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Dernier Cri.

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By Klaus Mann.

What a weird ^{idyll}~~place~~ it was! - that provincial Austrian watering-place and its representative hotel - the Bellevue. I don't remember who had recommended me the dreary place, nor why I stayed there for a fortnight or even longer - instead of rushing to the next train presently when I had glimpsed at the ^{dull}~~leery~~ promenade, the sleepy Kurhaus, the dusty palm trees adorning the deserted lobby of the Bellevue.

There was something uncannily depressing about that hotel in all its faded splendor. The whole establishment - luridly pompous as it was, with its marble stair cases, vast ball rooms, sultry chambres séparées, and secret corridors - exhaled the most penetrating nostalgia for those legendary ^{days}~~periods~~ of abominable taste and tremendous fun - when Russian Grand Dukes, roaring with savage laughters, used to chase buxom chambre maids; Austrian officers sipped champagne out of a lady's slipper, while handsome princes of the House of Hapsburg kept obstinately their "icog-nito", though their true identity was only too well known to everybody - : the imposing doorman - very Franz Joseph-like with his magnificent pair of whiskers - had a sardonic smirk when he addressed his Imperial Highness simply as Herr Baron... How remote it seems! how unreal! - this withered glamour of forgotten festivals - the weightless merriment of laughs and waltzes long died away... ~~What a light-minded, brilliant world it must have been! - ; in fact, as remote from us as the world before a pre-revolutionary style of life may have seemed to the generation following the French Revolution. Could we listen now to the noisy conversations of princes, bankers and adventurers who once patronized the Bellevue, we may be horrified and disgusted by their ignorant frivolity,~~

~~their ruthless selfishness, the vulgarity of their opinions, pleasures and ambitions. And yet, what a lovable - an entrancing world! - with all its pretentious forms, its complicated rites and vices...~~ I recognized ^{the} ~~its~~ charm and ^{the} ~~its~~ absurdity ^{of that down-sunken world} as I gazed dreamingly into one of the dingy mirrors decorating the ~~w~~ walls of the Bellevue Bar.

It was in that gold-framed mirror that I caught the first glimpse of the Baroness. Her fragile figure gradually emerged from the shady depth of the glass like a mermaid slowly rises from ^{her} ~~the~~ chilly hiding-place. ~~of her will~~. She entered the bar on the arm of her ~~elderly~~ ungainly cavalier. She laughed. She was very attractive.

What I noticed first of all were her eyes - disproportionately big: inconsolably sad under a saucy hat. My heart smote me as I watched her crossing the empty bar - royally erect; shrouded in the provocative sweetness of her perfume and the triumphant cascades of her pearling laugh. I was struck, ravished, bewildered - by the glimmering pallor of her ageless face, the strange elegance of her clothes, and, above all, by the disquieting contrast between the elate melody of her laugh and the unfathomable melancholy of her eyes.

Never shall I forget this first performance of her repertoire I witnessed. Her companion was a middle-aged fellow - hook-nosed, swarthy and greasy -: probably a minor businessman from the Balkans. They drank champagne - : what else could they possibly drink? Champagne is an indispensable ingredient of the traditional set-up: it just belongs to the show - as Ophelia's flowers or the death's-head are essential for any Hamlet production.

Everything was perfectly comme il faut - arranged and acted according to the rituals of a classic pattern. His trivial jokes and her silvery giggle; the naughty refrains of dated French chansons that she recited with a provoking nonchal^{ance}; his delight and ~~his~~ clumsy

efforts to be sparkling too - :it was altogether like a scene out of a musical comedy - long-rehearsed, often-tested. ~~I~~ always knew what would happen next. Now, he will start to sing some dirty little nonsense - whereupon she, of course, pats his mouth with her fingertips - chuckling "Hush, chérie! - You have a voice like a crow!" - :full of banter and wit..

While she flirted with him, and called him mon chou and mon petit coco, she wanted me to know how disgusted she really was with his poor manners and his ugliness. She made faces behind his back and darted scornful glances - just to inform me that she thought him a bore and that he annoyed her to madness. Her disgust was, of course, more honest and authentic than her artificial merriment. Yet, strangely enough, even this tragic attitude of hers was not quite sincere. The suffering that she seemingly tried to conceal, was really just another aspect of the traditional pattern: Here I am am, in all my sordid depravity! - my poor heart bleeding, corroded with shame and pain - while I pretend to have a wonderful time with that hideous moran...

When she had left - not without having presented me with a plaintive but promising smile - I asked the barman if he knew who she was. - "That dame?" - He shrugged his shoulders and seemed slightly shocked - either by my ignorance or else by my frivolous curiosity. - "Why, of course - it's the Baroness," he said, not very enthusiastically; then added - while he kept moving his cocktail shaker in a bored, mechanic way: " She lives here for many years." I was not quite sure if this ^{meant} ~~was~~, in his opinion, a fact speaking for the Baroness, or if he rather disapproved of her long stay at the Bellevue Hotel. As I was still musing on this puzzling question, he informed me - casually but in the discreetly lowered voice of an experienced bawd: "Apartment 36 - in case you're interested... But you'd better give her a ring before you drop by to see her. She is ~~still~~ pretty busy - sometimes..."

I assured him, rather indignantly, that I had certainly no such intentions - whereupon he shrugged again and retired.

~~Why should I make~~ ⁴ a date with her? What an ~~absurd~~ ^{ludicrous} idea! - True, I liked the dainty oval of her pallid, ~~delicate~~ face, and there was something in her voice and smile that affected me. She had been ~~kind of~~ ^{rather} exciting, indeed, when she gave me ~~me~~ those treacherous looks, behind the back of her lover... But - a date? It would probably be expensive - and hardly worth the price...

Yet, when I crossed the lobby I stopped at the desk from where the concierge, Herr Tulpitz, supervised majestically all goings-on of the Bellevue. He was an imposing old fellow, Herr Tulpitz - ; in fact, an ideal concierge - dignified, thoughtful and kind. He would tell me, in a plain and yet tactful way, if it was advisable to make friends with that so-called Baroness.

His reaction on my ~~simple and~~ casual question was apt to ~~surprise~~ ^{astonish}, if not to frighten me. He seemed unduely pleased and at the same time alarmed, tickled as well as puzzled, and altogether muddled and overwhelmed with excitement, ~~when I inquired after that dubious lodger~~ - "The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière?" he asked ~~for his part~~ ^{back} - pronouncing the grandiose name with a certain solemn tenderness, ~~apparently deeply shocked by my stunning naivité~~. There was a long, stone-like pause before he added - all severity and serious disapproval - : "I am surprised, Sir. Very surprised, indeed."

I smiled uncomfortably, feeling rather foolish and guilty. Finally I ventured to say, very timidly: "She is sort of famