of scientific training will have been taught it. The essence of it is this. The man of science, it is said, carries out carefully measured observations and experiments in the area in which he hopes to make discoveries, and gradually amasses a lot of hard data. Sooner or later this begins to exhibit certain general features, and these in turn suggest to him a lawlike hypothesis. He seeks to verify this hypothesis by finding evidence that conclusively proves it. If he succeeds, it becomes a permanent addition to the body of our certain knowledge, and so he will have discovered a regularity of nature, a law that can be put to use wherever it applies.

The most important feature of this method was the way general statements were reached from observed instances, a process known as induction. The inductive method was seen as the very hallmark of science, the criterion of demarcation between what could count as science at all and what could not. Statements based on intuition, or authority, or any other ground, were not scientific; only statements of observable fact, and statements validly induced from them, were scientific, and only those statements were genuine certainties. Scientific knowledge was thus uniquely secure, and its expansion consisted in the continual addition of new certainties to the corpus of those that already existed.

Some embarrassing questions about induction were raised in the eighteenth century by David Hume, who pointed out that no number of observation statements could logically entail a general statement. Take, for example, the statement "All swans are white," which occurred frequently in textbooks of logic in the Middle Ages. Millions of swans may have been observed by innumerable observers across centuries of time, and every single one of them may have been white, but still it does not follow that *all* swans are white. It is always possible that somewhere, as yet unobserved, there are black swans. (Such was indeed the case, in Australia.) Thus, universal statements of the form "All A's are B" can never be verified by any number of observations. Yet the embarrassing thing is that all scientific laws are of this kind. Such statements as Newton's law of gravitation are taken to hold anywhere and at any time. Yet if they cannot be verified by observation, how have they been proved?

Consequently there arose the famous problem of induction, the skeleton in the cupboard of philosophy. Scientific laws appeared to be incapable of rational demonstration. They all assume the regularity of nature—assume that the future will be like the past in those respects in which scientific laws are taken to operate—yet there is no way of justifying this assumption. It cannot be justified by observation, since we cannot observe future events. It cannot be justified more generally by experience, since the fact that the future has been like the past in the past in no way guarantees that it will be like it in the future. And it cannot be justified by logic, since scientific laws are not logically entailed by the observed instances from which they are supposed to be derived. Science *works*. But we are at a loss to show why it works. From Hume to Russell, some of the greatest philosophers have grappled with the problem without solution. In his *History of Western Philosophy* Russell wrote: "Hume has proved that pure empiricism is not a sufficient basis for science. But if this one principle

[induction] is admitted, everything else can proceed in accordance with the theory that all our knowledge is based on experience. It must be granted that this is a serious departure from pure empiricism, and that those who are not empiricists may ask why, if one departure is allowed, others are to be forbidden. . . ."

When Russell wrote these words, a solution to the problem of induction had already been published, in German, by Popper. This is his seminal achievement, from which most of his others ultimately derive. It starts by pointing to a logical asymmetry between verification and falsification. Although universal statements cannot be proved, they can be disproved. No number of observations of white swans can ever prove the statement "All swans are white," but it is disproved if one single observation of a black swan is accepted as correct. So, although any search for conclusive verification is irrational in that it is a search for something that is not to be found, attempted refutation is perfectly rational. Scientific statements can be tested to any degree we like, by systematic attempts not to prove them right but to prove them wrong.

This would mean that we never actually *know* a scientific statement to be true. Quite so, says Popper, we never do. We know at best that the statement is compatible with all our observations so far, and has resisted our most stringent attempts to find fault with it. We shall continue to make use of it for as long as it meets these conditions. When it ceases to do so, we shall be challenged to find a better theory. And this is indeed, says Popper, how what we call "knowledge" advances. We are confronted by a problem, usually as a result of some failure in an existing theory or expectation; we then try to think up a possible solution to it; we put our trial solution to the test, which almost always shows up errors; this makes us either improve it or replace it, and we go on using our new theory until we are forced to change it in its turn. So the inductivist view of scientific method was wrong at every point. We do *not* start from observations, we do *not* generalize from these to form hypotheses, we do *not* verify our hypotheses, and we do *not* arrive finally at certain knowledge. The history of science is a history of superseded theories—theories that do not arise out of our observations and experiments but precede them and are tested by them. The formulation of a fruitful theory is thus seen as a creative human act that requires great gifts, not least of which is boldness of imagination.

The history of science does support Popper's view. Most of what was "science" in the past is now known to be false. In fact, it was the fate of the best-attested scientific theory of all time, Newtonian physics, that led Popper to formulate his methodology. Newton's laws had been accepted all over the world as laws of nature, definitive facts, for two hundred years. Yet during the years when Popper was growing up, a theory fundamentally different from Newton's was being increasingly discussed, a theory that one may now say has superseded it. Opinions might differ about the merits of Einstein's theory of relativity, but its claim to serious attention could be denied by no one. This was what struck the teen-age Popper most forcibly. If two centuries of "verification" had not proved the truth of Newton's theory, what could? He realized, quite simply, that nothing could.

Popper noted that two other theories that claimed to be scientific and were at the height of inteliectual fashion in the Vienna of his day, psychoanalysis and popular Marxism, made no allowance for their own fallibility. Whatever happened, they were able to provide an explanation—indeed, it was this ability to explain everything that so excited their adherents and gave them a sense of revelation, of having discovered the key to life. But Popper saw that it was precisely this that ruled them out of court as scientific theories. For in any view of science, if all possible observations must fit in with a theory, then it could not be claimed of any actual observations that they supported it, there could thus be no such thing as confirming evidence for it, and its status could not be scientific. And in Popper's view of science, if all possible observations must fit in with a theory, then it was unfalsifiable and therefore untestable—and unscientific. From the beginning, then, Popper realized that his views about the natural sciences had profound implications for the social sciences. These were to grow into, among other things, the devastating onslaught on the scientific claims of Marxism that he was later to incorporate in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. But his first full-scale demolition job was carried out on logical positivism.

Popper had to combat the verification principle in philosophy as well as in science. The central concern of the logical positivists was with meaning. In their desire to clear away all unnecessary verbiage from intellectual activity, they sought to distinguish those statements that really do mean something from those that do not. And they came to the conclusion that meaningful statements are of two kinds. Either they are purely formal statements in mathematics or logic, in which case their truth or falsehood can be demonstrated internally, so to speak, without reference to observation of experience: the false statements are ultimately self-contradictions, the true ones tautologies. Or they purport to convey empirical information, in which case they can be tested in the world of actual or possible experience. So, for an empirical statement to convey anything to us at all, we must know what sort of experience on our part, or somebody else's, would verify it. From this there developed the famous verification principle, which held that a statement only contains information about the world if it is somehow or other susceptible to verification. Such statements may be false as well as true, of course, but in either case they have a meaning. Statements that no conceivable observation could verify have no meaning: they are

mere noises from the mouth—exhaust. The logical positivists, wielding this principle like Occam's razor, slashed away what they thought to be meaningless verbiage. And what they eliminated in philosophy included, among other things, the whole of metaphysics.

Popper brought arguments against the logical positivists from every side. His most powerful was that the verifiability criterion eliminated not only metaphysics but the whole of natural science, since scientific laws were themselves unverifiable. This also meant that in failing to provide any criterion of demarcation between science and metaphysics the logical positivists had failed in their declared intention of separating the latter from the former. Popper argued that science had its historical origins in metaphysical theories—in religious, magical, mythical, and superstitious views of the world—so metaphysical theories could demonstrably be of the highest value and importance; and once that was admitted it was hard to see how they could be held to be meaningless. Again, he argued that before we can address ourselves to the question of how we should go about verifying any given statement, we have first to understand what the statement means, so its verifiability cannot be the criterion of its having meaning. He pointed out further that philosophical statements are, characteristically, neither tautologous nor verifiable. In fact he took the view that any great concern for finding a criterion of meaningfulness was beside the point anyway, since discussion cannot avoid the use of undefined terms. He pointed out that scientists devote little or no time to the analysis of even such fundamental concepts as "mass," "energy," "light," and so on, and yet it is in the sciences that we have our most plentiful and useful "knowledge," and make the best progress.

His deepest argument, the bedrock underlying several of his others, was that the conception of scientific method that the logical positivists regarded themselves as bringing to philosophy was wrong; indeed, it was the one he had overthrown. This idea was so radical that his opponents failed to grasp it. They did not see that Popper, having debunked the inductive method, was proposing another to put in its place, namely falsifiability. Instead, because of their obsession with meaning, they took him to be putting falsifiability forward as a criterion of *meaning* to replace their own verification principle. And because they, contrary to Popper, thought that empirical statements not of a scientific character were meaningless, they dismissed attempts to put the matter straight with the assertion that the two things came to much the same in the end. It was years before the full implications of what he had done sank in.

Although Popper had accomplished all this by his early thirties, he was still a schoolmaster doing philosophy in his spare time. He did not land his first university lectureship, and become a professional philosopher, until 1937, when he went to the University of New Zealand at the age of thirty-five. By this time he had become seriously disillusioned with the realities of left-wing politics—the flabbiness and cowardice of the Social Democrats no less than the self-deluding Machiavellianism of the Communists. When Hitler seized power in Germany in 1933, Popper realized that the Left in Austria would be quite incapable of stopping the Nazis there either—and that a Nazi take-over would eventually be followed by a European war in which his beloved Austria would be on the wrong side. He determined to leave before this happened: hence his willingness to go to New Zealand. The decision saved his life, though he had no notion of this at the time. Having had a Protestant upbringing from parents who had themselves been baptized, he did not particularly think of himself as a Jew—but Hitler would have done so. In fact, many of his relations were subsequently murdered by the Nazis.

Not long after Popper's arrival in New Zealand, the news reached him that Hitler had annexed Austria. He decided that very day to write *The Open*

KARL POPPER ON HISTORY

History has no meaning, I contend. But this contention does not imply that all we can do about it is to look aghast at the history of political power, or that we must look on it as a cruel joke. For we can interpret it, with an eye to those problems of power politics whose solution we choose to attempt in our time. We can interpret the history of power politics from the point of view of our fight for the open society, for a rule of reason, for justice, freedom, equality, and for the control of international crime. Although history has no ends, we can impose these ends of ours upon it; and *although history has no meaning, we can give it a meaning.*

It is the problem of nature and convention which we meet here again. Neither nature nor history can tell us what we ought to do. Facts, whether those of nature or those of history, cannot make the decision for us, they cannot determine the ends we are going to choose. It is we who introduce purpose and meaning into nature and into history. Men are not equal; but we can decide to fight for equal rights. Human institutions such as the state are not rational, but we can decide to fight to make them more rational. We ourselves and our ordinary language are, on the whole, emotional rather than rational; but we can try to become a little more rational, and we can train ourselves to use our language as an instrument not of self-expression (as our romantic educationists would say) but of rational communication. History itself—I mean the history of power politics, of course, not the non-existent story of the development of mankind—has no end nor meaning, but we can decide to give it both. We can make it our fight for the open society and against its enemies (who, when in a corner, always protest their humanitarian sentiments . . .); and we can interpret it accordingly. Ultimately, we may say the same about the "meaning of life." It is up to us to decide what shall be our purpose in life, to determine our ends.

This dualism of facts and decisions is, I believe, fundamental. Facts as such have no meaning; they can gain it only through our decisions. . . . Instead of posing as prophets we must become the makers of our fate.

—*From* THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES

Society and Its Enemies. He spent the entire Second World War in New Zealand and regarded the writing of *The Open Society*, which he finished in 1943, as his war work—a fact that explains the book's biting emotional drive and unremitting sense of urgency. In two volumes, it is the most massive and powerful statement in the English language of the case for political democracy. It traces the history, and tries to analyze the appeal, of totalitarianism; in doing so, it singles out the greatest geniuses of "right" and "left" totalitarian theory, Plato and Marx respectively, and subjects their political philosophies to extended criticism of a sustained and passionate brilliance.

In his earlier writings Popper had worked out the logic of problem solving. It so happened that he had done this in the context of the natural sciences, but what he had arrived at was the rationale of problem solving *as such*. In *The Open Society and Its Enemies* he applied this to the social sciences. He showed that the most effective way for a society to set about solving its problems was to encourage their free formulation and an untrammeled propounding of alternative solutions, followed by general criticism, followed by changes in the light of that criticism. Such a society is what Popper means by "the open society"; his main achievement in the book is to show that this approach to problems is superior to any alternative, *even when all moral considerations about freedom and other such values are left aside*—to show that, and why, authoritarianism of any kind is almost bound to result in less successful problem solving. The notion, more popular in this century than in any other, that a rational or scientific approach in politics calls for the central planning by a single authority of a unitary social order, rests on an erroneous conception of rationality and science. For instance, when Karl Marx imported what he thought of as scientific method into socialist theory, he made what was essentially the same mistake as the logical positivists when they imported scientific method into their philosophizing.

KARL POPPER ON PLATO

Individualism, equalitarianism, faith in reason and love of freedom were new, powerful, and from the point of view of the enemies of the open society, dangerous sentiments that had to be fought. Plato had himself felt their influence, and, within himself, he had fought them. His answer to the Great Generation [i.e., Pericles, Sophocles, Herodotus, Democritus, and Socrates, who believed in freedom and the brotherhood of man] was a truly great effort. It was an effort to close the door which had been opened, and to arrest society by casting upon it the spell of an alluring philosophy, unequalled in depth and richness. In the political field he added but little to the old oligarchic program against which Pericles had once argued. But he discovered, perhaps unconsciously, the great secret of the revolt against freedom, formulated in our own day by Pareto [the nineteenth-century theoretician of totalitarianism]: "To take advantage of sentiments, not wasting one's energies in futile efforts to destroy them." Instead of showing his hostility to reason, he charmed all intellectuals with his brilliance, flattering and thrilling them by his demand that the learned should rule. Although arguing against justice he convinced all righteous men that he was its advocate. Not even to himself did he fully admit that he was combatting the freedom of thought for which Socrates had died; and by making Socrates his champion he persuaded all others that he was fighting for it. Plato thus became, unconsciously, the pioneer of the many propagandists who, often in good faith, developed the technique of appealing to moral, humanitarian sentiments, for anti-humanitarian, immoral purposes. . . . He transfigured his hatred of individual initiative, and his wish to arrest all change, into a love of justice and temperance, of a heavenly state in which everybody is satisfied and happy and in which the crudity of money-grabbing is replaced by laws of generosity and friendship. . . . The lesson which we thus should learn from Plato is the exact opposite of what he tried to teach us. . . . Arresting political change is not the remedy; it can never bring happiness. We can never return to the alleged innocence and beauty of the closed society.

—*From* THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES

From Popper's standpoint, the Marxism of Karl Marx is indeed a scientific theory, as it claims to be, because it is falsifiable; but like nearly all theories in the history of science, it has turned out to be false. For instance, it predicted that (and explained in detail why) the urban proletariat in capitalist societies was bound to form an ever-increasing proportion of the population, whereas in fact, since Marx's day, this proportion has been ever decreasing. And whereas according to the theory the working class was bound to get poorer and poorer until it was driven to revolution, in fact it has become richer and richer and quite uninterested in revolutionary politics. According to Marxist theory, only societies that had first completed the capitalist stage of development could go communist; but in fact not a single such society is among those that have gone communist. And so it goes on: in almost every major respect the development of capitalist society has taken a form that Marxist theory declared to be impossible. Indeed, communist societies themselves have been radically at variance with Marxist predictions from the beginning.

In the face of all this, the practice of Marxists since Marx has been *incessantly* to reformulate the theory in order to keep it in touch with the evidence (not to mention reformulating the evidence to keep it in touch with the theory). The result is what I referred to earlier as "popular Marxism," which, unlike the theory of Marx himself, is unfalsifiable and therefore unscientific, and whose practice has become a by-word in the modern world for dogmatism and Jesuitry. On the other hand, the claims of *serious* Marxism to be scientific are central to its doctrine. And it would be hard to think of any scientific theory that has been proved wrong in so many, and such important, respects. Yet somehow the illusion persists that it is an intellectually formidable theory. I do not see how any rational man can have read *The Open Society* seriously and still be a Marxist.

The Open Society is so rich in arguments it is impossible to summa-

rize. But perhaps we may pick out one point. A policy—whether in government, industry, or elsewhere—is a hypothesis from which empirical predictions are deduced: "If we do A, B will follow; if we want to achieve Y, we must do X." The implementation of the policy then tests these predictions against reality. Almost no policy ever passes the test with full marks, so we need to be always on the lookout for signs that our policy is *not* working. The bigger the errors revealed, the greater the improvements we can make. Receiving criticism, and then acting on it, is indispensable to the rational formulation and implementation of policy. This is why the most efficient societies in the world are by far those that have so-called "free" institutions. The popular notion that the most efficient form of society must somehow be a dictatorship is wrong both in theory and in practice. Where are they, anyway, these efficient dictatorships? The most sheerly practical considerations are at one with morality here: logic, rationality, a genuinely scientific approach to social problems—all point to a free, "open" society, one not centrally controlled but pluralistic; and one concerned not with the implementation of a blueprint for some ideal and definitive state of affairs, but with a never-ending feedback process of continuous change during which aims and goals are themselves perpetually revised in the light of ongoing experience. *The Open Society* as a whole presents, as no other book has ever done, a fully worked out, full-scale, full-blooded philosophy of Social Democracy, passionate yet rational, radical yet practical, morally idealistic yet highly critical and amply informed by the realities of experience.

The Open Society, which appeared in 1945, was Popper's first book to be published in English, and it brought him his first real fame in the English-speaking world. In 1946 he went to England, and there he has lived ever since. For twenty years he was Professor of Logic and Scientific Method at the London School of Economics, from which he retired in 1969. In 1965 he was knighted—so the ardent Social Democrats from Vienna have become Sir Karl and Lady Popper. But neither Oxford nor Cambridge seemed at any time to want him as a professor. And behind that there lies a story.

When Popper arrived in England in January, 1946, it was to be nearly fourteen years before his great book *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* would be published in English, though it had been available in German for over eleven years. Its contents were virtually unknown in philosophical circles—in fact, logical positivism was still widely influential in British universities. And the other approach to philosophy becoming newly fashionable, linguistic analysis, had still less appeal for Popper. Not only had he spent his life grappling with some of the fundamental problems of the age—the status of human knowledge, the methods of science, the reconciliation of rationality with social ethics, the place of violence in politics, Marxism, the conflict between totalitarianism and democracy—he had made massive and utterly distinctive contributions to their possible solution. Yet in England he found himself expected to take seriously the view that philosophical problems are only pseudoproblems in which we become enmeshed as a result of our misuse of language.

In his eyes this was not only totally wrong but involved a tragic and culpable abnegation of intellectual responsibility. He sympathized entirely with the hostile impatience so commonly expressed toward it by educated nonphilosophers. Among these, his work found increasingly enthusiastic acceptance with men and women of the highest gifts—Nobel Prize winning scientists, cabinet ministers, internationally famous economists, sociologists, historians of art. The acceptance was not passive but active, directly affecting the way they did their own work. But the increasing number of philosophers who accepted the view of philosophy Popper rejected seemed thereby incapacitated for any serious understanding of his work, and his reputation in his own profession ceased to grow. Like the logical positivists before them, the linguistic analysts saw him in terms of their own concerns and thus failed to appreciate both his radical originality and the immense extension of his range beyond theirs.

Now that both logical positivism and linguistic analysis have been, or are being, abandoned, there is a growing awareness that Popper is the crucial figure who was right about both all along—right not just in the sense of not accepting them, for there were always plenty of philosophers who did not do that, but in the sense of having put clearly from the outset what have come eventually to be accepted as the decisive arguments against them.

Popper's reaction to professional neglect has been to ignore it and carry on working at what he believes to be important. Although much of the philosophical community still has to catch up with the full implications of what he published in the 1930's, during the intervening decades he has been quietly working his way toward more advanced positions, and toward new positions in other fields. *Objective Knowledge* was published in 1972. Next year or the year after, another new book is due from him called *Philosophy and Physics*. And last May a massive two-volume evaluation of his life's work was added to the distinguished *Library of Living Philosophers* (Open Court Publishing Company, La Salle, Illinois). Much the most important and exciting area for growth in contemporary philosophy is, I am convinced, here. My hope is that the ablest of Popper's disciples will approach his work not as the most promising footsteps to follow, but as a challenging and advanced position to leave behind.

Bryan Magee, a British journalist who was elected earlier this year to Parliament, wrote the critical study Karl Popper *in Viking's Modern Masters series.*

"Ludds, Do Your Duty Well!"

Long before assembly lines began to dehumanize labor, English textile workers rose in savage wrath to smash their machines and "crush their oppressors in the dust"

By CHRISTOPHER HIBBERT

At York on Saturday, January 2, 1813, one of the most dramatic and tragic trials in English legal history began. Scores of men were brought up from cold, dark cells to stand accused of an extraordinary variety of crimes in the cramped dock of the court. They were charged with murder and assault, with plundering and stealing arms, with malicious damage to property, with treason, incitement to riot, and the administration of illegal oaths. The youngest was a boy of fifteen, the oldest nearly seventy. Most of them were clothworkers, but there were also hatters and shoemakers among them, cardmakers and coal miners, tailors, butchers, apprentices, watermen, and carpet weavers. Many were illiterate; a few had criminal records. But the greater number were honest men who had never been in trouble before. As the *Leeds Mercury* reported about those accused of the worst crimes, "they were young men on whose countenances nature had not imprinted the features of assassins." They had but one thing in common: they would all be known to history as Luddites.

The most articulate of the accused, John Baines, a sixty-six-year-old hatter with a deeply wrinkled face, passionately declared that he had been waiting thirty years "for the long suffering people of England to rise in their strength and crush their oppressors in the dust." Some two or three years earlier, while making a fiery speech at Halifax, Baines had cried out, "The vampires have fattened too long on our heart's blood.... I am now nearing the end of my pilgrimage, but I will die as I have lived; my last days shall be devoted to the people's cause. I hail your rising against your oppressors and hope it may go on till there is not a tyrant left to conquer. I have waited long for the dawn of the coming day, and it may be, old as I am, I shall yet see the glorious triumph of democracy."



RADIO TIMES HULTON PICTURE LIBRARY

General Ned Ludd—a wholly fictional warrior—urges his men on in this caricature of circa 1811. The unknown, and unfriendly, artist has dressed him as a woman.

Throughout the winter of 1810–11, the Home Office had been flooded with accounts of such speeches, along with a stream of the most alarming reports about the widespread disaffection and riots they provoked. Most of the riots seemed to be spontaneous protests against the rising prices and increasing scarcity of food occasioned by Napoleon's Continental blockade, or against the government's retaliatory orders in council. By severely limiting British exports to the Continent, the orders had halted certain industries at home.

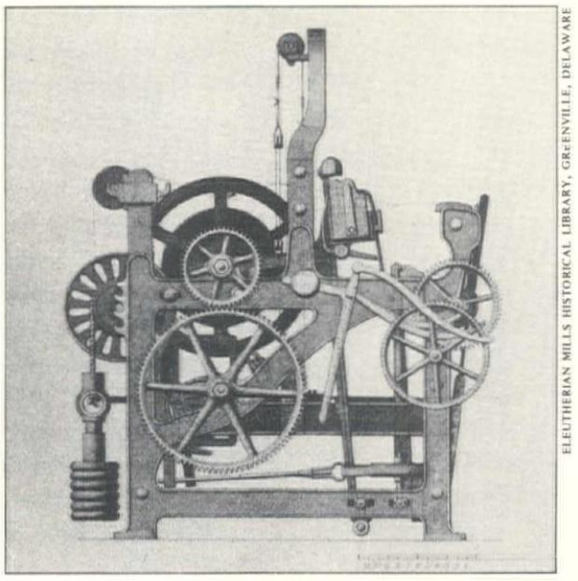
But there were other riots that appeared to have been planned. Members of the government read with horror of hundreds of working people meeting at night in fields ringed with sentries who demanded a password from those who sought admittance. Masked orators harangued the assembled workers, and there was talk of weapons, of binding and terrible oaths, of strange, unnerving initiation ceremonies, of imminent attacks on employers and other respectable citizens. The government found it extremely difficult to confirm these disturbing reports, for the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 had effectively driven trade unions underground. Working people were closing ranks and successfully excluding spies and informers from their illicit associations.

That such associations were tightly organized could not be doubted. The workers avoided open confrontations with employers, but if their demands were not met, men would one by one give notice until an entire labor force had simply vanished. Or sometimes they would resort to violence, damaging the goods they were paid to manufacture, breaking workshop windows, destroying tools. To workers whose livelihood was threatened by new mechanical contrivances, these violent methods seemed to offer the best means of redress. The workers from three trades in particular felt vulnerable to the introduction of modern machinery, and it was among them that the violence to be known as

Luddism erupted in its terrifying fury.

Clothworkers from the West Riding of Yorkshire, cotton weavers from south Lancashire, and framework knitters from the midland counties of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Derbyshire were all skilled tradesmen who took pride in their work and jealously guarded the traditional privileges to which their expertise entitled them. This was especially true of the Yorkshire clothworkers, also known as croppers or shearmen, who considered themselves superior to other workers in the district. They earned as much as thirty shillings a week—almost three times the average wage in the Yorkshire clothing trade. Now, however, their pride was being undermined by the growing interest in two cloth-dressing machines: the gig mill, used to raise the nap on woolens, and the shearing frame, a new invention that trimmed away the superfluous nap. The gig mill was not a modern invention. It had been known for centuries, but in Yorkshire—with the exception of a few villages outside the main centers of trade—the clothworkers had so far successfully resisted its introduction; in Leeds not a single employer had dared set one up in his factory.

Not all the Yorkshire clothworkers were blindly prejudiced against gig mills and shearing frames as such. But they were afraid that these and other machines would destroy their traditional way of life and their own high standards of craftsmanship. Some of them also feared—as later generations would, in fact, find—that machines might well render the worker's day stupefyingly boring. Nevertheless, most of them were prepared to come to terms with machinery, provided it did not throw them out of work without compensation, and provided that other means of livelihood could be found for them. Practical suggestions were made by the workers' representatives for a tax on machine-worked cloth, the proceeds to be paid to unemployed croppers until new work was found. Many small employers were willing to negotiate on these terms—indeed, when the clothworkers, prevented by law from forming a trade union, instituted "Sick Clubs" or "Institutions" as a quasi-legal alternative, several smaller employers contributed generously to the funds.



ELEUTHERIAN MILLS HISTORICAL LIBRARY, GREENVILLE, DELAWARE

Steam-powered looms, similar to the one above, were first used by the English textile industry in the late 1700's.

The richer and more powerful employers were decidedly less sympathetic. So, too, were the authorities in London. When the "Institution's" delegates were sent to London to present the clothworkers' case against both the unrestricted introduction of the gig mill and the employment of unskilled men and boys, they were treated scarcely better than criminals by the parliamentary Committee on the Woollen Trade. This, in effect, was what the committee considered them to be: their organization was as "efficient" as it was "dangerous"; its "ultimate tendencies" were "still more alarming in a political than a commercial point of view"; its very existence called for "the most deliberate and serious consideration of Parliament."

Parliament, duly perturbed, gradually removed by a series of enactments all the protection and privileges that the clothworker had previously enjoyed. He now could do nothing but face the gig mill and the shearing frame with implacable enmity; when various Yorkshire employers took advantage of their workers' weakened position to install the machinery, violence could no longer be delayed.

In the Midlands, meanwhile, the framework knitters (or stockingers, as they were also called) were edging toward violence in much the same way. Their main grievance was not so much machinery—they had long since come to terms with the stocking loom; it had more to do with their employers' attempts to save money by cutting down on labor and the quality of the goods. Framework knitters had never been well paid, but they took pride in their traditions and skill. They made gloves and shirts, cravats and pantaloons, as well as stockings, and they were deeply offended by the shoddy articles, disreputable to their trade, that now resulted from slapdash techniques and the use of unskilled labor.

They had other grievances as well. Most of them worked at home, paying rent to the master hosiers not only for their cottages but also for their looms, and their rents were being constantly and arbitrarily increased. Moreover, specialists were now often paid at rates appropriate to unskilled men.

Following the example of the Yorkshire clothworkers, the framework knitters at first attempted to protect their interests by constitutional means, patiently turning to their representatives in Parliament, who drew up a bill "For Preventing Frauds and Abuses in the Framework Knitting Manufacture." A

weak, watered-down version of the bill eventually did pass the Commons, but it was peremptorily thrown out by the Lords. So, like the Yorkshire croppers, the stockingers of the Midlands felt forced to violence.

Indeed, even while these unsatisfactory discussions and debates were being conducted in London, there were sporadic disturbances and riots in the Midland counties; toward the end of 1811 the character of these outbreaks became very alarming. It was clear by then that they were carefully planned and deliberate; they were no longer the work of shouting mobs urged on by rabble-rousers but of disciplined gangs led by masked men whose orders were implicitly obeyed. "The rioters appear suddenly, in armed parties, under regular commanders," a provincial newspaper reported. "The chief commander, be he whomsoever he may, is styled *General Ludd.*"

The name was soon familiar throughout the country. It appeared as a signature at the bottom of inflammatory handbills and at the end of dire warnings to employers whose machinery had been marked for destruction. It appeared in ballads and in broadsheets. While nurses of middle-class children frightened their charges with it, conjuring up visions of a terrifying ogre, the children of the poor were taught to venerate it and to remember it in their prayers. "The dread name Ludd" was invoked at night in taverns and alehouses; it was mentioned with fear and apprehension at the dinner tables of the rich. Men said that to disobey an order given on its authority was to risk immediate death.

Those who knew the real Ned Ludd could only be astonished by his sudden rise to fame, for he was a simpleton living in an obscure village in Leicestershire, where he was the natural butt of heartless children. One day, provoked beyond endurance by his tormentors, he chased one of the children into a nearby cottage. He lost track of the child there, but he did find two knitting frames and vented his anger on them instead. Thereafter in that district poor Ned Ludd was automatically blamed whenever frames were smashed. Within ten years the convenient scapegoat had become a legend, and straw effigies of "the renowned General Ludd" were carried in procession through the northern and midland villages, accompanied by standard-bearers waving red flags. Under the name of Luddites, the machine breakers became members of an underground revolutionary movement with a definite, if unsystematic, program of action.

They were certainly not indiscriminate in their destruction. The workshops and knitting frames of good and honest employers were left untouched. "In one house last night," runs a typical newspaper report about the marauders, "they broke four frames out of six; the other two, which belonged to masters who had not lowered their wages, they did not meddle with." It soon became common for hosiers to protect their machinery by posting notices that read: *"This frame is making full-fashioned work at the full price."* But no frame was completely safe until the Luddites had given it their sanction.

Calling themselves "inspectors from the committee," groups of Luddites would visit a village and summon the workers to the local inn. After collecting money for men already thrown out of work because their frames had been broken, the "inspectors" designated the frames to be destroyed in the future. These orders were invariably obeyed, for the Luddites were known to be as merciless as they were just. Anyone breaking their rules was sure to be severely punished, even hanged.

By the beginning of February, 1812, the Luddites' campaign in the Midlands was gradually coming to a halt. They had achieved a considerable measure of success: most employers had been forced to increase their men's wages, dismiss unapprenticed boys and women, and improve the quality of goods. But the attacks also ceased because great numbers of troops had moved into the area. As a result, large-scale assaults, even surprise attacks carried out at night, were now much more difficult to mount. Moreover, the government had introduced a bill that would make frame breaking a capital offense.

No sooner had the authorities appeared to have gained control over the situation in the Midlands, however, than Luddism broke out with even greater virulence in Yorkshire. Workers there were urged in the name of "General Ludd, Commander of the Army of Redressers" to "follow the noble example of the brave citizens of Paris who in sight of 30,000 tyrant redcoats brought a tyrant to the ground." Employers received letters threatening murder unless their "detestable" shearing machines were pulled down.

Many employees did pull down their machines, and the shops of those who declined to do so were attacked at night by gangs of workers with blackened faces. Men wielding huge iron hammers known as "Enochs" (after the firm of blacksmiths who made them) smashed doors, shattered shearing frames, and demolished gig mills. As in Nottinghamshire, the Luddites operated with military discipline, marching toward their objective in silent ranks, ten abreast. And "as soon as the work of destruction was completed," the *Leeds Mercury* informed its readers, "the Leader drew up his men, called over the roll, each man answering to a particular number instead of his name; they then fired off their pistols, . . . gave a shout, and marched off in regular military "order." Oftentimes they would sing. The Luddites' verses, sung to the accompaniment of rousing martial airs, are perhaps more memorable for their enthusiasm than for their lyric quality:

> And night by night when all is still
> And the moon is hid behind the hill,
> We forward march to do our will
> With hatchet, pike and gun!
> Oh, the cropper lads for me,
> Who with lusty stroke
> The shear frames broke
> The cropper lads for me!

Another favorite extolled the virtues of their "grand Executioner":

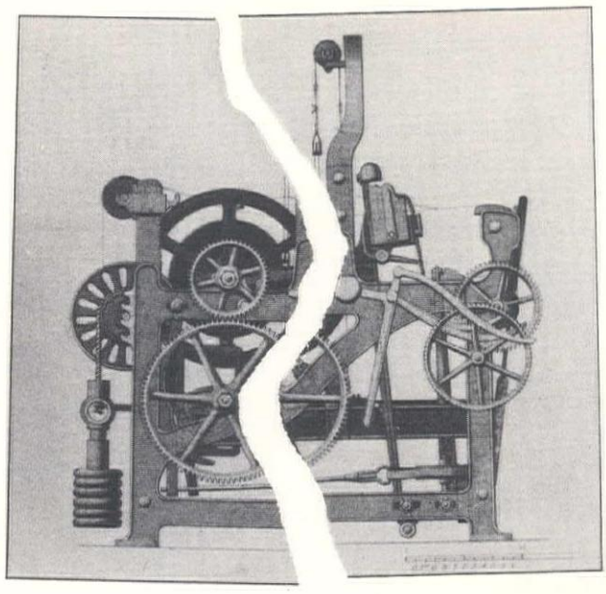
The guilty may fear, but no vengeance
he aims
At the honest mans life or estate.
His wrath is entirely confined to
wide frames
And to those that old prices abate.
These Engines of mischief were sentenced
to die
By unanimous vote of the Trade;
And Ludd who can all opposition defy
Was the grand Executioner made.

And when in the work of destruction
employed
He himself to no method confines,
By fire and by water he gets them
destroyed
For the Elements aid his designs.
Whether guarded by Soldiers along
the Highway
Or closely secured in the room,
He shivers them up both by night
and by day,
And nothing can soften their doom.

He may censure great Ludd's disrespect
for the Laws
Who ne'er for a moment reflects,
That *foul Imposition* alone was the cause
Which produced these unhappy effects.
Let the haughty no longer the humble
oppress
Then shall Ludd sheath his conquering
sword,
His grievances instantly meet with redress
Then peace will be quickly restored.

Let the wise and the great lend their
aid and advice
Nor e'er their assistance withdraw
Till full fashioned work at the
old fashioned price
Is established by Custom and Law.
Then the Trade when this ardorous
contest is o'er
Shall raise in full spendour its head,
And colting and cutting and squaring
no more
Shall deprive honest workmen of bread. . . .

By the spring of 1812, scarcely any smaller manufacturers in Yorkshire were still using machinery, and the Luddites felt that the time had come to march against the big mills whose owners had hired guards. There were two mills in particular that the Luddites were determined to destroy, William Horsfall's mill near Huddersfield and William Cartwright's at Rawfolds in Liversedge. They decided to attack Cartwright's mill first.



Cartwright himself never left his mill, not even at night when armed workers and soldiers manned a line of defense all around the property. Inside the mill he had thrown up barricades of spiked rollers to protect the machinery, and at the top of the stairs a vat of concentrated sulfuric acid was held ready to be tipped on the heads of any Luddites who succeeded in breaking down the door.

Between one and two hundred Luddites assembled for the attack under the leadership of George Mellor, a passionate and brave young cropper of twenty-two. Armed with pistols, hammers, hatchets, and muskets, the men marched in three well-ordered companies to Cartwright's mill, arriving shortly before midnight. They immediately opened fire and after twenty minutes of hard, fast shooting had smashed nearly all the windows. Then an assault party of sixteen men, headed by Mellor and armed with axes and "Enochs," dashed through the yard gates. Under heavy fire from every side, the Luddites lashed out frantically—and uselessly—at the huge barred doors of the mill. Five or six men were wounded, the ground of the yard became slippery with blood, the assault party was soon forced to retreat. Mellor escaped with his badly injured cousin in his arms, but two dying comrades were left lying by the mill door.

These two men were Samuel Hartley, a twenty-four-year-old cropper who had been dismissed by Cartwright when the new machinery was installed, and John Booth, nineteen years old, a harness maker's apprentice and the son of a former cropper who was a clergyman in the neighborhood. Young Booth and Hartley purportedly were allowed to lie in agonizing pain all night.

At length, after a crowd had gathered, the two wounded men were carried inside the mill and then to the Star Inn at Robertown, where doctors were summoned to attend them. Hartley died almost immediately; Booth lingered on until six o'clock, amidst the fumes of the aqua fortis that had been applied to the stump of his amputed leg. The Reverend Hammond Roberson, a pugnacious High Tory who had been at Rawfolds the night that Cartwright's mill was attacked, hovered over him in the hope that he might confess the names of his accomplices. He refused to speak, however, until he knew he was dying, and then he motioned to Roberson to come closer. "Can you keep a secret?" he whispered. With eager expectation Roberson replied that he could. "So can I," gasped Booth, closed his eyes, and died.

Cartwright's successful defense of his mill marked a turning point in the his-

tory of Yorkshire Luddism. Thereafter, no other mill was assaulted in force; and Cartwright himself became a hero to the authorities, to army officers, and Tory squires, magistrates, and parsons alike. The clothworkers, of course, detested him more than ever now. He received some grudging approval when a soldier who had refused to fire on the Luddites and who was sentenced to receive three hundred lashes outside his mill was unbound after twenty-five at Cartwright's fervent request. But this leniency scarcely softened the hatred he aroused during his subsequent relentless pursuit of those Luddites who had survived the attack on his mill.

Despite the thoroughness of this pursuit, however, not a single man was arrested. Thousands of troops patrolled the West Riding; scores of spies were employed; whole villages of working people, who must have known at least some of the men involved, were rigorously questioned. But there was a conspiracy of total silence. As two London magistrates who had been sent north reported to the Home Office, "Almost every creature of the lower order, both in town and country, are on the Luddites' side."

Thus supported and protected, Mellor and his accomplices decided to take action against the other big mill owner in the district, William Horsfall, a more hated man than even Cartwright. Horsfall positively invited attack. He had been heard to proclaim his ardent desire to "ride up to his saddle girths" in Luddite blood. His mill, like Cartwright's, was defended by armed workers and soldiers; and he had gone so far as to have a cannon mounted on the roof. But it was not the mill that the Luddites intended to assault. In revenge for the men killed at Cartwright's, particularly John Booth, a close friend of Mellor, it was Horsfall himself who was marked as their victim. Mellor had a morbid loathing of Horsfall, more virulent even than his hatred of Cartwright. For one day, as his cousin later related, Mellor had come across a cropper's starving wife who had collapsed in a hedgerow with her dead baby in her arms. As Mellor tried to revive her, Horsfall came riding by. Mellor picked up the baby and, in a fury of resentment, held it out toward Horsfall, accusing him of being responsible for its death. Horsfall's response had been to cut Mellor across the face with his whip.

Mellor had his revenge on the morning of April 28, 1812, when Horsfall, riding home from Huddersfield, was injured by a fusillade of musket balls fired from behind a stone wall. He died thirty-eight hours later.

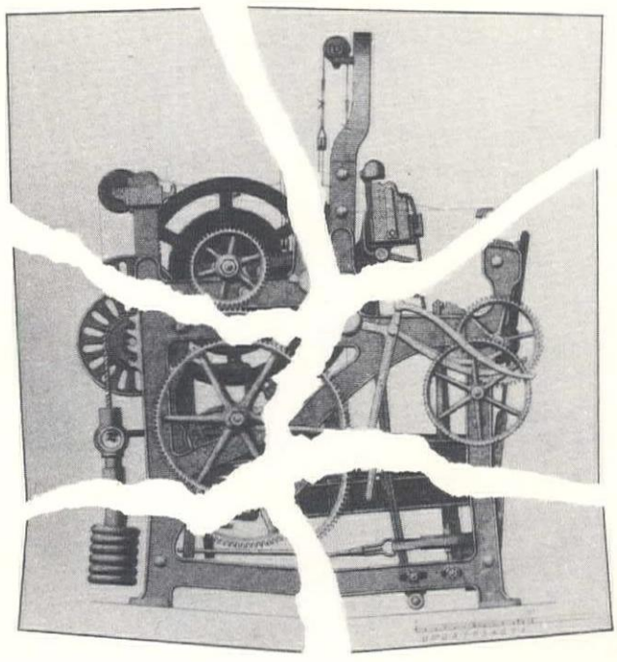
This murder shocked the county and brought the middle and upper classes together in revulsion. Although many workers were, of course, deeply distressed by the murder, the Luddites' hold on the sympathy of the working community was, nevertheless, almost as secure as ever. And for months even an intensive search throughout the area failed to uncover anyone willing to betray the assassins. Not until one of Mellor's accomplices turned king's evidence did their whereabouts become known. Nine months after the murder Mellor and his accomplices were finally captured. Along with a number of other Luddites and their supporters—John Baines, the Halifax hatter, included—they were carted off to York, and the mass trials of January, 1813, began.

Baines and five of his associates were sentenced to seven years in a penal colony for administering illegal oaths, the sternest sentence possible for that offense. Mellor and two others convicted of Horsfall's murder were hanged, though they refused to the end to acknowledge their guilt. Nine men found guilty of receiving arms and money for the Luddites were also condemned to be hanged. So, too, were five men of good character who, on the flimsiest evidence, were convicted of having taken part in the assault on Cartwright's mill. On being asked if he thought that so many men should be hanged on one beam, the judge is said to have pondered the question at some length before delivering the whimsical reply, "Why, no, Sir, I consider they would hang more comfortably on two."

After these executions, Luddism in Yorkshire was at an end. The movement, however, had not yet run its full course. A few weeks before Horsfall's murder, the discontent of the Lancashire cotton weavers had culminated in an outburst of Luddite violence as widespread as it was brief. Following an attack on the premises of a Stockport manufacturer who had had the temerity to install a steam loom, weavers rioted in Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, and again at Stockport, where the mob was led by two men dressed as women and calling themselves "General Ludd's wives." Threatening letters, like those received by employers in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, were addressed to manufacturers who had set up machinery in their factories. "We think it our Bounin Duty to give you this notice," ran one such warning, "that is if you do Not Cause Dressing Machines to be Remov'd Within the Bounds of Seven Days . . . your factory and all that it Contains Will . . . be Set on fire."

The day after this letter was written, the most formidable Luddite army ever assembled attacked a mill containing steam looms at Middleton. The defenders of the mill, though greatly outnumbered, were armed with muskets, whereas the several thousand Luddites had no weapons more lethal than stones and consequently could not get beyond the mill gates. The next day, however, when the Luddites gathered outside the mill in even greater numbers, they were joined by almost two hundred men wielding miner's picks or muskets with fixed bayonets. The defenses of the mill again proved too strong. Several assaults were driven back, and by the time the Luddites had turned in desperation on the mill owner's house and set it on fire, the army had arrived on the scene. The troops opened fire; several men were killed; and many more were wounded.

Dispersed with heavy losses at Middleton, the Luddites nevertheless assembled three days later at Westhoughton, where a steam-powered mill



was attacked, its doors smashed in, and its power looms demolished. This was on April 24; three days later Horsfall was murdered in Yorkshire; a fortnight after that the prime minister, Spencer Perceval, was assassinated in London.

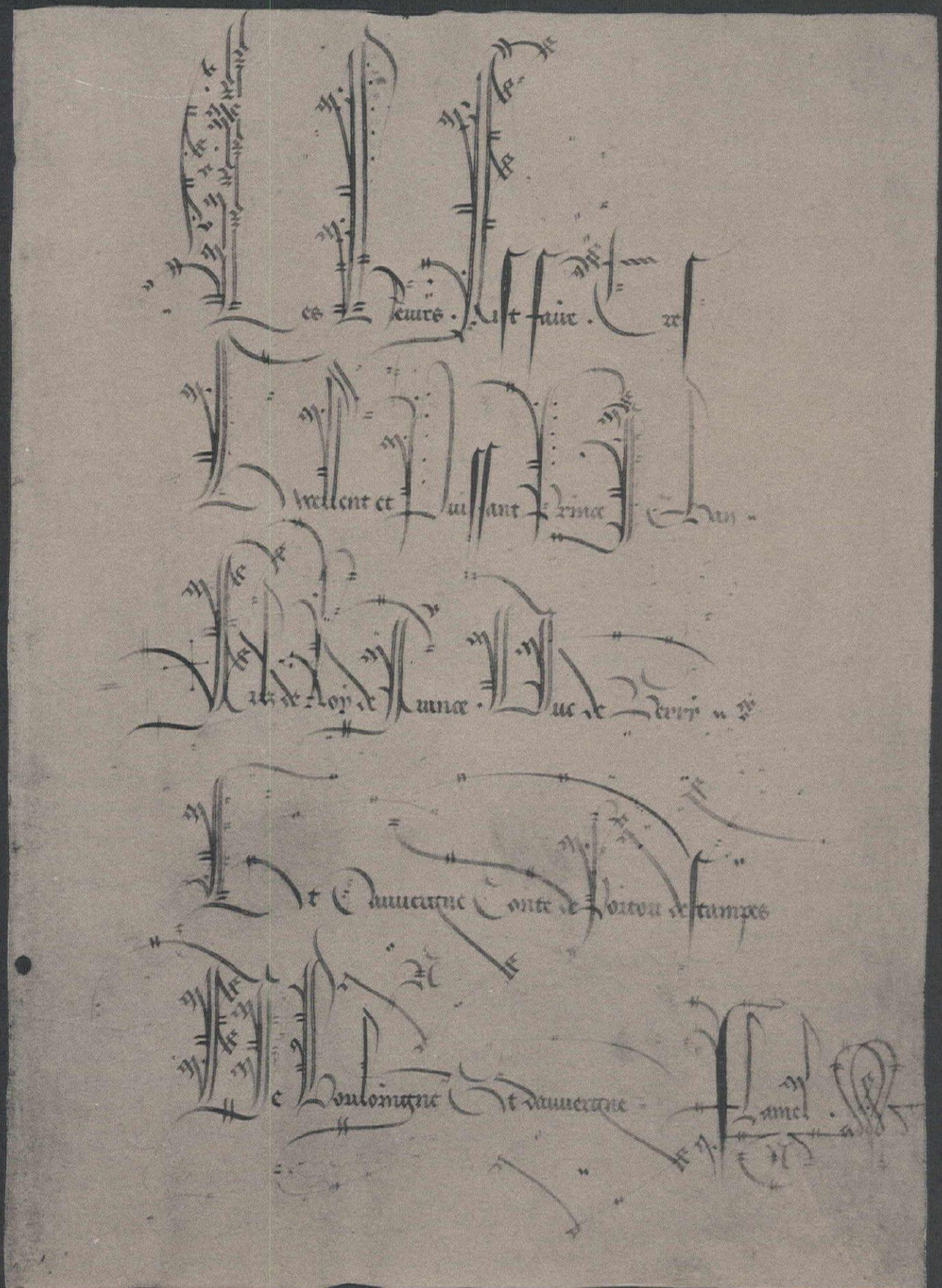
It seemed for a time that the Luddites might have provoked a national revolution. John Bellingham, Perceval's assassin, was not a workman but a mentally deranged commercial agent ruined by the war. Yet he was acclaimed by the Luddites as a hero worthy of comparison with George Mellor. In Lancashire, people openly expressed their joy at his deed; in London, huge crowds applauded him; in Nottingham, mobs paraded through the town "with drums beating and flags flying in triumph"; in Yorkshire, notices offering rewards for the prince regent's head, now that the prime minister had been disposed of, were posted on the walls.

Never, since machine breaking had first become widespread, had a general insurrection seemed more imminent. As one condemned Luddite now put it, "Ludding and Politicks were closely connected." And the vice lieutenant of Yorkshire declared his belief that England was taking the "direct road to an open insurrection." Had there been some national leadership or even national policy that the Luddites could have identified with, this open insurrection, which the government constantly dreaded, might well have broken out. But what little reliable evidence exists suggests that Luddism was essentially a spontaneous movement: its local leaders had little connection with one another and no settled policies of long-term reform. In the districts where they operated, the Luddites retained their hold on the working communities long after the days of machine breaking were over, but by the summer of 1812 the crisis of Luddism was past. There were isolated instances of machine smashing and rioting well on into the fall, and as late as 1817 a large factory at Loughborough in Leicestershire was attacked by masked men armed with blunderbusses, their leaders shouting, "Ludds, do your duty well!" This was the final demonstration of the Luddites' declining power, and afterward James Towle, the last of the Luddite heroes, was executed.

Yet for years the spirit of the Luddites lingered on. Those who survived the gallows or escaped transportation handed down Luddite legends, sang Luddite songs, and carefully preserved Luddite secrets. They were proud of their part in an underground movement that was indeed an important stage in the development of the working class, far more significant than the outbursts of violence that gave Luddism its subsequent notoriety. Machinery was, after all, only part of a general factory system the Luddites had vainly strived to destroy. As E. P. Thompson has pointed out in *The Making of the English Working Class*, Luddism erupted at a time when the old paternalist legislation that had to some extent protected the worker from the unscrupulous manufacturer and unjust employer was being swept away; when the "shadowy image of a benevolent corporate state"—where artisans occupied a lowly but nevertheless respected position in society—was being rapidly dispersed. Artisans and journeymen felt themselves "thrust beyond the pale of the constitution" and robbed of those few rights they had previously enjoyed. "As a body of ingenious artisans employed on materials of great value," the experienced silkworkers of Derby protested to the master hosiers, "we conceive ourselves entitled to a higher station in society." Instead of that, they—and tens of thousands of skilled workers in other trades—were to be given over to what they considered little better than slavery in vast, forbidding factories where their identities would be lost, where they and their children would be exploited, oppressed, and corrupted, confined for all their working lives in demeaning, incessant, soul-destroying labor. From this point of view, then, Luddism can be seen as "a violent eruption of feeling against industrial capitalism." And workers today who protest against the emotionally and intellectually stultifying effects of factory life may be seen as the Luddites' natural heirs.

More than two hundred years have passed since Richard Arkwright developed the spinning frame. But for those workers who have to operate them, unwillingly, repetitively, in conditions of unutterable boredom, machines remain the enemies of man, as monstrous an affront to the human spirit as those detested, clanking contrivances in the dark, satanic mills of early industrial England.

The latest of Christopher Hibbert's many books covers the early life of George IV, who became prince regent the very year—1811—the Luddite rebellion was launched.



LES BELLES HEURES OF THE DUC DE BERRY

The *Belles Heures*, a prayer book commissioned in the early years of the fifteenth century, is now receiving its due as a radiant masterpiece of the late Middle Ages



While an attendant stands guard, the Duc de Berry kneels at prayer in the painting above, one of some hundred and seventy in his Book of Hours. Jean Flamel, secretary to the duke, wrote in a flourishing hand on the flyleaf, opposite, that the Belles Heures *had been "made to the order of the very excellent and mighty Prince Jean, son of the King of France, Duc de Berry and Auvergne, Count of Poitou, Estampes, Boulogne. . . ."*

If art can be said to reveal the spirit of an age, then the decorated pages of the *Belles Heures* of the Duc de Berry are proof only that the fifteenth century in France was a period of extraordinary contrasts. Certainly the sparkling miniatures of saints and angels seem to have little to do with the mundane horrors that people faced. By all accounts, the dawn of the fifteenth century was a time of chronic war, injustice, misery, and pestilence. Poets like Eustache Deschamps wrote melancholy lyrics of a world in decline:

> Time of mourning and temptation,
> Age of tears, of envy and torment,
> Time of languor and damnation,
> A declining age near its end,
> Time full of horror. . . .

Even the Church was in trouble: it was rumored that not one soul had entered paradise since the Great Schism began. Outbreaks of the plague were common, taxes were high, and political stability unknown. In such a world, a beautiful Book of Hours provided welcome escape, at least for the few who could afford one.

The *Belles Heures* is the first of two Books of Hours with miniatures by the Limbourg brothers, artists in the service of the Duc de Berry. The later work—the *Très Riches Heures* in the Musée Condé, Chantilly—has been widely reproduced, and this fall the lesser-known but equally beautiful *Belles Heures* is at last receiving the attention it has so long deserved. It is on exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and a new, complete edition of the manuscript has just been published by George Braziller, Inc.

"Ces heures. Fist faire. Très Excellent et Puissant Prince Jehan . . . ," reads the flyleaf of the *Belles Heures*, flamboyantly inscribed by the Duc de Berry's secretary. The "very excellent and mighty" prince commissioned the *Belles Heures* some time around 1405, toward the end of a long life as the powerful ruler of the duchy of Berry in central France. Son of the Valois king John II, the Duc de Berry and his brothers—King Charles V, Philip the Bold of Burgundy, and Louis of Anjou—were the great collectors and art patrons of their time. (See "The Duty of the Prince is Magnificence" in HORIZON, Autumn, 1970.) Of them all, the Duc de Berry seems to have had the greatest love for his collection, and the closest relationship with the artists he employed.

Much of the duke's enormous collection has disappeared. During his lifetime, he was occasionally forced to sell

By PRISCILLA FLOOD



Seasonal vignettes and signs of the zodiac decorate the calendar pages of the Belles Heures. *Among them are a male and female Gemini, above, posing discreetly behind a shield, a peasant scything grass below, and, opposite, workers tying wheat into bundles.*

gems and melt down precious gold jewels to pay his soldiers. Over the centuries the tapestries that brought warmth and color to drab castle walls have almost all disappeared; most of the castles the duke built have crumbled. But, of the nearly three hundred manuscripts known to have been in his library, about a third remain today. Portable and relatively easy to protect, the books are his enduring legacy.

Books of Hours first came into use at the end of the fourteenth century as a devotional aid for members of the upper class, who often had their own private chapels. Included in a Book of Hours were prayers for the daily office (matins and lauds, prime, tierce, sext, nones, vespers, and complin) and the hours of the Virgin and the Passion, and edifying stories of various saints, usually taken from *The Golden Legend*, an anecdotal compendium drawn up by Jacobus de Varagine in the thirteenth century. Rich in marvelous and often bloody detail, the lives of the saints made a Book of Hours enjoyable as a storybook as well as a spiritual guide.

Since there was no prescribed iconography for a Book of Hours, the artists who illustrated them were free—within the confines of the patron's wishes, of course—to introduce new subjects and designs. A noble gentleman or lady commissioning a Book of Hours knew that the result would be a truly original work of art. The Duc de Berry, with typical extravagance, commissioned six of them—each elaborately illuminated. Certainly beauty was as important to the duke as religious significance. In his introduction to the new Braziller edition of the manuscript, *The Belles Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry*, Millard Meiss, the noted art historian, points out: "Prayer alone and contemplation of the Christian mysteries would scarcely have required an entire series of manuscripts of this kind, even though each painter told the stories in a somewhat different way." Only the duke's best *enlumineurs* worked on the Books of Hours, and among the best were three brothers, Paul, Jean, and Herman of Limbourg.

The *Belles Heures* is the only complete illuminated manuscript from their hands (the *Très Riches Heures* was left incomplete when they died and finished by other artists). As far as we know, the brothers began their artistic careers in Paris, where Herman and Jean were apprenticed to a goldsmith at the turn of the century. Their love of intricate design, almost like bright jewels inlaid in gold, derives, perhaps, from this early training. Painters and craftsmen of all sorts lived together and learned from one another in the ateliers of Paris, which already had a long tradition as a center of art. The "School of Paris," as it later came to be called, produced fresh and delicate paintings that combined a realistic attention to detail with a new sense of space and three-dimensional form. Artists came to Paris from all over Europe, and the work they produced was truly international in style. In this artistic melting pot, the Limbourg brothers must have developed their talents quickly: by 1402, Paul and Jean were hired by the Duc de Berry's brother Philip to illustrate a Bible, the commission stating that they were to work exclusively on the Bible and receive twenty Parisian sous daily "for their labor and their living, as well as other necessities. . . ."

In 1413 Paul turns up in the records of the Duc de Berry as a *valet de chambre*, but Millard Meiss believes that the Limbourg brothers were all in the duke's service much earlier. One piece of evidence is the juicy tidbit that in 1408 the duke was holding an eight-year-old girl in his castle at Bicêtre near Paris for the pleasure of his *"peintre alemant"*; presumably this German painter was Paul. The next year, the duke gave a house in Bourges to *"ung sien paintre nommé Pol, natif du païs dallemaigne."* Such favors of flesh and property would only have been bestowed on an established member of the court. In fact, the brothers were on such good terms with their patron that they felt free to play a practical joke on him: in 1410 they sent him a fake book, like a publisher's dummy, "made of one piece of wood, painted in the semblance of a book in which there were no leaves, or anything written."

Working in one of the duke's castles in Bourges or Paris, the artists completed the *Belles Heures* by late in 1408, or early in 1409. (The Duc de Berry had so many residences in Berry and in or around Paris that it is difficult to know for sure where he or his artists could be found.) The inventory of the duke's library described the manuscript as follows:

> Item, a *belles heures*, very well and richly illustrated; at the beginning is the calendar, very richly inscribed and illustrated; and afterwards is illustrated the life and martyrdom of Saint Catherine; and following that are written the four gospels and two prayers to Our Lady; and then begin the hours of Our Lady, and following these are several other hours and prayers; . . . [it is] covered in scarlet velvet with two gold clasps, . . . these hours monseigneur had made by his *ouvriers*.

In addition to the life of Saint Catherine, there were four other major picture cycles—three representing the lives of ascetic saints and one illustrating the story of the Great Litany.

These special cycles were picture stories: miniature follows miniature



with short inscriptions serving as captions for the inventive and beautiful illustrations. One can assume that the subjects of the picture cycles—all optional in a Book of Hours—had some special meaning for the duke. Saint John the Baptist was his patron saint, and the purely legendary Saint Catherine, a learned virgin of Alexandria, was especially venerated by the Valois. She was supposed to have been a daughter of a king, and many of the royal women, including the Duchesse de Berry, placed themselves under her protection. Catherine was also the special saint of scholars and philosophers, among whom the duke included himself and the intellectual members of his court. Contemplation and love of classical learning were celebrated in the pictures of the life of Saint Jerome, the scholarly Father of the Church who admitted being distracted from the Gospels by the eloquence of Plato. The awful experience of the plague in France would have lent added poignancy to the miniatures of plague victims in the story of the Great Litany (the prayers originally offered by Pope Gregory the Great during an outbreak of plague in Rome in 590). The Duc de Berry knew well the dreadful disease: his own mother had died of the plague when he was nine years old.

But why did the lives of the ascetics hold such a particular fascination for the duke? In addition to the life of Saint Jerome, an advocate of extreme asceticism, the *Belles Heures* also included picture stories of Saint Bruno, founder of the austere Carthusian order; Saint Paul, by tradition the first Christian hermit; and another early Christian, Saint Anthony Abbot, who gave away his possessions and fled to the desert. Faced with the violence of politics and the worldly vanity of the court, perhaps the Duc de Berry himself longed for a simple life in the wilderness.

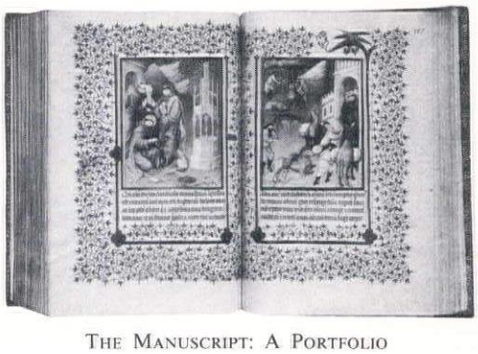
Not all the miniatures of the *Belles Heures* are religious in nature. Scenes from the secular life—threshing of wheat, trampling of grapes, slaughtering of a pig—mark the seasons on the pages of the calendar. The first of the two portraits of the duke depicts him in a splendid blue robe and kneeling at prayer in his private oratory. A grand and vigorous seignior, he appears to be in his late thirties or early forties. The Limbourg brothers must have known the value of flattery, for the duke was at least sixty-five at the time. Since the portrait faces one of Jeanne de Boulogne, Berry's second wife, then in her twenties, youthful appearance was important. (Even in an age of loveless marriage, Berry was chastised for unseemly lust when, at forty-nine, he took a bride of twelve.)



In the last miniature of the *Belles Heures*, illustrating a prayer for travelers, the Duc de Berry and his retinue approach a fairyland castle decorated with the blue and gold banners of Burgundy. Millard Meiss speculates that the miniature may depict an actual journey that the duke made to Ypres in 1408. There he met with his nephew John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, in an attempt to settle a bloody dispute between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs that threatened to become civil war.

The duke's attempt to mediate was a failure, the feud continued, and his connections with the Armagnac party brought him grief. Beginning in 1410, he was forced to live outside Paris much of the time, for his own safety. In 1411 his Hôtel de Nesle in Paris was looted, and Bicêtre, full of paintings and works of art of all kinds, was burned—presumably by Burgundian supporters. Violence had finally burst into the duke's own world, destroying what he held most dear.

In 1416 another scourge of the age—epidemic disease—apparently took the lives of all three of the Limbourg brothers. Within six months, their patron was himself dead at the age of seventy-five. His vast collection was dispersed; the *Belles Heures* was acquired by Yolande of Aragon, wife of the Duke of Anjou, Berry's nephew. Not much is known of the manuscript's peregrinations until the nineteenth century, when it turned up in the collection of the Baron d'Ailly and from there passed into the hands of Baron Edmond de Rothschild. Since 1954 the *Belles Heures* has been one of the prized holdings of The Cloisters in New York City. Almost 570 years later, its miniatures are as fresh as on the day the Limbourg brothers put down their brushes and delivered the completed manuscript to the duke. He would be pleased.

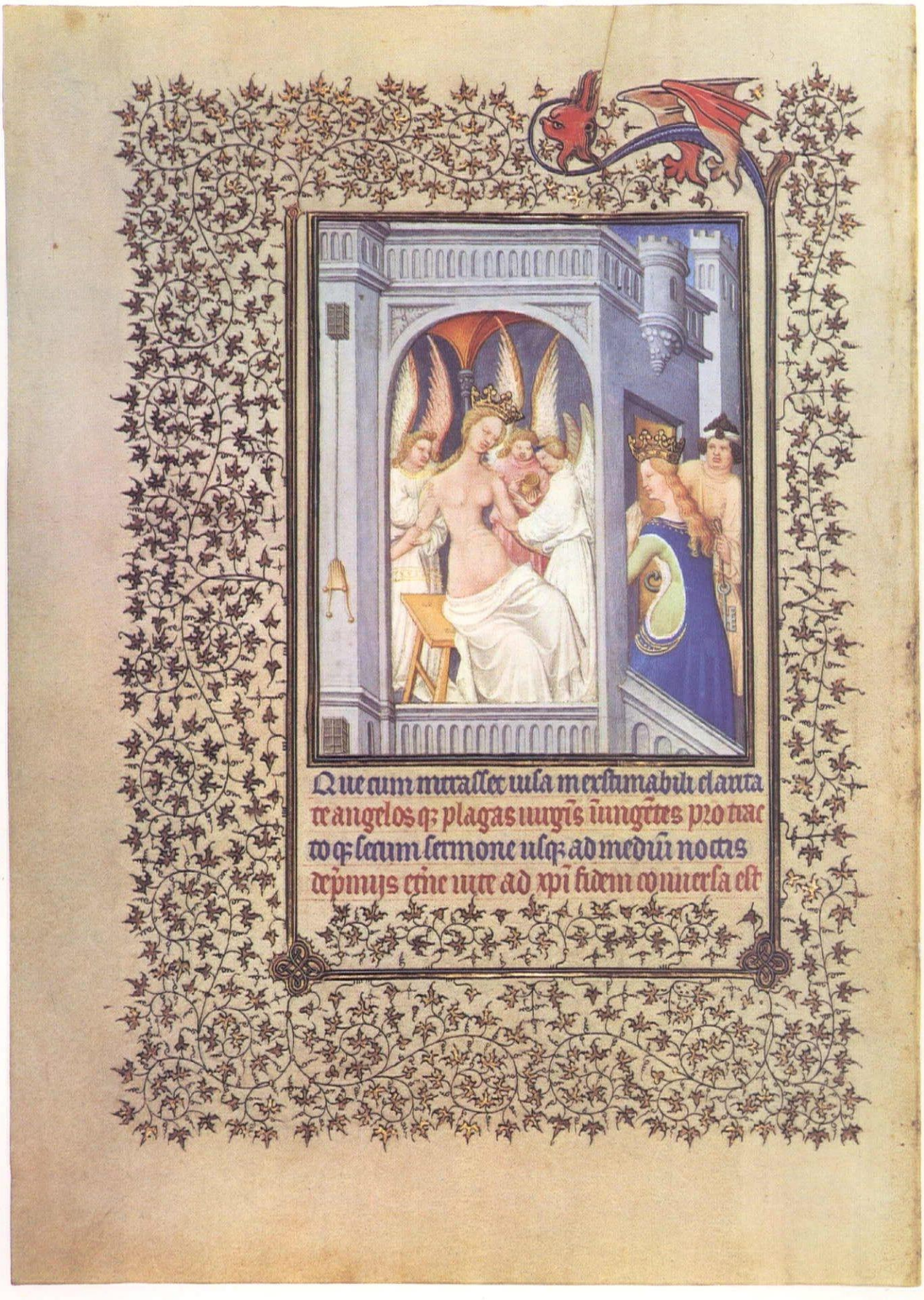


THE MANUSCRIPT: A PORTFOLIO

When the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York acquired the Belles Heures *for The Cloisters collection, the late James J. Rorimer, who was then director of the museum, called it a "jewel among great Gothic manuscripts." Certainly the exquisite pages, which are reproduced here to size, are dazzling in the intricacy of their design and the brilliance of their colors. Striking hues—gold, vermilion, and an ultramarine blue so precious that the Duc de Berry listed pots of it among his treasures—play against a wide range of delicate pinks, grays, greens, and browns. The Limbourg brothers' paintings, surrounded by lavish borders, combine with beautiful Gothic script to create a work that is truly "illuminated"—filled with light. Most important, the artists were imaginative storytellers: all but the last of the illuminations on the following pages illustrate moments from sacred tales dear to the medieval audience.*



The painting of the Annunciation beginning the Hours of the Virgin has the most elaborate border of all the miniatures in the manuscript. Among the angels and intertwining acanthus leaves are the arms of the Duc de Berry—escutcheons of fleur-de-lis—and the diminutive swans and bears that served as his emblems.



Pale, delicate, and chastely nude, Saint Catherine of Alexandria is anointed by angels as the Roman empress Faustina enters her prison for a visit. The saint, according to the legend, was tortured and finally put to death by the emperor Maxentius for her refusal to marry him and worship his pagan idols.



In this miniature illustrating the Hours of the Passion, the Hebrews, offered the traditional clemency for one prisoner at Passover, choose Barabbas. Pilate stands in the center of a balcony above an agitated crowd, while the prisoners who are about to be crucified with Christ peek from behind the barred window.



De sancto georgio ā.

Cum autem beat' georgius in no mine dei martirium re cepisset uenerunt ca pud eum regionis um ciuitatem et sanctum corpus eius nocturno

Saint George, patron of chivalrous knights, ignores the hissing young dragons emerging from the cave, slays their monster-mother, and rescues the beautiful princess. By the time the Belles Heures *was painted, the story had taken on added significance: the kneeling princess represents the Church saved by the Crusades.*



Rex egregie cor
dam regi francie
ludouice pie cum regi glo
rie triumphans hodie pro
prie reque regni eterne
xpm deprecare. Vbis.
Ora pro nobis karissime
ludouice. Responsum.

In 1249, during the Sixth Crusade, Louis IX of France, known as Saint Louis, captured the Moslem city of Damietta on the North African coast. Here his ships are approaching the city, and the saint is praying for victory, or perhaps simply for safe passage through the rocks that rise from the churning sea.



Sanct' paul' prim' hēmita fruēte plecuōe de
aj uilo q' xp̄ianus quidā mt' amena ligat' et
ab ipudica fitat' lingua abscidit et mt' facie
spuit ut tempta ōne dol' fugaret. roma fug'

What appears to be a scene of idyllic love-making is actually the cruel temptation of a Christian devised by the emperor Decius. The youth, pinned to the ground while a prostitute caresses him, bites off his tongue to quell his lust. To escape such persecution, Saint Paul the Hermit, right, fled to the desert.



Quē dum p siluas anthoni quereret ypotn
tauū obuiā hīt qui ei derta uiā ad paulū de
mōstrat ide sanū reptr siluar dū erore gētiliū
et tandē lupū q eum ad paulū cellam adduxit.

The story of Saint Paul the Hermit nears its end as the saint waits to die beside his stone sarcophagus on the shore of a vermilion Red Sea. Saint Anthony Abbot, another early Christian ascetic, is seeking the old man in the wilderness. He asks directions of a fanciful creature that is part centaur, part satyr.



The last prayer in the Belles Heures *is devoted to travelers. Jean de Berry, bearded in this portrait, rides a white horse toward a castle. The courtiers, their prancing mounts, the crenelated towers—all elements in the Limbourg brothers' real world—seem here part of a fairyland removed from the passage of time.*



A Connoisseur Who Sleepwalked into History

Baron Edmond de Rothschild—one-time owner of the *Belles Heures*—feared Zionism, disliked democracy, and became, quite by accident, a founder of modern Israel

The House of Rothschild was already legendary when Baron Edmond de Rothschild, art collector and eccentric philanthropist, was born in 1845, the fourth son of the head of the family's Paris branch. He was, in many respects, a peculiar man, but he was peculiar in the Rothschild way, and the Rothschilds were the most peculiar private family of the age.

The family's most obvious distinction was the unparalleled magnitude of its wealth. Together, the five family banks—in Paris, London, Frankfurt, Naples, and Vienna—were worth an estimated one billion dollars. Edmond's father, Baron James de Rothschild, youngest of the five sons of the dynasty's founder, Nathan Amschel Rothschild, was not merely the richest man in France, he was richer than all the other major French bankers combined. Such wealth was, literally, fabulous, although the fables it inspired were of the most sinister kind.

What made the Rothschilds so dazzlingly conspicuous, however, was not their wealth but what they did with it. For they were not capitalists in the strict sense—that is, members of the middle class who invested in private commercial and industrial enterprises. The Rothschilds were, almost exclusively, state bankers who advanced loans to, and single-handedly supported the credit of, governments, particularly the monarchies of Britain, France, Prussia, Italy, and Austria (which gave the family its baronial title in 1822). And of course they were Jews, one generation removed from Frankfurt's Jew Street. "King of the Jews and the Jew of Kings" was the way one hostile pamphleteer described a leader of the clan around the time of Edmond's birth.

Friend and foe alike took it for granted that the Rothschilds were the real rulers of Europe—its "sixth dynasty." This reputation was perhaps the oddest thing about the Rothschilds, for in fact they had no real political power and, what is even more remarkable, not the slightest wish to possess it. Standing at the center of the public life of Europe, the Rothschilds thought only of the welfare of the family. They were as private and as fundamentally apolitical as any family could be whose fortune was tied to the destiny of nations and whose parties were attended by the rulers of Europe. In this sense, Edmond de Rothschild was the quintessential Rothschild, for when he died in 1934 he had helped make history, not by espousing a public cause, but by pursuing a private hobby.

Of the first thirty-seven years of Edmond's life little is known. According to his biographer, David Druck, he lived during those years a "quiet, refined and carefully guarded palace existence." Life in palaces he certainly led. There was his family's elegant town house on the rue Lafitte, which one of its habitués, the German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, described in his sardonic manner as a "palace" that "unites everything which the spirit of the sixteenth century could conceive and the money of the nineteenth century could buy." Benjamin Disraeli, England's once and future Jewish prime minister, pronounced it "more gorgeous than the Tuileries." The family's country house was an immense chateau at Ferrières, which Edmond's father had had Joseph Paxton build for him in order to outdo Mentmore Towers, the Paxton-designed palace of Edmond's English cousin, Mayer Amschel ("Build me a Mentmore, only twice as big," was Baron James's order to the man who had designed the Crystal Palace).

What young Edmond was "carefully guarded" against, to judge from Heine's account, was the endless siege of the Rothschilds by an army of designing toadies, men so sycophantic, said Heine, that it merited scientific study. "I went to see M. de Rothschild," the poet reported tongue-in-cheek, "and saw a gold-laced lackey bringing the baronial chamber pot along the corridor. Some speculator from the Bourse, who was passing, reverently doffed his hat to the impressive vessel." A lifetime of fending off importunate strangers probably contributed to the mixture of "arrogance" and "furtiveness," which, said the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann, characterized

Edmond de Rothschild was once described by Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first president, as "something of a dandy, but full of experience and sagesse. . . . *In manner he could be both gracious and brutal." Reproductions of the photograph opposite were sold as souvenirs in Palestine in the 1920's.*

By WALTER KARP

Edmond de Rothschild's personality.

Year after year, Edmond dutifully carried out the responsibilities that the House of Rothschild imposed on its males. Although he had little aptitude for banking, he took his place as a partner in the Paris bank. Educated, like all Rothschilds, to cleave to the Jewish faith, he was pious and orthodox. He had a genuine bent for art collecting: in 1880 he acquired the superb *Belles Heures* of the Duc de Berry, with illuminations (a selection of which begins on page 64) by the celebrated Limbourg brothers. For decades he collected engravings too, and on his death was to leave some twenty thousand to the Louvre. But this activity was, like the others, a family custom: almost every Rothschild was a collector, and several, including Edmond, were quite discerning about it.

At thirty-three, he loyally contributed to the all-important solidarity of the far-flung family by marrying Adelheid von Rothschild, a cousin from the Frankfurt branch. Marrying each other was not quite a house rule, but of the twelve marriages contracted by the sons of the five founding sons, nine were to Rothschild women. Anti-Semitic writers in the 1880's would point to the international solidarity of the Rothschilds as proof that world Jewry formed a vast, seamless international web inimical to the well-being of nation-states. The truth is, the Rothschilds had to work hard to preserve their international solidarity against the natural tendency of the family to break up into its national components. With his slender figure, fine, chiseled face, and fashionable Paris dress, Baron Edmond looked more like a French diplomat than anyone's idea of an international Jewish banker.

The uneventful palace existence of Baron Edmond was rudely and forever disrupted on September 28, 1882, when a persistent stranger with a stutter, neither rich nor famous nor fashionable, managed to gain the baron's well-guarded ear. Since the visitor was a rabbi from Russia, the baron was prepared to hear him out. For months, the plight of Russia's Jews had claimed the attention of the civilized world, which looked on in shocked disbelief as Czar Alexander III organized murderous pogroms and promulgated brutal anti-Jewish legislation, as if to defy the century's faith in man's universal advance from barbarism to civilization. In Paris, Victor Hugo had organized a relief organization, and since the Rothschilds headed it, Baron Edmond was acting in accord with family policy as he prepared to make a charitable donation to the shabby figure in front of him.

The rabbi's request was deceptively simple, but it would entangle the baron for the rest of his exceedingly long life. Among the Jews fleeing Russia, the rabbi reported (after reminding the baron portentously that Moses, too, had a stutter), a small number had become imbued with the idea of settling in Palestine and farming its inhospitable soil. They had been there two months and were already starving. To save them was a simple act of charity, but when the baron offered a sizable sum, the rabbi shook his head. He wanted more than money from the baron; he wanted him, he said, "to respond to the call of your nation to revive the ancient land" by financing Jewish farm settlements in Palestine. At that the baron hesitated, and thirty years and thirty million dollars later he was still hesitating, for the notion of a Jewish return to the ancient homeland was, to the emancipated Jews of Europe, like political dynamite.

The idea of Jews returning to Palestine was by no means new; in England it had actually been a fashionable idea since the 1840's. It was fashionable, however, only among Christians. To Edmond's English cousins it was little short of anathema. Since the French Revolution had initiated the emancipation of Europe's Jews from their medieval restrictions, the guiding principle of emancipated Jewry was something the French rabbinate called "national affirmation," the doctrine that the Jews were not a nation or a race, but citizens of their respective countries who simply adhered to the Jewish faith. To speak of returning to the ancient homeland was to revive the awkward notion that Jews were members of an ancient nation and not merely adherents of an ancient religion.

Baron Rothschild's response to "the call of your nation to revive the ancient land" was perfectly in character. He would, indeed, finance Jewish farming in Palestine, but without endorsing the notion that he was reviving a Jewish homeland. Moreover, he stipulated, the illustrious name of Rothschild was not to be attached to the enterprise. The future colonists were to know him only as the "renowned benefactor," whose identity would be kept secret. There was to be no blaring of trumpets, no public notice, nothing to suggest that he, a Rothschild, had committed himself to a public cause. "Only if we proceed quietly and cautiously," he admonished an enthusiast, "will our work be crowned with success." Just what he eventually hoped to accomplish nobody was ever sure: as Dr. Weizmann observed many years later, the baron probably didn't know himself.

One thing he certainly did not envision were democratic communities of sturdy self-governing farmers. Like the rest of the Rothschilds, with their almost medieval fondness for monarchy, Baron Edmond was strangely out of touch with his time. He looked on his colonies (there were four by 1884) as a sort of private demesne of poor relations, with himself as the benevolent patriarch. Under the rule of his agents, the colonies were run like an autocratic state. "Paris," as the baron's remote administration was referred to in Palestine, not only told the farmers what to plant, when to plant, and where to plant, it—meaning the baron—even laid down rules of personal conduct.

The net result of the baron's well-meaning despotism was high comedy—a perpetual guerrilla war between an incredibly openhanded philanthropist and his incredibly rebellious beneficiaries. What made the warfare comic was its sheer unreality. The colonists

demanded independence: the baron demanded filial obedience. Since the baron, a genuinely kindly man, would never abandon his colonies and since the colonists could not survive without his support, the battle, like a family quarrel, raged without letup for decades. The colonists sneered at their benefactor, referring to him contemptuously as "Baron de Rothschild, Anonymous Benefactor." They savagely impugned his motives, some accusing him of planning to build a palace on the land they were plowing with his money. They also filled the Jewish press with bitter tales of his autocratic rule. But their favorite way of tormenting him was to treat him as a brainless moneybags. When he complained to a talkative delegation that their speechmaking was getting him down, one of the delegates replied, "Baron Edmond, give us the key to your safe and we promise not to make any more speeches." The baron, for his part, fumed over the ingratitude of his subjects. "How have they acted toward me?" he complained to the chief rabbi of France. "Not one word of satisfaction. Not one of them after five years has come to tell me that he can earn his own livelihood, which they should have been able to do, for I know that they had the means. But no! They prefer to tell lies, these pious people. They have but one purpose: to extract as much money as possible from me." Yet he kept the money flowing.

In 1887 Baron Edmond boarded his luxurious yacht and paid his first visit to his little kingdom, determined to crush the rebellion. It was the first time he had actually faced his co-religionists of the humbler sort in any numbers, and his hauteur only made a bad situation worse. To one rebel ringleader, he issued the public demand: "Sell me your land and remove from the colony." To which the rebel replied, in what was already the established pattern of the endless war, "Baron, all your millions would not suffice for it." When a rebellious colony invited the baron to a fête in his honor, it was the baron's turn to reply: "Tell them that I am angry with them. They must become better." To the baron, all issues were personal and moral. When he replaced a hated administrator with a less detested agent, he warned the colonists, "If you revolt against him also then I will not forgive you for your sins." In fact, he always did forgive, but of independence he would grant not an iota. "I created the Palestine Yishuv [settlement]," he told a delegation seeking a modicum of self-rule, "I and no one else. Therefore neither colonists nor any organization have the right to interfere with my plans and to offer opinions on the subject." What was anyone to do with a man so autocratic and doting?

Despite his failings, the baron was the only wealthy Jew in Europe interested in Palestine at all. Inevitably, men of larger vision began spinning their dreams around him. In 1896, when Theodor Herzl took the idea of Jewish settlement in Palestine a giant step further by proposing a Jewish state there, he set about winning the baron's support. Their meeting, which took Herzl months to arrange, was a total failure. "When he expressed to me his idea of convoking a Congress and starting a public agitation among Jews and non-Jews . . . I was frightened," the baron recalled twenty-three years later. "I thought it was harmful to the welfare of Jews all over the world, since the anti-Semitics would raise the cry that the Jews ought to be made to go to their own country."

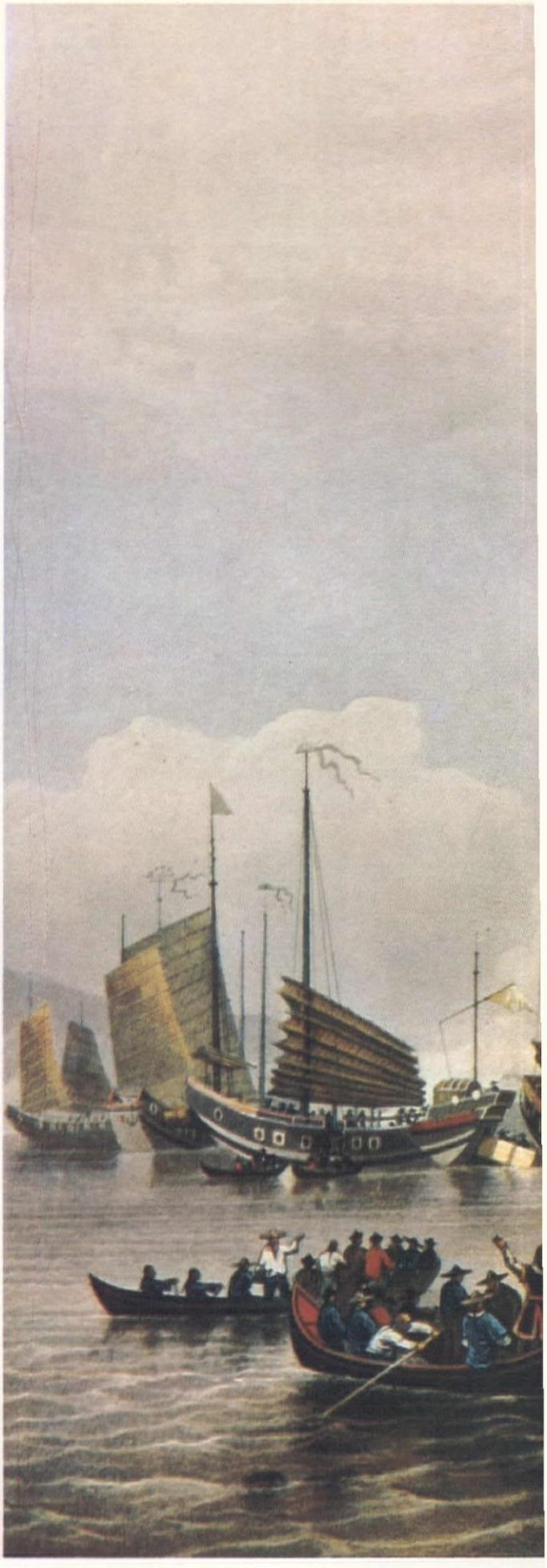
The baron's fright was understandable, for, though it is not often remarked, the ideology of anti-Semitism and the ideology of Zionism are, in important respects, strikingly similar. Both declare the Jews to be, above all else, a nation and not a religious group. Both hold that the Jews' dispersal through many lands is harmful and unhealthy. If it was the outburst of anti-Semitism in France, inspired by the Dreyfus case, that prompted Herzl to call for a Jewish state, it was the same anti-Semitism that frightened Baron Edmond away from Herzl. The English Rothschilds were less than unsympathetic: they formed the League of British Jews to combat Herzl's Zionism.

The baron, at any rate, kept up with his "plans." He continued to found colonies, he continued spending a stupendous fortune, and he continued his running battle with the colonists, whom he now began to rebuke—although it came oddly from a Rothschild—for living too comfortably. "Where is the idealism," he told them on his 1899 yachting trip to Palestine, "in building luxurious homes, where in a woman wearing a modern hat?" Zionism was beginning to win worldwide support and was building new towns in Palestine, but as far as the baron was concerned the world beyond his private domain scarcely existed. When, in 1914, other Rothschilds became interested in Palestine, Baron Edmond fumed in anger. "After I've spent tens of millions on the project, while they made fun of me," he wrote to Weizmann, "they want to come in now with a beggarly few hundred thousand francs and share the glory? If you need money you come to *me*!"

If ever a man sleepwalked into history, it was Baron Edmond de Rothschild, for his twelve agricultural colonies were without question among the strongest roots of the modern state of Israel—the very idea of which had frightened him, and to which he was never quite reconciled until almost the end of his life. He was eighty-one when he paid his final visit to Palestine in 1925. The new city of Tel Aviv was festooned with flags and bunting in honor of the baron, who was called upon to make a farewell address. "When I look back on the stretch of almost half a century since I began my work," said the baron, "and when I recall how Palestine appeared in those days, a rocky barren land full of thorns, it seems to me that I am in a dream." Afterward, five thousand school children paraded past the town hall while the old man, standing on the balcony, wept. Perhaps it was then that he at last caught up with the history of which he was a notable part and with a political movement to which he had belonged without quite knowing it.

THE OPIUM WAR

By J. H. PLUMB





The British grew great quantities of the opium poppy, left, in their Indian colonies of Bengal and Bihar, and then exported its hardened juice—opium—into China. When the Chinese tried to suppress the illegal trade, Britain went to war in 1839. In the painting above, the ship on the right, the H.M.S. Nemesis *(Britain's first steam gunboat in the Orient), fires on a Chinese junk and destroys it.*

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, GREENWICH; OPPOSITE: ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS, KEW — BOTH COURTESY TIME-LIFE INTERNATIONAL



When China's rulers tried to ban a drug that was turning millions of their countrymen into addicts, British pushers launched a war to keep the traffic moving

BRITISH MUSEUM—COURTESY TIME-LIFE INTERNATIONAL



The emperor Ch'ien Lung, borne on a litter and preceded by members of his mandarin entourage, goes forth to meet Lord Macartney (at far right) on September 14, 1793. The British embassy was received in the gaily decorated tent at rear because of Macartney's abrupt refusal to kowtow to the emperor: only in such an informal setting could this lapse be made to seem acceptable to the Chinese.

Empires fall. Always they carry the seeds of their own decay, but seeds require special circumstances to germinate and grow. All empires excite the greed and envy of other nations, but it requires special opportunities for greed and envy to be transformed into aggression. China was no exception. In 1750 China had never been stronger, richer, more stable; no other empire had been so long in existence, no other government's future looked more secure. By 1850 China was at the mercy of Britain. The reasons were complex. Perhaps nothing could have saved China, but it was a drug—opium—that triggered disasters that ended in China's ruin.

In 1600 only a few European merchants, mainly Portuguese and Dutch, handled the Chinese luxury goods—silks, porcelains, lacquer, tea—that found a ready market in the West, but they knew next to nothing of the country from which these goods came. Some of them had read about the travels of Marco Polo, though not many believed the stories were true. A few intellectuals had acquired a little more knowledge, but it was only during the seventeenth century, with the missionary activities of the Jesuits, that Europe's knowledge of China grew steadily in accuracy and volume.

Even that knowledge was cast in a strange mold. The Jesuits accepted the mandarins' view that China was governed by scholars according to the principles of Confucian morality, a view that the philosophers of the eighteenth century—Leibnitz, Voltaire, Malebranche—adopted with enthusiasm. And, of course, Oliver Goldsmith popularized this image of China in his *Citizen of the World,* in which a courteous, charming, and witty Chinese philosopher observes the oddities and contradictions of London life, so different from the philosophical rationalism of his own country. Indeed, a fairy-tale China, with a tiny substratum of factual reality, was used as a means of criticism of European life and institutions. The philosophers of the Enlightenment preached harmony, benevolence, justice, and longed for a society free from religious myth but committed to the morality of religion. They thought they had found it in imperial China.

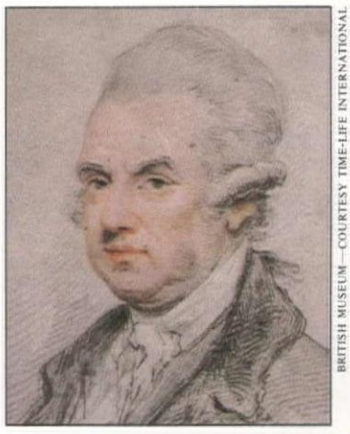
And the philosophers were not alone. Since the late seventeenth century, artists, particularly those concerned with the decorative arts, had bastardized many themes and some of the styles of Chinese art, and by the mid-eighteenth century chinoiserie ran riot in architecture, porcelain, and furniture. The Duchess of Bedford had a pagoda-style dairy; the Landgrave of Kassel built an entire Chinese village; and it became outrageously smart to own a Chinese boy servant (far smarter than having a mere Negro page), partly because they were exceedingly rare, only a few being brought back by East India merchants. The Duchess of Dorset was so enamoured of her boy—Wang y Tong—that she provided private tutors to give him a classical education and then had him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Some China lovers were so besotted that they dressed themselves up as mandarins. And, of course, in the minds of many the two images of China fused: it became a treasure house of morals and of beauty. Tea, silk, porcelains, and lacquer ceased to be rarities. Europe had created an almost insatiable market for the goods of Chinese craftsmen, and therein lay the problem.

The Chinese wanted nothing. Improvements in agriculture and a huge jump in population provided an almost limitless labor supply; a large and extensive empire that stretched from Turkestan in the west to Siberia in the north and Vietnam in the south provided the raw materials and the exotic substances for the sophisticated craft manufacturers of China. Economically, the Chinese were self-sufficient. They wanted no goods, no materials from the West, nothing.

Indifferent to European goods, they were even more indifferent to Europe itself. Indeed, the Chinese lacked any interest in either Europe or Europeans. From time immemorial China had been surrounded by barbarian peoples of a far lower cultural level. The Chinese had regarded themselves not only as the center of the universe but as peculiarly blessed by heaven. Theirs was the Celestial Kingdom. Hence, they had always regarded their relationship with outside peoples as the relationship between suzerain and vassals. Overseas trade was not seen as a part of the natural order of things, as it was in Europe, but as an extraordinary occasion for which special imperial permission might only rarely be granted. To allow trade at all was an act of imperial condescension and benevolence, taking on the guise of tribute.

It was an attitude that Europeans, particularly the English, found hard to understand and difficult to accept. And they searched for ways to get around or break down China's prejudice about foreign trade.

After 1660 the English began to be addicted to drinking tea—

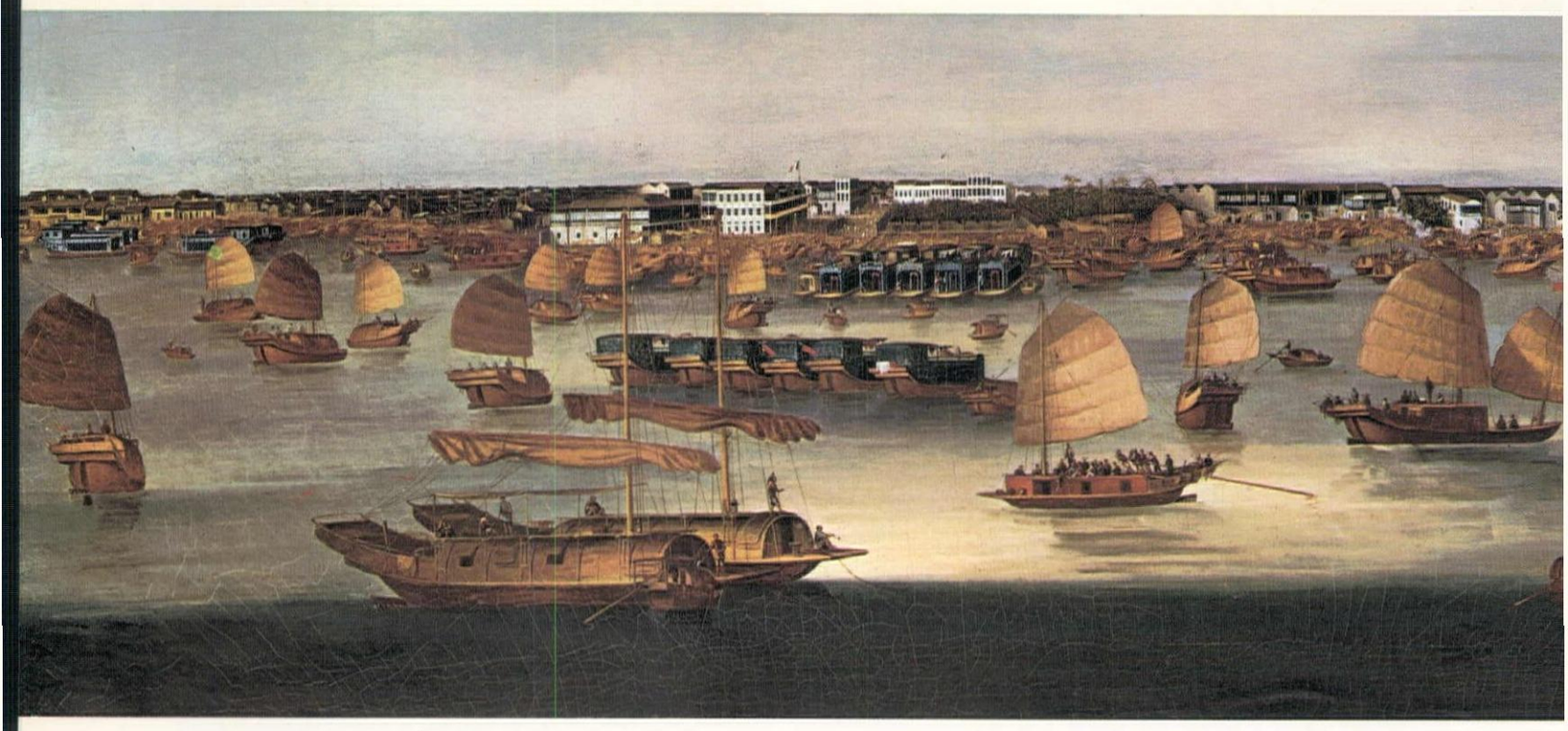


BRITISH MUSEUM—COURTESY TIME-LIFE INTERNATIONAL

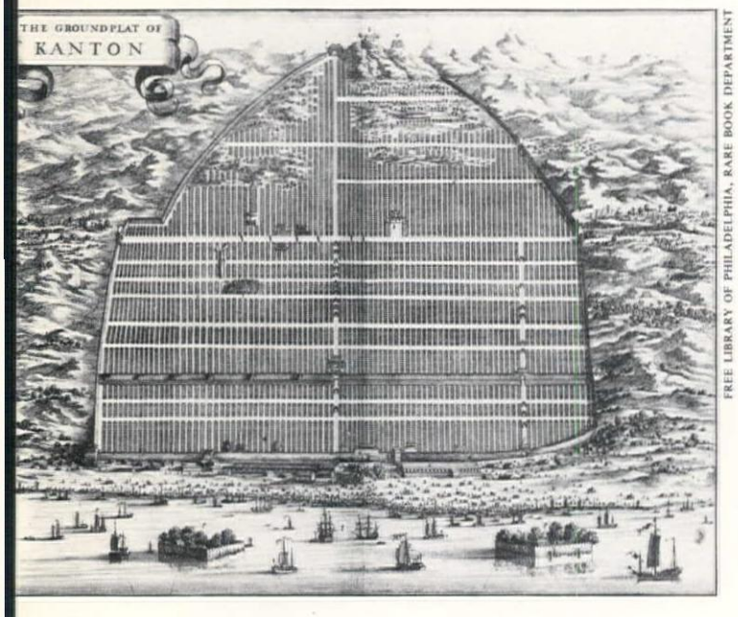
George, Earl Macartney (above in a water-color portrait), was sent to China in 1793 by his king, George III. Although Ch'ien Lung and his minions entertained him politely for two weeks, Macartney failed to accomplish his goal—an easing of the trade restrictions imposed by the emperor on the British East India Company. Nor, as the Gillray cartoon below suggests, were the Chinese greatly impressed with Macartney's gifts (pictured here as a jackdaw, a mousetrap, and the illustrated works of Shakespeare).



BRITISH MUSEUM, PRINTS AND DRAWINGS



Chinese sampans glide past anchored Western ships, above, in a view of Canton painted by a Chinese artist early in the 1840's. Trade is brisk, and the foreign influence highly visible in the offshore forts (far right) and gleaming white "barbarian houses" (above and center). Canton, the only port open to foreign merchants before the Opium War, had first been visited by Westerners in 1516, when a Portuguese ship nosed into the harbor. By 1670, the date of the plat below, the Dutch ran the port, but their influence ebbed after the British arrived in 1699.



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ironically, a mild drug, relatively harmless even though many people fulminated against its use. China was the only source of tea; none was grown at that time in Ceylon or India. English consumption rose with exceptional rapidity, and it became even more important for the merchants of the East India Company, which had a monopoly on England's trade to the Far East, to get a toehold in a Chinese port so that they could load their own ships with tea and thus avoid the huge charges of the middleman that kept prices high.

They made their attempt at Canton—for several reasons. The Portuguese had long enjoyed the occupation of a tiny piece of Chinese territory, Macao, at the mouth of the Canton River—a curious anomaly, but already two centuries old. Canton was also a long way from the imperial court, so blind eyes were easier to find or to create with judicious bribes, and merchants were naturally less hostile to foreign trade than mandarins. Furthermore, because of its position in the deep south, Canton had preserved trading links with the Philippines and Indonesia and with Burma and India. It was, in consequence, more cosmopolitan than any other Chinese port.

By 1700 the English merchants had begun to trade with some regularity at Canton; elsewhere (at Chusan, Amoy) their attempts had failed disastrously. But even at Canton, the situation was difficult. Ships were forced to stay in the river; every official had to be bribed; the Chinese were uninterested in European goods—for their fine silks and porcelain and tea they demanded, and got, silver. Worse, there was no certainty about the trade. The fear of imperial displeasure or a change of mandarins could lead to endless delays. Of course, the English were not alone in trying to get a foothold in China. The French arrived there in some numbers, and there were, as well, Germans, Danes, and Dutch, all harassing and annoying the Chinese bureaucrats, who realized well enough the immense temptations for local merchants and local officials.

The situation, as far as the imperial court was concerned, was of no major significance—how could a handful of barbarian traders be of any importance—but it created irritation and called for regulation. And the

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN CHINA TRADE



Chinese no longer wished to abolish it entirely. As the British home market increased, so did the Chinese trade, but the balance was overwhelmingly in China's favor. Silver poured into the country through Canton. Yet as the trade grew, so, too, did the irritation, and finally, in 1759, the Chinese emperor issued an explicit and detailed court order regulating foreign trade. The order was benign, but rigid.

The emperor, as an act of benevolence, permitted foreigners to trade with merchants he assigned—those now notorious hongs who, of course, paid the court handsomely for the privilege. Under no circumstances would foreign merchants be allowed to approach Chinese government officials; approval of a humble petition must come through the hong merchants. A small area of twenty-one acres outside Canton was allotted for the warehouses and living quarters of the foreign traders.

For decades life in the "barbarian houses" of Canton was rigidly ordered; no women, foreign or Chinese, were allowed, and when three white women were smuggled in, in 1832, the outraged Chinese threatened to stop the trade. Indeed, the traders could only leave their compound (in parties of not less than three or more than nine) three times a month to visit the flower gardens or the temple on the opposite side of the Canton River. And, once the season's trading was over, they had to leave: they went down river to Macao and rejoined their families. Nevertheless, the Westerners formed close friendships with some of the Chinese merchants, who proved to be men of great ability and great urbanity. The months of boredom were relieved by lavish entertainment, which the Chinese enjoyed as much as the foreigners, and a vivid and intimate account survives in the memoirs of William Hickey:

These fetes were given on the 1st and 2nd of October, the first of them being a dinner, dressed and served *à la mode Anglaise,* the chairman on that occasion using, and awkwardly enough, knives and forks, and in every respect conforming to the European fashion. The best wines of all sorts were amply supplied. In the evening a play was performed, the subject warlike, where most capital fighting was exhibited. . . .

The second day, on the contrary, everything was Chinese, all the European



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

Howqua was the senior hong merchant in Canton before the Opium War. In his dealings with foreign traders over several decades, he amassed approximately twenty-six million dollars, making him one of the world's richest men.





PRIVATE COLLECTION—COURTESY BERRY-HILL GALLERIES; BELOW: INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY

guests eating, or endeavoring to eat, with chopsticks, no knives or forks being at table. The entertainment was splendid, the victuals superiorly good, the Chinese loving high dishes and keeping the best of cooks. At night brilliant fireworks (in which they all excel) were let off in a garden magnificently lighted by coloured lamps, which we viewed from a temporary building erected for the occasion, and wherein there was exhibited sleight-of-hand tricks, tight- and slack-rope dancing, followed by one of the cleverest pantomimes I ever saw. . . .

For a time the system worked and trade grew. By the 1780's even the working classes in England were drinking tea every day, and the demand was steadily increasing. The East India Company could not handle this great expansion with its own vessels, so it was forced to license independent traders who lived in India; they were known as country traders, and they began to take on a larger proportion of the Chinese trade. They could, and did, adopt methods that the official East India Company could not. They surreptitiously opened several lines of trade at smaller ports near Canton; they bribed local officials; and they smuggled in the one commodity that the Chinese had at last come to need—opium, or *po-pi*.

By the late eighteenth century opium smoking was centuries old in China, but addiction was not widespread and the trade was small. The Bengalese, however, could grow the opium poppy in massive quantities, as much as the market demanded. At last the English had found something to sell that would help them balance a trade that had always been in China's favor. So the British became drug pushers.

With their vast revenues in India, the East India Company merchants were not as deeply concerned about the drain of silver as were the country traders, whose resources were far smaller. Consequently, the most ardent pushers were the country merchants. They were willing to take great risks, and so they were responsible for continual clashes with Chinese authorities.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, constant friction and the growing conviction among the more rapacious English merchants that here was a wonderful market, ripe for the plucking, if only the obscurantist Chinese officialdom could be made to see reason, led the British government to try to deal directly with the emperor. Two embassies were dispatched, of which the more famous was that of Lord George Macartney in 1793. It was the first time a trained British diplomat had reached the imperial court at Peking.

The visit was carefully planned by Macartney, an old, wise, and greatly experienced diplomat. Macartney was as intelligent as he was cultured, and he prepared himself diligently for his task. The intention was to impress the Chinese court with the superior technology of Europe in the hope of persuading the mandarins that great benefits would accrue from close contact with the West. So the presents con-

Western merchants wearing top hats, at left, haggle with Chinese traders over the price of tea. This painting, a detail of a work done about 1835, records the various stages of growing and processing tea leaves. Workers in the distant fields cultivate the shrubs, sort and package the leaves in sheds, and then load tea chests onto a sampan docked at the wharf. Until 1833 British trade with China was monopolized by the East India Company, whose official coat of arms appears at right.





French cartoonists gleefully lampooned England's shameful smuggling of opium into China. In Honoré Daumier's satiric sketch above, a British admiral forces the drug down the throat of a pigtailed Chinese. France, however, was not completely blameless, since it had nationalized its opium trade—with all profits going to the government.

OPPOSITE: *The steps involved in the production of opium are seen inside an East India Company factory at Patna, in the Indian state of Bihar. After harvesting the poppies, farmers bring the raw opium juice to the factory, where it is weighed (1) and spread out to dry (2). When the opium is of the proper sticky consistency, laborers form it into two-pound balls (3), which are wrapped in poppy leaves and again spread out for drying (4). Storage rooms (5) contain thousands of balls of opium waiting for shipment (6) down the Ganges to Calcutta and, finally, China.*

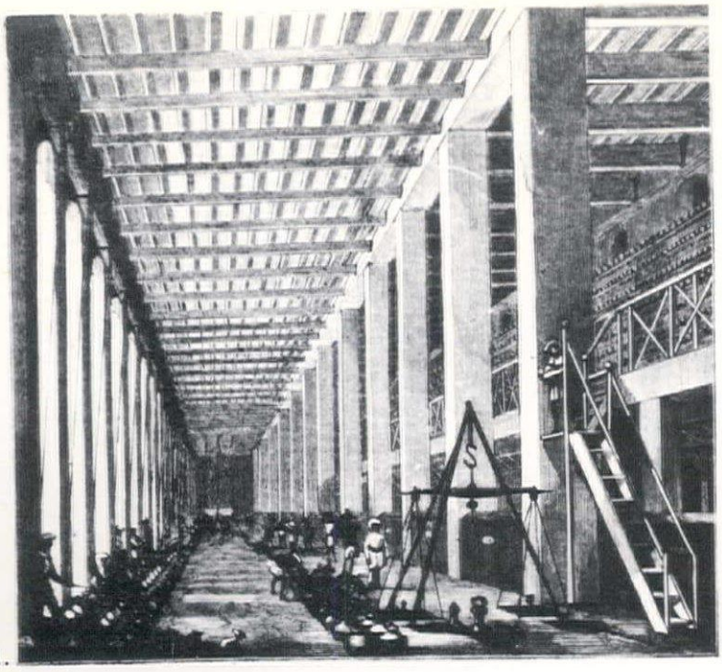
sisted of clocks, watches, astronomical apparatus of the most elaborate kind, vast telescopes, microscopes, and other scientific instruments of an exact and mechanical nature. Among the Macartney entourage were instrument makers, natural philosophers, scientists, botanists, and doctors of medicine. The intent was to show the Chinese that the route to progress lay through close friendship with the West. The threat of power, however, was not forgotten. Dragoons, artillerymen, and infantry went with Macartney, and his suite was transported in two formidable men-of-war bristling with guns. To make it clear to the Chinese that this was no embassy from a subordinate nation bringing tribute, Macartney proceeded directly to Tientsin, the port of Peking, ignoring the Chinese order to go to Canton. When he got to Peking, he flatly refused to prostrate himself before the emperor.

The embassy ended in total failure. Macartney gained nothing—not one tiny concession. The imperial court received him with great politeness and accepted his presents with seeming delight. Mandarins listened sympathetically to his proposals; the emperor acknowledged his presence; visits, feasts, courtesy calls, filled his days. And then his hosts delicately made it quite clear that he must go home. His journey to Canton impressed Macartney in a way the Chinese may not have expected. He saw that China was richer, larger, more populous than he had conceived—a market, in fact, with enormous potential and excellent communications. Indeed, he was deeply impressed, as was his entourage, with China and its people, if not its government.

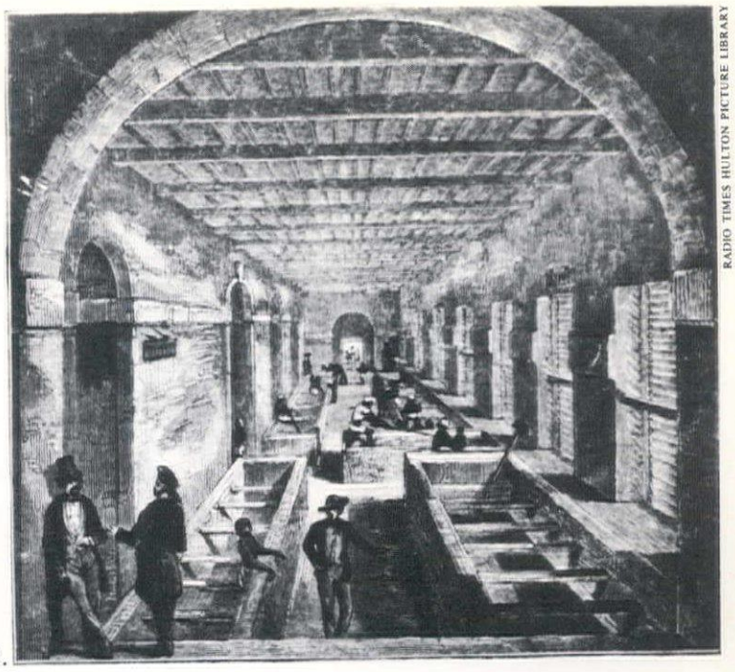
The court was relieved to see Macartney go. No mandarin was impressed. No mandarin wished to develop any relationship, diplomatic or commercial, with the red barbarians. Their expressed delight in the scientific and mechanical presents was largely courtesy; after all, they had possessed complex astronomical instruments for centuries. They rejected the idea of change, could not conceive of any nation enjoying so stable, so rich, so orderly, so divinely blessed a society as their own. For half a century the emperor Chi'en Lung had ruled a rich, prosperous, and stable China, which indicated, therefore, the blessing of heaven. China itself had been the cultured center of the universe for two millenniums. Western gadgets were of no significance, their traders largely nuisances and best confined to the remotest of ports.

Such an attitude baffled and irritated Macartney. Any government that was so impervious to change, so blandly conservative and self-satisfied, must end disastrously; indeed, he likened China to an old decaying hulk that could only be kept afloat by skillful pilots, and then only for a short time. Macartney's disenchantment, which was widely reported, coincided with a new European attitude toward China. Johann von Herder, a German philosopher, called China a mummified corpse. The mandarin-philosopers of the Enlightenment were turning into obscurantist bureaucrats bent on self-enrichment and blind to what was best for the Chinese people.

Furthermore, England's victories over Napoleon and its growing strength in India were breeding a sense of arrogant imperial destiny, particularly in the more aggressive merchants and officials. The future was British, and trade was the key to the future; if need be, the gunboat should be used to make the Chinese realize what was best for them. The British soon began to act far more peremptorily in Chinese waters—occupying Macao twice with armed forces and seizing an American ship in 1814 almost in the port of Canton, much to the anger of the Chinese.



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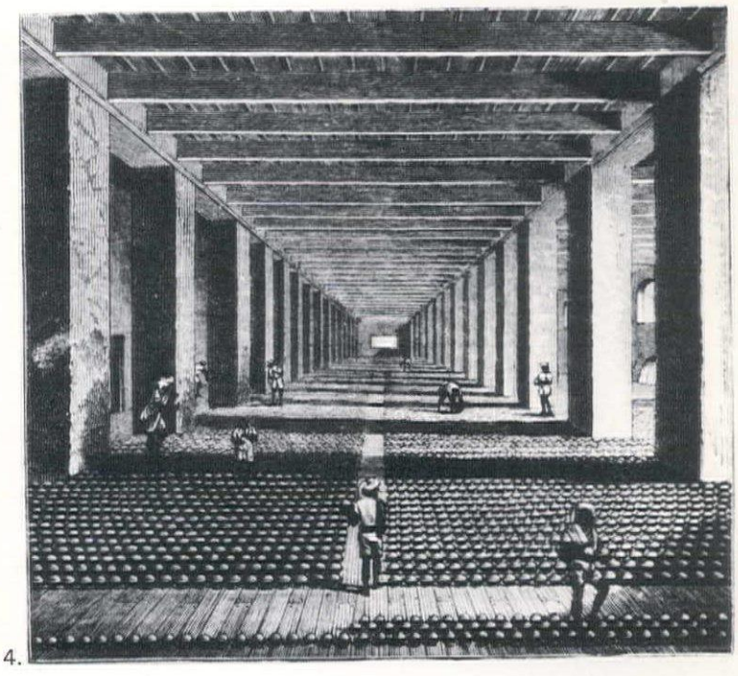


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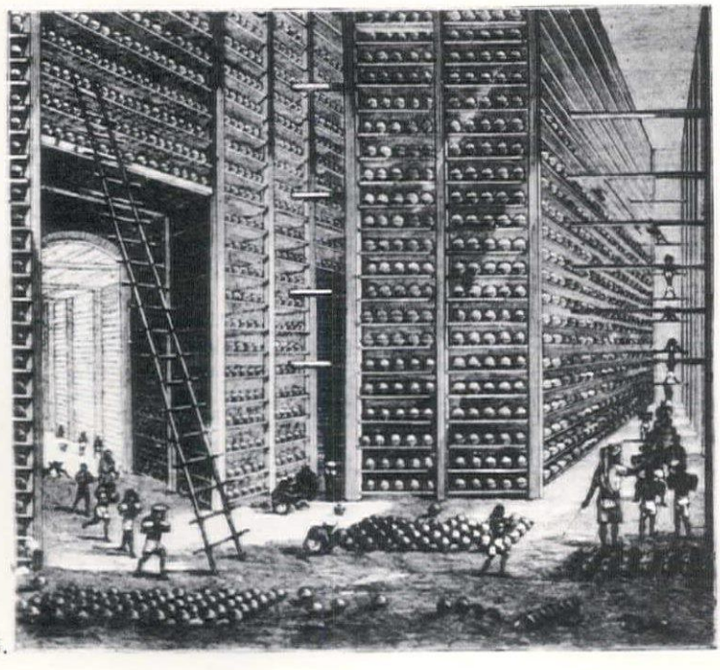
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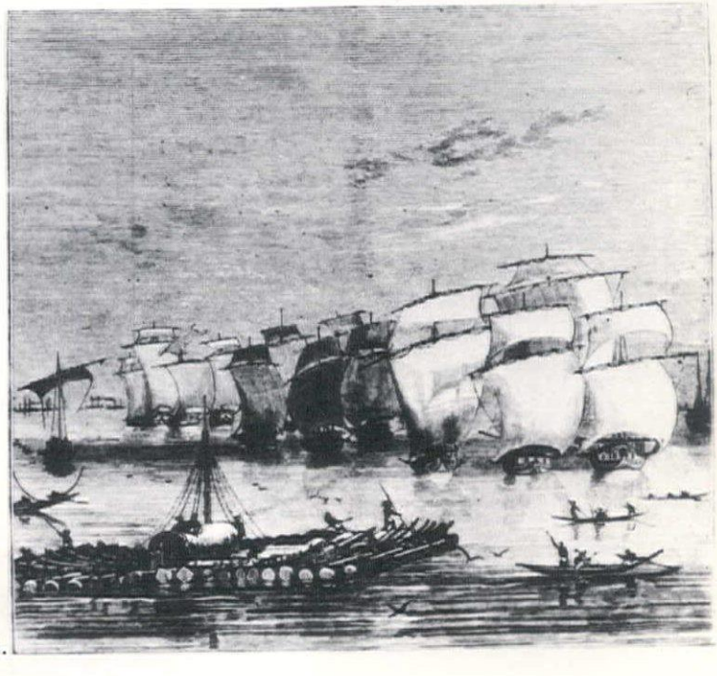
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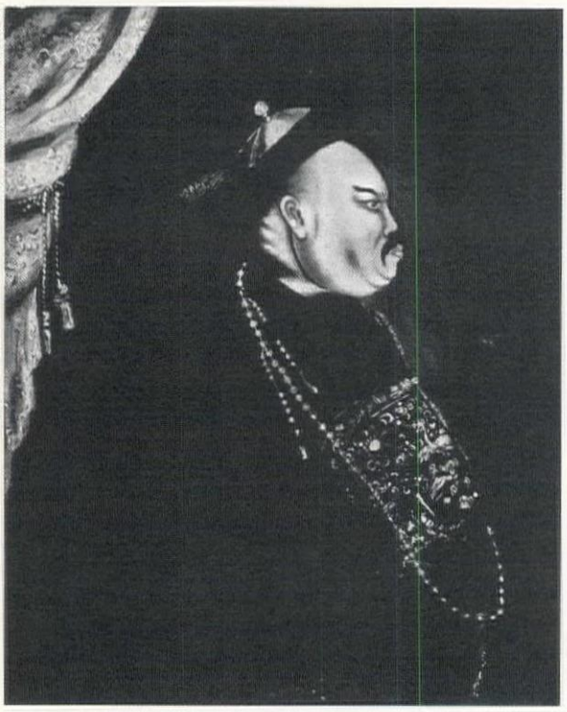
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MRS. FRANCESCA M. WITG — COURTESY BERRY-HILL GALLERIES

Commissioner Lin Tse-hsu, above, scowls fiercely in this portrait by George Chinnery. Appointed by the emperor to stamp out the opium trade, Lin confiscated 20,283 chests of opium, imprisoned English merchants—and precipitated the Opium War. His efforts were in vain, however, for opium smoking continued to flourish in China—the photograph below was taken after the turn of the century.



ROGER-VIOLLET

Once again the British tried an embassy, sending Lord William Amherst, a diplomat of the highest distinction. He fared worse than Macartney and was expelled from Peking before he could secure an interview with the emperor.

With the British unable to secure diplomatic relations, forced to negotiate through the hong merchants, made to trade in a manner more suitable to the fifteenth than the nineteenth century, Anglo-Chinese relations could only go from bad to worse. Yet the British government was not eager for a clash with China. Its imperial problems were vast, and after the failure of the Amherst mission, the British government let the China situation drift.

Alas, there were strong currents bearing it to disaster. Human beings become easily addicted to drugs. Alcohol swept the world in neolithic times: tobacco, the betel leaf, hashish, even coffee and tea are all addictive. And, like the plague, drug usage can quickly become an epidemic. This is what happened in China with the "foreign mud," as the mandarins disdainfully described opium. Opium had been introduced into China as early as the eighth century A.D. In 1620 there was a report that Formosans were mixing opium resin with tobacco and smoking it. The habit had spread sufficiently for it to be the subject of three imperial bans in the eighteenth century. It did not, however, reach epidemic proportions until British country traders began to push it for all they were worth in the early years of the nineteenth century.

By 1830 the amount of opium traded yearly had reached 40,000 chests —enough for 2.1 million addicts. Most of these were members of the official and middle classes, which, of course, frightened the Chinese government. The money involved ran into millions of dollars, and, as ever with illegal drug traffic, a complex underground of corruption, bribery, and violence riddled even further the worm-eaten structure of Chinese administration. Along the whole southeast coast of China drug addiction and drug pushing flourished. The Chinese merchants, whose technical ingenuity was stimulated by the prospect of massive profit, even developed a special boat, the *p'a lung*, or "scrambling dragon," to handle the trade. This was a shallow-draft, heavily armed vessel, manned by sixty oarsmen, that could move at amazing speed and thus easily evade the government junks, or, if need be, do battle with them.

Foreign trade had now transformed itself into a tragic social problem that worsened every year. Opium dens were spreading deep into the interior of China as brigands and secret societies joined the illicit trade. And for the Chinese government there were even more serious consequences than the human tragedy or the flouting of imperial will upon which the social order depended. Opium had begun to stimulate chronic inflation. While the stream of British silver flowed into China, the nuisance of foreign trade was almost acceptable, but now the opium consumed was far more costly than all the tea and silk that Europe and America wanted. As opium poured in, silver poured out. By the 1830's the drain of silver approached five million dollars a year. Silver became so scarce in China that its value in relation to copper—the basic coinage —rose sharply, which created inflationary difficulties.

The Chinese government might be served by bland, conservative scholars who worshiped the past almost to the point of folly, but they were quick to realize the new dangers for their country—spreading drug addiction combined with chronic inflation. They knew that, unless these conditions were checked, social harmony would be at risk. To grant the

West's wishes for greater trade would not only be an affront to the majesty of their empire but, they thought, merely intensify the horrors that troubled them. One policy alone appeared feasible: to stamp out opium addiction with all the ferocity that the central government could employ. Falling demand would reduce trade, which could then be confined to its proper sphere, the factories at Canton.

This policy, naturally enough, did not attract all Chinese officialdom —particularly in Canton and the ports to the southeast. Officials there had witnessed the huge growth of the opium trade in the 1830's; they were well aware of its ramifications and its undesirable links with brigands, secret societies, and the corrupt underworld. They came to believe that eradication was impossible and that it was better to recognize the inevitable and liberate the trade from imperial interdict. The leaders of this policy were not merchants or administrators but a group of intellectuals—then as now, it would seem, in the forefront of drug-acceptance policies. Hau-Nai-Chi, a former associate of the Canton Academy, was confident that the intellectuals' solution was right, and he boldly petitioned the emperor. His scheme was intricate and ingenious, though quite impracticable. However, it is worth describing because of its remarkable parallels with measures proposed in our own age. Opium was to be legalized, extensively cultivated to cut out foreign competition, taxed at a high rate upon importation, sold only by barter to check the drain of silver, and its use confined to the common people—all scholars, officials, and soldiers would be forbidden to smoke.

Such a scheme was totally unworkable, completely unrealistic, and yet, had the intellectuals' policy been adopted, it is quite possible that disaster might not have struck China so soon. Ironically, unworkable policies are sometimes tactically superior to clear-cut, seemingly sane ones that force confrontation. However, as in most political systems, the intellectuals did not have a great deal of power in Peking; the ruthless upholders of law, order, and imperial authority easily won. They were led by two men of exceptional integrity: Governor Teng T'ing-chen of Canton and Commissioner Lin Tse-hsu, who would join forces in 1839. Both loathed opium, loved China, revered the emperor, and enjoyed drastic action.

On September 19, 1830, the emperor ordered Governor Teng to stamp out opium. He obeyed with alacrity. Every day there were trials and public executions of addicts, with officials "seizing, trying and strangling the poor devils without mercy," according to William Jardine, an English trader whose fortune, based on opium, was to create one of the greatest British firms in the Far East. Chinese merchants and bankers were clapped into prison, their property seized. The "scrambling dragons" were caught and destroyed. The bottom fell out of the opium market.

Back in Peking, the law-and-order mandarins grew fervent; one demanded the execution of every addict who failed to reform within a year, a plan that, had it been accepted by the emperor, would certainly have led to a monumental slaughter. The majority of the court officials thought this a little too severe. However, the party of severity, if not of mass murder, won. Lin Tse-hsu, in a passionate memorial to the emperor, wrote that if opium smoking was not abolished, China would have neither soldiers nor money with which to fight the barbarians. Known as "Lin the blue sky" for his steely rectitude, he had proved his capacity as an antidrug-enforcement official while governor of Hopei and



BRITISH MUSEUM COURTESY TIME-LIFE INTERNATIONAL; BELOW: *Illustrated London News*, 1858

A Manchu bannerman, above, protected by a leather skirt and armed with a quiver of arrows, was no match for the fire-breathing "foreign devil," whose destructive powers were caricatured, below, by a Chinese artist. Before their disastrous battles with the English, Chinese officers regarded British muskets with contempt; the British, on the other hand, considered the Chinese soldiers effeminate.





COURTESY GEORGE RAINBIRD LTD.

British officers confer with a Chinese delegation in July, 1840, just before England's conquest of Tinghai, a major port on Chusan Island in the East China Sea near Shanghai. In an attempt to cow the Chinese, the British had invited their brigade-general to inspect the huge guns aboard the flagship H.M.S. Wellesley. *Although the Chinese commander realized he would be defeated, his fear of imperial wrath proved stronger: "Still," he said, "I must fight."*

Hunan, where he had destroyed thousands of pipes and burned tons of opium. Impressed, the emperor dispatched him to Canton to reinforce Teng. His mission was to suppress the opium trade. On January 8, 1839, Lin set out for Canton and the sun began to set on imperial China.

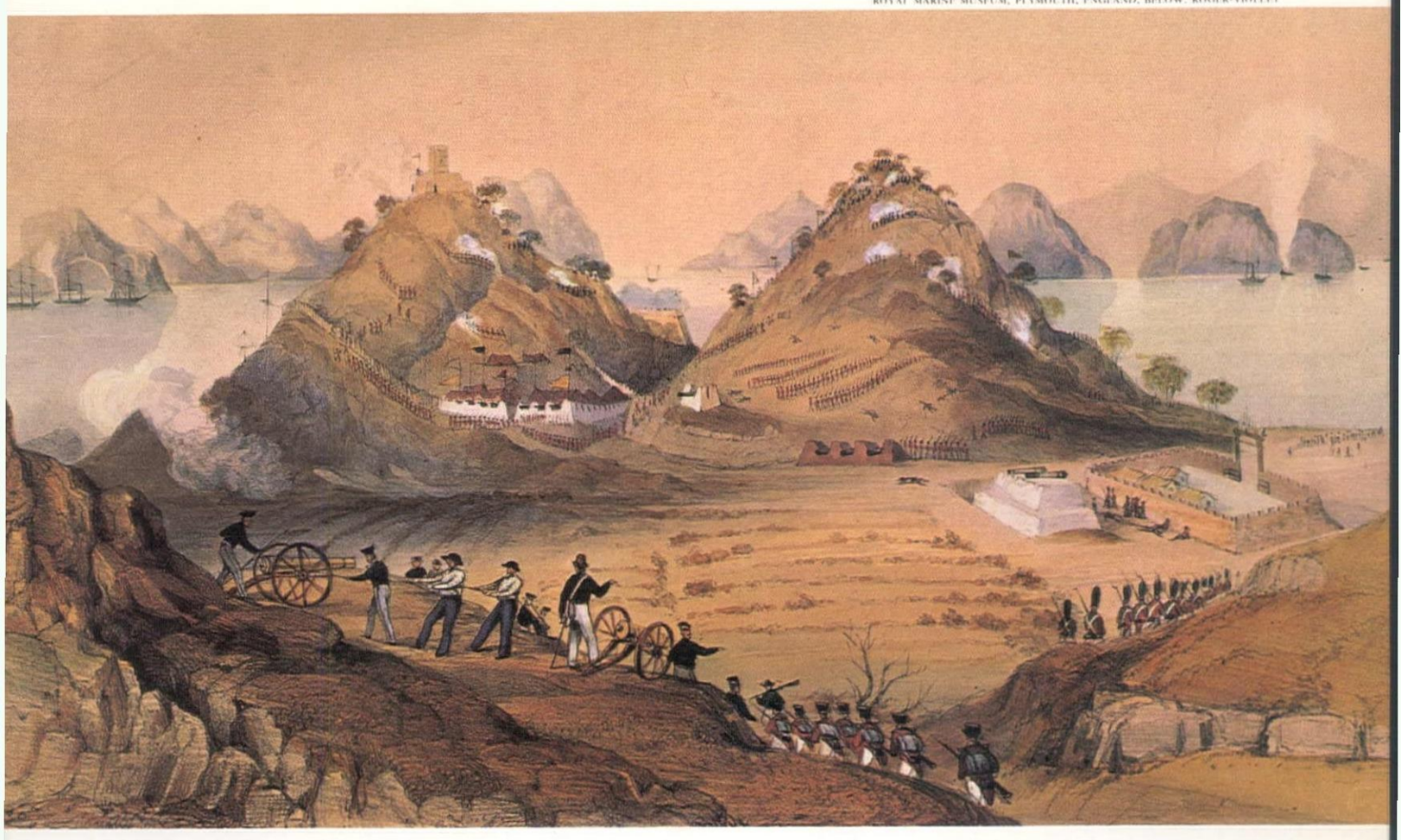
Lin was an exceptional mandarin, and not merely because of his honesty. Most court officials disdained even to learn anything about the West; barbarians and their works were of no significance. Not so Lin. He employed translators, learned about the geography and the constitutions of the West, and even had an American missionary translate a European book on international law for him. Lin had no intention—if he could help it—of being at a disadvantage with the barbarians. Also, realizing Britain's moral dilemma, he wrote to Queen Victoria asking why, since opium was forbidden in England, she allowed her merchants to trade in it with China, and asking her to imagine the roles reversed. Unfortunately for Lin, the Foreign Office refused to receive the letters, for there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries.

And so, Lin set about destroying the opium trade at Canton. He ordered the surrender of all opium within three days and demanded that the traders pledge under bond never to engage in the traffic again, violation of the pledge to be punishable by death. To ease these draconian measures, Lin offered to exchange five chests of tea for each chest of opium. The British merchants hesitated; Lin threatened to decapitate the two leading hong merchants, Howqua and Mowqua, who had traded with and befriended British merchants for decades. Reluctantly, the British surrendered some opium, but not enough for Lin, who showed that he meant business by clapping Howqua and Mowqua in irons. To add to the squeeze, Lin demanded the surrender of the leading British opium merchant, Lancelot Dent. Howqua, fearful for his own neck, pleaded with Dent to surrender. He refused. Lin ordered all Chinese servants out of the foreigners' compound, forbade the delivery of food supplies, and stopped trade of any kind.

Captain Charles Elliot, the superintendent of the British traders, was in a quandary, for he knew that fifty thousand chests of opium were on their way from Bengal. He had to get trade opened again, and somehow get paid for the opium. He decided on surrender—but most ingeniously. He demanded that all British traders give their opium to him "for the service of Her Majesty's Government." That done, Elliot then surrendered the opium to Lin, not only on behalf of the British government but also as a possession of the government. Lin accepted the opium and destroyed more than twenty-one thousand chests in a public ceremony. The British left for Macao, and when they got into a brawl there, Lin forced the Portuguese to expel them. They had to sail for Hong Kong, at that time almost uninhabited. Lin was victorious. The trade was at an end, the British thrown out of Canton.

But Lin had, in fact, made an error. The queen's property—opium—had been wantonly destroyed, and the British government decided to demand compensation, not for its merchants but for itself. Every English merchant who traded with China had nothing but contempt for the Chinese army and navy. For years many of them had been demanding action. Now they got it. A British naval force was dispatched to Canton and Tientsin to put direct pressure on the court—to demand, in fact, reparations. In panic, the imperial court reversed its policy. The emperor disavowed Lin; the Chinese persuaded the British naval force to go back to Canton and to negotiate there. That done, the Chinese

ROYAL MARINE MUSEUM, PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND; BELOW: ROGER-VIOLLET

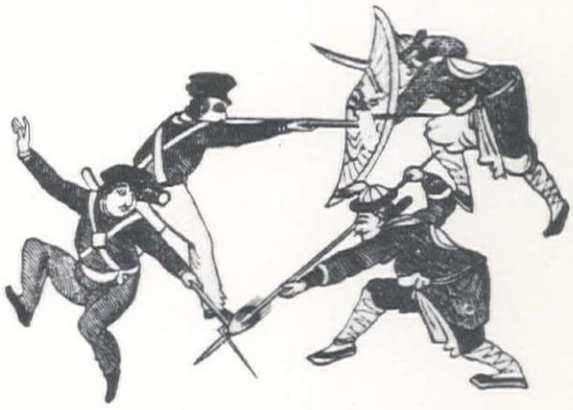


prevaricated once again, feeling that the British forces were by now a safe distance from Peking.

In London, Palmerston, who would not take insults to the British flag easily, was so infuriated that he stepped up the action. British warships poured into Chinese waters. They brushed aside Chinese resistance and set about systematically taking Chinese ports and communications centers. When they besieged Nanking, Chinese opposition collapsed. To save face and keep the British out of Peking, the Chinese conceded to all demands. Five ports were thrown open; Hong Kong was ceded to the British, a huge indemnity—equivalent to twenty-one million dollars—was imposed for the cost of the expedition and the destroyed opium. America and France quickly followed in British footsteps, demanding equal trading rights. The plunder of China had begun.

Many Chinese officials realized their country's dilemma and its needs. Lin himself had pleaded for customs dues to be levied to buy gunboats. After the Opium War other mandarins demanded a forward movement into Western technology and Western knowledge. But the conservative forces at court won out. The benevolence of heaven had shone on China for centuries; its life style, its culture, its social relations were sanctioned by heaven. Tribulations and barbarian invasions had been a part of its history, but they had always been—with heaven's blessing—overcome; time, patience, guile, and a strict adherence to Confucian virtue would see them through again. A decade later Japan faced a similar choice—the past of the East or the future of the West—and they leapt into the future. China remained torn and undecided, thereby providing a seedbed for a Western import more socially destructive than the poppy—the ideology of revolution.

Above, English artillery bombards Shakok Fort at Chuenpi, one of the defenses guarding the entrance of the Canton estuary, on January 7, 1841. The battle, painted on the spot by Frederick J. White of the Royal Marines, opened the way for the defeat of Canton in May. In the caricature below, drawn by a Chinese artist, Tartar soldiers exchange sharp blows with bayonet-wielding English infantrymen.



OVERLEAF: *An Irish regiment routs Chinese soldiers clad in "lucky" tiger uniforms on the offshore island of Amoy on August 26, 1841 (the Year of the Tiger). A year later, the British captured Nanking, and the Opium War was ended.*



NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM, LONDON



Marriage (and One or Two Other Social Institutions) Georgian Style

Lord Grosvenor consorted with bawds; his lady carried on openly with the king's brother, but no one at court was scandalized... until the servants began to snicker



BRITISH MUSEUM, DEPARTMENT OF PRINTS AND DRAWINGS

Surprising Lady Grosvenor and her royal paramour in a furtive embrace, Countess D'Onhoff recoils, shocked—according to this contemporary cartoon version of the incident. In fact, the countess had offered the lovers the use of her couch.

On a spring morning in London in the year 1764, Richard, Lord Grosvenor, was out walking in Kensington Gardens when it began to rain. He took refuge in a pavilion, where he found a beautiful girl of eighteen and her little sister of eleven already sheltering. With the ease of well-bred people, they fell into conversation and, when the rain had abated, the young ladies, Henrietta and Caroline Vernon, accepted Lord Grosvenor's offer to see them home in his coach. Henrietta vowed that it was the "easiest" coach she had ever sat in, and its owner replied that she could "become the mistress of it at any time she wished." Four months later Henrietta Vernon became Henrietta Grosvenor in Saint George's Church, Hanover Square.

Henrietta was already, in her teens, "the toast of the gay and the polite," and, as the granddaughter of the Earl of Stafford and the daughter of Henry Vernon of Hilton Park in Staffordshire, an eminently eligible bride, though no heiress (her father's extravagances having depleted his daughter's dowry). This was of no consequence to Lord Grosvenor, who was one of the richest members of the peerage and owned vast property in London as well as several country estates, and Henrietta now seemed to have everything a worldly and pleasure-loving girl could desire.

In human terms, however, the mating of Richard and Henrietta proved a total misalliance. She was spontaneously warm, sociable, loved music, dancing, and the gaiety of life at court. Richard had no taste for the refinements of the court; his one interest was the turf, and he tended to be shy and uneasy in the company of people other than his racing cronies. A more basic cause of strain between the two was the failure of their physical relations. High-spirited and hot-blooded, Henrietta was capable of strong erotic passion, but her references to Richard are charged with that mixture of irritation and contempt that the company of a repulsive bedmate can provoke. It is clear that after bearing him three sons (only one of whom survived to manhood), she yielded to him rarely, and then probably under duress. For Richard, the main considerations were numbers and availability: he kept a regular stable of mistresses and for novelty resorted to bawds and brothels.

Thus we have in the year 1768–69 two rich and conspicuous members of the aristocracy engaged in a relationship barren of all but mutual resentment and discontent—fertile ground on Henrietta's side for serious infidelity.

We do not know exactly when she first met George III's brother, Henry Frederick, the Duke of Cumberland—probably as early as 1766—but it was inevitable that they should meet. In 1769, the year in which certainties emerge, Henry was twenty-four and Henrietta twenty-three. They were constantly in each other's company at the opera, which they both loved, or at the routs and assemblies and receptions where Henrietta circulated with her friends and usually without her husband.



hat was it in Henry that attracted Henrietta? Certainly not the compliment of royal attention alone. Like Henrietta herself, he was an out-and-out romantic. He made a woman feel that she mattered to him above everything else in the world, and that there was nothing he would not suffer for her sake—ridicule, discomfort, embarrassment, even danger. Unfortunately, the very qualities that attracted Henrietta made the duke as unsuitable a choice for her clandestine lover as Richard had been for her official husband. Henry exceeded Henrietta in imprudence and rashness, his delusions of competency in the art of dissembling rivaled even hers, and, as if that were not enough, he loved dressing up in curious costumes and fancied himself a master of disguise.

For her part, Henrietta showed nothing short of inspiration in her poor choice of confidantes. Her personal maid, Hannah Birch, was a pert and treacherous little hypocrite, so psychopathically indiscreet that she was discovered by Lord Grosvenor in his and Lady Grosvenor's bed with a man servant and was only saved from dismissal by Henrietta, who admonished her to behave more respectfully in public, lest suspicions be aroused that "she knew what she should not."

By the early months of 1769, when Henrietta was again pregnant, the lovers were mutually obsessed. They openly met every day and left social functions at the same time so commonly that their servants consorted, and, when Lady Grosvenor's servants were called for, the Duke of Cumberland's servants prepared to leave before receiving an order. At night they used a variety of rendezvous: Saint James's Palace, where Henrietta's sister Caroline, now seventeen and a maid of honor to Queen Charlotte, had her own apartments; Kensington Palace, where Henry retained a private suite of rooms; the establishment of Madame Reda Vembreght, or Mrs. Reda as she was known, who operated a milliner's shop in Pall Mall; and the apartments of a fencing master in the Haymarket, secured for them by Mrs. Reda for use during the intermissions or even the performances of the opera. Mrs. Reda was as dangerous an agent as could be found, an inquisitive procuress who would, and did, sell anything and anybody to the highest bidder. She had the true bawd's prurience and during the lovers' Haymarket trysts lurked in the corridor to see and hear what she could.

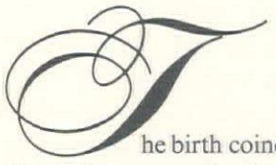
In the later hours of the evening the lovers often resorted to the house of the Countess D'Onhoff in Cavendish Square, where a branch of the department store John Lewis now stands. The location of their operations was the couch in the dining room on the first floor, where today the "Cash and Carry" section is located, just opposite the "Young Ideas" department. Camilla D'Onhoff was the granddaughter of the notorious Lord Grey of Werk, who had abducted his young sister-in-law for the purpose of "unlawful love," as it was called in the prosecution brought against him by his brother-in-

law. Camilla had enjoyed, for the times, an unusually cosmopolitan education, partly in Paris, had later migrated to Warsaw, and now, at the age of twenty-three, was back in England as Countess D'Onhoff—by virtue, she explained, of being the widow of the brother of King Stanislaus II of Poland. A different and less friendly account of her exotic title was that it had been acquired as a result not of marriage with the king's brother but of a less official association with the king himself. It was Camilla who was Henrietta's bosom confidante and probably more familiar with the mechanics of the intrigue than anyone else.

Before we spare too much sympathy for the wronged husband in these transactions, we should recall how Richard was living. Although a dichotomous alternation between elegant formalities and brutish informalities was an upper-class male prerogative in the eighteenth century, few carried the practice to the lengths of Lord Grosvenor, who would desert the court and his great house in Grosvenor Square, with its platoons of liveried servants, and disappear for days at a time into the world of whores and horses. He generally spent his nights with a strumpet of his choice in one of the opulent brothels around Duke Street and Bow Street and sometimes he roamed the streets in search of novelty among the juvenile savages—his "little wickeds," he called them—who lived by theft and prostitution in London's underworld. During the day he would watch his horses run at Epsom, the height of the fun coming after the official races when he and his cronies would themselves race their splendid phaetons around the course at breakneck speed, all finally arriving at the King's Head for hot wine and disputes over the rival merits of the horses.

Such was the matrimonial background against which Henrietta's conduct must be judged. Any danger of the lovers' excitement flagging was averted by the anguish of brief separation that Henry's official and Henrietta's marital duties imposed. In addition to being a royal duke, Henry was an Admiral of the Fleet, an honor that sometimes required his presence at sea. He was away during Henrietta's lying-in and he wrote with tender anxiety, "How sorry I am that I am deprived of the pleasure of seeing you this evening, but especially as you are in pain God grant it over upon my knees I beg it. . . . I wish I dare lye all the while by your bed and Nurse you—for you will have nobody that loves you as I do . . . O that I could but bare your pain for you. . . ."

On June 7 Henrietta gave birth to a boy, to be christened Richard after his father, or at least after his mother's husband, for there would be no lack of voices asserting that Richard was the Duke of Cumberland's child.



he birth coincided with a decline in his parents' relations. Coming suddenly into his wife's room, Richard discovered Mrs. Reda by the bedside, ostensibly discussing a hat ordered by Lady Grosvenor. But, as Reda had acted as a procuress for *him*, Richard had no illusions concerning her character, or her probable role as courier for Henrietta. A few days later, Henrietta, Caroline, and Richard were together in Grosvenor Square when a footman announced the delivery of a packet of "patterns" from the milliner. Caroline accepted it and was passing it discreetly to Henrietta when Richard asked to see the packet. On Henrietta's refusal, he tried to wrest it from her by force; she resisted, Caroline rushed to her assistance, and in an instant, a violent struggle ensued, young Caroline hauling at her brother-in-law and pummeling him fiercely while the servants in the corridors listened, entranced. But Richard managed to grab part of a letter from Henrietta and, clutching his prize, rushed into another room. After a few minutes he returned in a state of curiously friendly complacency. Why, he inquired, had Henrietta troubled herself over the letter? There was nothing in it to cause concern.

Despite these warning signs of Richard's suspicion and resentment, Henrietta and Henry's epistolary idyll continued to blossom. Henry wrote to say that at supper on the first night aboard his flagship, the H.M.S. *Venus*, "I could not Eat. I . . . *kissed your dearest little Hair* and laye down and dreamt of you had you on the dear little couch ten thousand times in my arms kissing you and telling you how much I loved and adored you and you seemed pleased but alas when I woke I found it all dillusion *nobody by me*. . . ."

Henrietta began her reply with a reference to the recent contretemps: "He appears to be in a rather better temper today so I'm in great hopes that he did not get enough to the letter to make out much. . . ." Her main news, penned the next day, was of her plan to feign illness in order to avoid being taken to their house in Cheshire, Eden Hall, before the return of her lover. The plan succeeded. She remained in London, and when Henry returned from his cruise the lovers, oblivious of the looks their servants exchanged, were joyously and recklessly reunited. Henrietta did not seem to suppose that her coachman noticed anything unusual when she returned from an evening visit to Kensington Palace "very much disordered in her dress . . . ruffles and apron much tumbled, and hair behind hanging about her neck, as if she had tumbled it behind by lying down."

Meanwhile, Richard had begun to receive well-informed anonymous letters, the first of which read: "If you have a mind to see your wife go off with her gallant place yourself at K——g's garden door at a little before Eight. . . ." The letter was signed "Jack Spratt." A sequel followed, this one advising Lord Grosvenor that the lovers were now "against your windows continually playing pranks under your nose"—a reference to their new practice of meeting in the gardens of Grosvenor Square itself, sporting among the trees and serenading each other with favorite airs by Arne and Handel. Still Lord Grosvenor took no action.



HENRIETTA, LADY GROSVENOR



RICHARD, LORD GROSVENOR



HENRY, DUKE OF CUMBERLAND

Six faces: Gainsborough portrayed the three culprits as prim patricians, leaving their true faces to our imagination: Henry disguised in a silly wig and hat to meet Henrietta; Lady Grosvenor flushed and spattered with mud after the tryst; her husband red-eyed from his *revels.*

By the middle of October, when the family's next move to Eden Hall fell due, Henrietta was too radiantly well to avoid her social duties, and on October 23 she set off by coach with a convoy of servants. Richard was to follow at a later date. The lovers' separation would have been less than two months but, in Henrietta's words, "minutes count for Years with those that love." Accordingly, it was resolved that Henry should stalk the Grosvenor convoy "in disguise," and that he and Henrietta would meet by appointment at predetermined resting points en route to enjoy the pleasures of love.

The performance that followed defies parody. The disguise favored was that of "Squire Morgan," a young man "somewhat disordered in his wits," who traveled for his health's sake in the care of an older man, "Farmer Trusty," (played by Henry's gentleman-porter). To further the deception, Henry wore a grotesque wig, known as a Tyburn top, that almost covered his eyes, and muffled himself up in cloaks, greatcoats, and villainous-looking hats.

In the uneventful world of English rural wayfaring, his "disguise" was met with wonder and mirth. At each inn "fool Morgan," as he had come to be called, engaged a room and signaled his whereabouts to Henrietta by marking a cross on his door with white chalk. Henrietta then pretended to dislike all the better rooms of the inn and insisted upon some inferior little room next to or near the door with the cross. Their performance was viewed with amused perception by the people they were striving to deceive, the domestic servants whose traditional sport was detecting the hypocrisies of their masters. Every morning they set off independently, as strangers, oblivious of the bawdy hilarity with which their beds were being compared by the household of the inn: m'lady's bed scarcely touched, Squire Morgan's furiously tumbled, full of hairpins, and so abused in general as to inspire the immortal observation of the chambermaid at the Red Lyon that if the fool came again "he should not have Holland sheets."

Arriving at Eden Hall, Henrietta sent orders to the estate blacksmith to make a duplicate set of keys for all the gates on the grounds. Then, while Henry and his party circled the perimeter of the park, courting gossip and speculation wherever they stopped to drink a bottle of wine, Henrietta had fires lit in a suite of rooms off a "retired" part of the gardens. On wet and cold November days, when most ladies of Henrietta's rank would not have ventured abroad, even in a coach, a fascinated audience of servants watched her roam the park in the company of a fantastic figure dressed like a parody of Macheath on the run.

In London Richard received another letter from "Jack Spratt" with the jeering intimation: "If you have not a mind you will take no Notice perhaps of a certain person that is gone in disguise and lye's at every Inn where she goes examine your servants and they will be more able to tell you of his constant attendance. He is now about your house and gardens in the country." Since Lord Grosvenor had ordered all his wife's letters intercepted and copied upon her return to Cheshire, he was not surprised; but the lovers soon would be.

On November 1 Henry and Henrietta were thrown into consternation by the news that Richard was almost on top of them; horses had been sent to Whitchurch to meet Henry, and he at once galloped away in a different direction, taking a circuitous route to avoid a meeting. In the cold darkness of the night in strange country he lost his way near the Welsh border—an ordeal to strain the most romantic feelings. Soaked, frozen, and suffering from a bronchial inflammation, he finally hired a post chaise to London. But Henry was a true glutton for punishment: no sooner had Richard gone off to visit his Flintshire estates than Squire Morgan and company reappeared on the scene, "the observed of all observers," to renew the now familiar duet on the grounds of Eden Hall. Again he had to decamp precipitously when Richard returned, and again he suffered a bleak and chilling journey back to London in the December gales.

His Lordship's return to Eden Hall signaled the invasion of the house by a rout of male friends with tastes similar to his own; when they came home after a day in the saddle and were plied with wine and punch, the saloons and drawing rooms resounded with their hunting cries and horseplay and wagers. Even Henrietta's private apartments were not safe from their boisterous and jocular intrusions, and she lived for the day she could return to London.

When the time finally came, Richard, as was customary, went ahead by a longer route to pay calls. Shortly before Henrietta set out in her coach with the children, nine servants in attendance, she received a warning from Caroline. Couched in the most urgent language, it reported that the liaison was an open

scandal at court and urged her to take immediate care to protect herself from exposure. But Caroline's effort was wasted; the curtain was already rising on the denouement of the comedy.

At dusk on the fourth day of Henrietta's journey south, the party reached the White Hart at Saint Albans. After supper, served under the supervision of Matthew Stephens, Lord Grosvenor's steward, Lady Grosvenor retired. About eleven, when the inn was dark and silent, Stephens, carrying a poker and followed by his brother, a groom, and a couple of footmen, stealthily climbed the stairs to Henrietta's room. The floor boards in the corridor creaked (they still do), but no one noticed. Stephens put his ear to two holes he had bored in the door while his mistress was at supper, heard the sound he expected, and, with the help of his companions and the poker, proceeded to smash the door open. The intruders surged in, carrying candles, and found a man standing by the bed fumbling with his waistcoat buttons. Henrietta, in dishabille, made a dash to escape by another door, fell down a flight of steps, and suffered the indignity of being helped to her feet by Matthew Stephens. In this humiliating moment of discovery, with her own servants gawking at her and the awakened guests jostling each other in the corridor, Henrietta displayed a haughty contempt: "I suppose you've done a very fine thing now," she said to Stephens. "My Lady," he replied in suitably contrite tones, "I am sincerely sorry for the occasion." "I am sure you are," said Henrietta, and turned her back.

Henry behaved with rather less dignity, though, no doubt, with the best of intentions. While Henrietta's fall distracted the crowd, he managed to escape into another room, and from there he exhorted the world at large to witness that he was not in Lady Grosvenor's room. "No, you're not now," Stephens hissed. "But you was a minute ago." Henry persisted, but too many people had seen him by the bed for the bluff to work. Without attempting to communicate further with Henrietta, Henry returned to London in the early hours of the morning, leaving Henrietta to endure the final indignities. Stephens acquainted her with the orders he had received from Lord Grosvenor: from this moment her husband's residences would be closed to her; her children would be taken from her; she would have two servants; apartments in Bond Street had already been reserved in her name; and to meet her immediate needs there would be two hundred pounds (the equivalent of approximately fifty-five hundred dollars today), and he placed two one-hundred-pound notes on the table before withdrawing. Henrietta spent the remainder of the night alone by a dying fire in a room with a broken door. The next day she hired a post chaise to London and, with her face hidden by a mask and the vehicle's blinds drawn, she drove past curious crowds assembled outside the inn. Hannah Birch accepted a lift to London and on their arrival disengaged herself from Lady Grosvenor's employment. She had her reputation to consider, she explained.

The press did not waste time. The last edition of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1769 had already been published, but a supplement quickly appeared with the headline *An Authentic Account of a Late Discovery*. "An assignation at the White Hart at St Albans" said the report, "between Lady G and a certain great D——e was disconcerted by the forcible intrusion of my Lord's gentlemen. . . . A suit is likely to commence in which the ablest lawyers will be employed."

That paragraph opened the floodgates, and a deluge of accumulated scurrility broke upon the three. Once Richard had put the machinery of the law into motion, depositions had to be taken. Details of what the butler saw, what the footmen, maids, gardeners, grooms, coachmen, hostlers, "bootketchers," and innkeepers saw and heard, were sedulously taken down by venal officers of the court and immediately sold, along with copies of the culprits' intercepted letters, to the highest bidder. Overnight, Henry and Henrietta's most

Town and Country Magazine, JULY, 1770

In Defence of Lady G——r

SIR,

I Cannot refrain taking up my pen in defence of my sex, at a time that so much malevolence is played off against us, because some have been indiscreet, and others, perhaps, guilty.

There was a time when the men thought if we possessed a tolerable share of beauty, sense, and good-nature, with that greatest of all *douceurs*, a fortune, we might be pronounced before marriage *angels*, and were afterwards allowed to be tolerable good sort of *women:* but now the men expect in us nothing less than *infallibility;* what, indeed, none of our sex have laid claim to since the days of *Pope Joan.*

The affair of lady G——r has made so much noise, and brought so much scandal upon our sex, that I cannot help attempting to vindicate her conduct. In the first place, the letters which passed between her and a certain D——e, are positively as *innocent* as if they had been written by children of ten years old: he no where claims her as a mistress, nor does she once mention him as a lover; but constantly titles him her *friend.* As to their *mutual feelings,* which Mr. Wedderburn . . . laid so much stress upon, I think them of little or no weight, as it has been very much questioned by many of their intimate acquaintance, whether either has any *feelings;* without it be in the *sentimental way;* so that at most this can only amount to a declaration of a *refined Platonic Love.* No facts have been proved against them; and even the circumstances are equivocal, of which his R. H. is willing to take his Bible oath; nay, the very situation they were found in at St. Albans can only be ranked under the head of an *indiscretion.* Why, then, as our sex lay no claim to infallibility, all this racket? Was adultery never before committed, or more fairly proved? But lady G——r is a very pretty woman, and there are many of her sex jealous of the extensive dominion of her charms; and the men are no less envious of the preference given, even in these *bagatelles,* to his R. H. Jealousy, it is plain, operated on Jack Spratt (alias the countess of D—h—ff) who took so much pains to acquaint his lordship that an intimacy subsisted between the D. and her ladyship; and probably many more females are in the same predicament, and vent their passion by scandal and malevolence.

This is, however, if not the most *plausible,* the most *decent* manner for accounting for her ladyship and the D's conduct; and as long as a tolerable apology can be offered for a woman, in my humble opinion, she should not be pronounced guilty.

I may, indeed, be somewhat partial to her ladyship, as I intend proposing her for a member of our society next week; where none but women of character *can* be admitted, notwithstanding the report so current, that there are many *demi-reps* amongst us.

St. James, July 18. I am, Sir, yours,

One of the female Coterie.

In 1770, when the public condemned Henrietta's infidelity—and condoned Richard's—an anonymous member "of the female Coterie" denounced male chauvinism and the double standard in this letter to Town and Country Magazine. *The affair, she insisted, was "Platonic Love."*

intimate exchanges became, in literal fact, an open book. The tender platitudes of the love letters were devoured by satirists and mercilessly regurgitated in derisive cockney dialect.

> All on the couch last night I lay
> I dreamt what now I sing
> I held you fast and kissed away
> Ay—just like Anything
> Doodle doodle doo
>
> God bless my *dearest little dear*
> God bless your little mouth
> To shew my feelings are sincere
> I'll take my bible oath
> Doodle doodle doo

Henry's spelling and syntax became a national joke. The *Freeholders Magazine*, announcing "Premiums for 1771," advertised "The Duke of Cumberland's premium for anyone who before the first of April 1771 will furnish him with a table composed of the letters of the alphabet and a rule by which he may be able to construct a letter, that the sense and spelling anyone may understand who can read English."

The celebrated comedian Samuel Foote regaled admirers attending his performances with jocular animadversion on the Grosvenor case. The Duke of Cumberland, he declared, had once told him that Lady Grosvenor was one of the most sensible women alive, and that one day he should see her letters; having now seen them, he had told His Royal Highness, "She is a damn'd sensible woman as to parts; but it was left to a man of your Highness' penetration to discover her genius."

Try as they would, the inventors were quite unable to match actuality; nothing faked could top the dramatic recitations by Madame Reda of her auricular witness of heroic copulation. She even insinuated that Henry, Henrietta, and the Countess D'Onhoff had conducted tripartite orgies. But, for gratuitous malice, the countess's part in the affair outdid all others: the May, 1770, edition of *Town and Country* exposed her as "Jack Spratt," the writer of the anonymous letters. No wonder the letters were well informed; the countess was poor Henrietta's trusted confidante.

A few observers were fair-minded enough to remark that the actual love letters themselves were curiously innocent, as if, said one female writer with barbed sympathy in a letter to the press, "they had been written by children of ten years old."

But most people reveled in the opportunity of censuring the culprits. Richard was mocked and lampooned as the "Cheshire Cornuto." Henry had to endure being pointed out by gaping yokels brought from the shires to London at Lord Grosvenor's expense to identify "Squire Morgan" as he emerged from the House of Lords. Henry was also attacked for deserting Henrietta in her hour of trouble, but it is difficult to suggest, society and his place in it being what they were, what else would have been feasible. He was the king's brother, and the policy of the Crown was, at the outset of the American War of Independence, peculiarly odious to liberal Englishmen; any member of the royal family was a useful target, and Henry was defenseless, in or out of court.



enrietta fought for them both. She counterpetitioned for divorce and, without flinching, paraded a troop of her husband's trollops through the witness box to describe in racy detail exactly when and how Richard had "rogered" them. Certain gentlemen, who did not think it fit to subscribe their names to their strictures, were indignant with her countersuit. "There is no parallel," observed one, "in the transgressions between a husband and a wife; for beside the risk on her side of a spurious issue to inherit his titles and estate, a woman's affections and esteem must be gained before she submits to a lover; whereas he, heated by liquor, corrupted by the example of boon companions, or accidentally meeting with an agreeable object, may trespass upon conjugal fidelity without transferring any share of his affections from the proper objects of his wishes."

The traditional inclination to excuse a husband's debauchery but not a woman's love was kept well in mind by counsel for the prosecution when he made a nicely sententious appeal to the prurience and prejudice of his British jury. "You have before you," said the learned Mr. Wedderburn, "the chastity and honour of the sex, the sanctity of marriage and the custody of British morals, and your determination will severely operate on each of these." He asked for a hundred thousand pounds in damages for Richard (equivalent to almost three million dollars today), but this estimate was considerably modified by Lord Mansfield's directions to the jury that it was no part of their duty to punish the defendant, but only to award suitable recompense to the plaintiff if they found for him. The jury did find for the plaintiff and awarded ten thousand pounds. The spendthrift Henry found it hard to raise the sum, but "secret funds" were put at his service by the Crown. Thus, when the taxpayer had paid for Henry's fun, and Richard had made a costly spectacle of all three of them, Lord Grosvenor found himself the most famous cuckold in England—and still married to Henrietta; for, both parties having been shown to be guilty of adultery, there could be no divorce in English ecclesiastical law as it then operated.

Henry, incurably impulsive, married the following year on the rebound, and died in 1790 at the age of only forty-five. Richard died in 1802, and an obituarist observed laconically, "He will be greatly missed on the turf." Henrietta, a widow and free at last, married her current gallant, General George Porter M.P. She lived until she was eighty-two and avoided further publicity. If she wrote more letters, they were not of a kind to become news.

Had the Duke of Cumberland been able to read John Chandos's other works, he might have avoided scandal. If the old sermons collected in In God's Name *(Bobbs-Merrill) failed to inspire chastity,* A Guide to Seduction *(Wehman) might at least have taught him a little discretion.*



The chorus from an all-black review of 1922

LOST BERLIN

"Dreadful tastelessness. But on what a level!" So wrote Bertolt Brecht of a raucous capital city where the laughter was about to stop

"You should steal 500 marks and follow [me]," wrote Brecht from Berlin to a friend in 1920. What drew Brecht and so many other brilliant minds to this glamourous capital, now—and perhaps forever—split in two? In the photographs that follow, some never before published, we get a hint of the allure, the electric atmosphere, the cynicism, the intellectual ferment, that characterized Berlin in the 1920's. For Brecht, as for all the real and would-be Bohemians of the city, there was one—only one—gathering place, the Romanische Café. There, in that shabbily splendid barn, gathered the writers, the artists, the art dealers, the journalists, poets, dancers, musicians, and divorce lawyers to talk endlessly over coffee and an occasional soft-boiled egg served in a glass. They talked about the opening of Brecht's *Threepenny Opera,* or the latest novel by Thomas Mann, or Erich Maria Remarque's controversial best seller, *All Quiet on the Western Front,* or the revolutionary theories of the Viennese Sigmund Freud, or Albert Einstein's work at the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, or movies such as *The Blue Angel,* or Duke Ellington's smash hit, the jazz revue *Chocolate Kiddies.* Behind all the interbellum giddiness of Berliners lay the memory of the waste of war, the disillusioning failure of political reform, and the grinding pressure of inflation. Ahead lay the path to fascism and yet another holocaust. That fragile moment in between is brought to life by Wolf Von Eckardt and Sander L. Gilman in their forthcoming book *Bert Brecht's Berlin,* to be published by Doubleday early in 1975, from which we draw both photographs and commentary.

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BRECHT ARCHIV; BACKGROUND: STAATSBIBLIOTHEK BERLIN



Playwright and poet Brecht caps his likeness

STAATSBIBLIOTHEK BERLIN



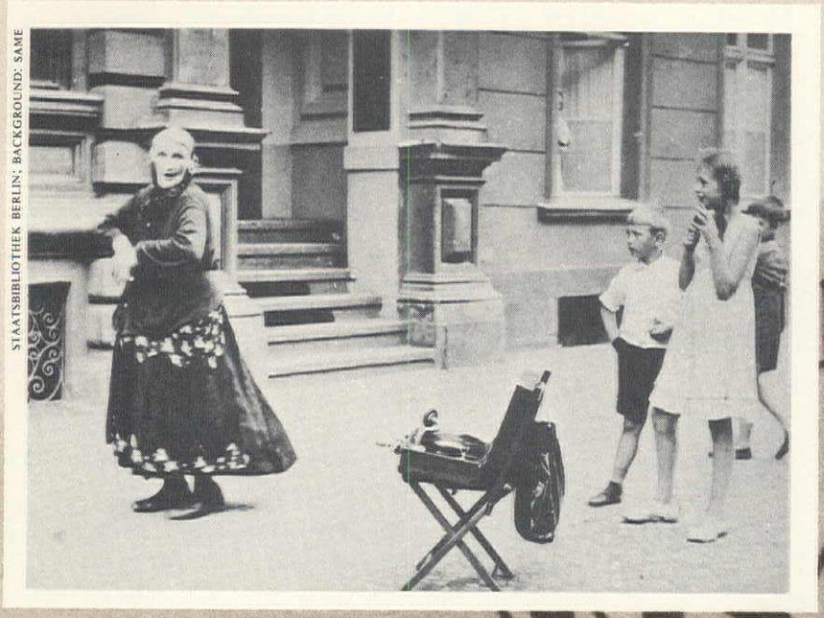
Erich Maria Remarque in 1928

LANDESBILDSTELLE BERLIN



A relatively young Albert Einstein

An old woman dances and sings for her supper



STAATSBIBLIOTHEK BERLIN; BACKGROUND: SAME



STAATSBIBLIOTHEK BERLIN

1923: Wash hampers of bills en route to the bank

When Inflation Really *Was* Inflation

Immediately after the war the German economy was shaky but still in fair working order. Then 1923 brought the complete ruin of the German currency as the exchange rate soared from 48,000 marks to the dollar to an astronomical four trillion. Hit by heavy war reparations and profiteering industrialists, Germany saw its funds flow abroad, creating an inflation that left Berliners to scrounge and barter for survival. When a trillion marks is worth only twenty-five cents, money becomes meaningless, and the good old German values of hard work and propriety were suddenly made obsolete.



1924: Playing with blocks of worthless million-mark bills

Background: On November 20, 1923, the new rentenmark replaced this billion-mark bill

Amusgang: Berlin After Dark

A macabre gaiety pervaded Berlin like an intoxicating smog: there was no shortage of drink, drugs, or beautiful women. "There are two kinds of places," wrote one contemporary; "those one talks about, and those one doesn't talk about but frequents just the same"—including such dives as the Eldorado nightclub, "where the arithmetic of love is not without its mistakes." The cabarets featured bitter satire and topical wit, and the bourgeoisie favored the revues with their chorus lines and living "tableaux." For simpler tastes there was vaudeville from Saturday night until Sunday morning. Berliners also imported American jazz and the popular hits such as "Yes, We Have No Bananas," and partook of whatever other pleasures they were able to devise.



LANDESBILDSTELLE BERLIN; BACKGROUND: SAME

The female legs at far left are Marlene Dietrich's



Background: The lights of Luna Park, an outdoor amusement spot

ARCHIV FUR KUNST UND GESCHICHTE

The vaudeville act of the Arthur Klein family



LANDESBILDSTELLE BERLIN

Josephine Baker, the American singer and dancer, as she appeared in Berlin



Mixed company at the Eldorado includes one woman, at left front



STAATSBIBLIOTHEK BERLIN

At Die Weisse Maus, a living tableau



ground : Members of a social club dance on a houseboat

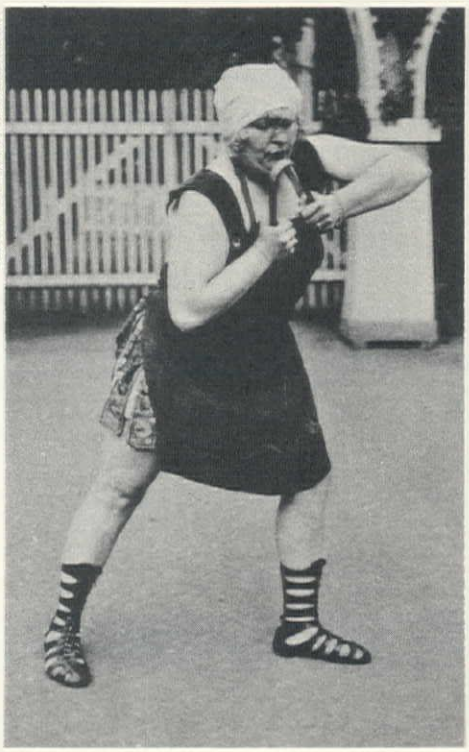


LANDESBILDSTELLE BERLIN; BACKGROUND: STAATSBIBLIOTHEK BERLIN

A strolling and strumming *Wandergruppe* in pursuit of nature



Free Body Culture: health comes first



ARCHIV FUR KUNST UND GESCHICHTE

Iron bars bend in the hands of "Miss Nobody"

Outdoor Action

When indoor pleasures paled, Berliners fled to the great outdoors to celebrate with song and dance and *völkisch* sentiment the delights of sports, body building, and nudism. This craze for romping naked, *Freie Körper Kultur,* or Free Body Culture, spread beyond the young to become a family pastime. For spectator sports Berliners went to the races: bicycle, horse, motorcar, and ostrich. The lazy Berliner, yearning vaguely for self-improvement, could choose among the many "educational films," as they were called, though their pedagogical aim was unspecified.



ARCHIV FUR KUNST UND GESCHICHTE

Setting forth on a round-the-world hike



PRIVATE COLLECTION — OFFERMANNS

Scene from a 1925 movie: *How to Gain Strength and Beauty*

Background: Berlin schoolgirls line up for medicine ball

Tastelessness Vanquished (By Something Even Worse)

Ever since the days of Napoleon's occupation, German youth had been organized for sport, and, incidentally, for political indoctrination. Now, in 1932, as the twenties orgy faded into a more ominous future, Adolf Hitler addressed the 100,000 members of his youth movement: "National Socialist Movements want to educate the German youth to be proud and brave and not to bend when others would lure him to evil deeds." So saying, he would lure thousands of young Berliners to death on the battlefields of Europe. A few months after these words, Hitler became chancellor; an exodus of the talented—unprecedented in history—began, a flight that took such extraordinary men as Remarque, Einstein, and Brecht out of Berlin and, many of them, to America.



STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, BERLIN; BACKGROUND: ARCHIV FUR KUNST UND GESCHICHTE

Bent under his banner, a boy leads a 1933 march





LANDESBILDSTELLE BERLIN

935: A crowd sieg-heiling before the Propaganda Ministry

The Inscrutable Idioms of Dr. Yee

Or,

how to avoid cracks, win fiends, and make the sack with a chicken sandwich

To assist the more than twelve thousand Chinese who immigrate to the United States each year, the bookstores of America's Chinatowns stock a volume entitled *English Colloquialism* by a Dr. Frank Yee. It purports to teach the speaker of Chinese how to use colloquial American English so that he may be understood by anyone and consequently fit into the American scene. Its first page offers "colloquial" equivalents for certain national and racial groups: an Italian is called a "Dago," a Frenchman a "Frog," a Chinese a "Chink" or a "Charlie," a black a "Nigger" or "Blacky," an Englishman a "Limey," and a Japanese a "Nip" or, exotically, a "cherry blossom." If the Chinese reader manages, perhaps with the aid of Kung Fu, to survive his use of these terms, he can go on to idioms.

The phrases the author has chosen readily convey the give-and-take of a dynamic society. We find such pithy epithets as "son of the gun" and "son of the bitch," as in "You son of the bitch. Why you accuse me of stealing your money?" Two suggested rejoinders to this are "Wait a minute, hold your horse" and "Watch your language, no raw words"; alternatively, the addressee may counterattack with "You are stink" or "You big piece of cheese." An ally on the scene may suggest that "If he should get fresh, let us knock the s—t out of him." (The offending word is correctly spelled out in the book.)

But not all of the expressions given are belligerent: many illustrate attempts to make friends. The greeting "Hi fellow met" is amplified and explained by "I seem to have seen you some where before." If one is surprised to see a friend, one may exclaim, "For the love of my! How you happen to be here?"; when the friend asks, "What is new?" one can answer, "Nothing new. S.O.S. That is all." A similar cordiality underlies certain implied or sought-after invitations: "There will be a scuffle at the YWCA tonight" and "Are you going to invite us to an ice-cream party?"

Several of the colloquial expressions listed are meant for use in situations involving the opposite sex. A nice looking female is referred to as a "dame," "broad," "chicken sandwich," "cheesecake," "oomph," or, elegantly, as a "traffic-stopping beauty." A rather unprepossessing young lady is dismissed with the comment that "She is a sort of Tom, Dick, and Harry." Remarks about men range from "He is the sheik of Chinatown" to "I don't think he is such a sex appeal." Dr. Yee informs us that amorous activity is known as



"lovey dovey," and the phrases he supplies for use in this contingency reflect, bewilderingly, both Chinese puritanism and the new permissiveness:

"It is late now. Let us make the sack."

"Let you stay over night here? I don't know you that well."

"Since life is so short let us make whoopee in a big way."

"Don't be silly! I am not going to kiss you. You better be wised up."

In the Chinese preface to *English Colloquialism*, Dr. Yee explains that in China he observed Americans using words that could not be understood by English-speaking Chinese, much less be found in an English dictionary. He therefore "sat in a teahouse and wrote 100 pages" in 1943, which he later updated and revised in 1962. As the student progresses in the book, he is introduced to phrases for use in advanced conversations with Americans. Among them are various set comments on politics, such as "I am not going to join Richard Nixon's band wagon" and "I have to look up my dossier before I can answer you."

Other phrases concern the law. If a reader of the book should become the object of police interest, he may soften up the arresting officer by exclaiming, "What a snappy uniform you got! It is just immaculate!" If that does not work, he can take a defiant tack with "What the hell! They got nothing on me." To which the officer, consulting his own copy of the book, might retort, "You got a Chinaman's chance!"

While the Chinese student of this book will, if he is diligent, be able to toss off any number of idiomatic remarks, he may find the American reaction thereto somewhat inscrutable. For example, the sentence given for the use of "fiend" is "You can't trust him because he is a fiend." "Crack" is given as a synonym for "crank," as in "What are you, a crack or something?"—a "crack" that a Chinese waiter might make to quell a difficult customer. "Hallelujah" is illustrated by "Hallelujah! All dressed up and going places, eh?" And useful phrases like "She is fond of digging dirt" or the enigmatic "Go and jump in the lake for I am so mad about you" are instances of American speech seen through a mist, like Chinese paintings of mountains.

As a final *coup de grâce* to social convention, the Chinese reader may consider the colloquialism for "finished" or "played out." It is given in the book as "All f—d up." This is not, of course, the usual American idiom for the meaning; on the other hand, it is, perhaps, a not completely erroneous assessment of *English Colloquialism*.

By CHARLES F. BERLITZ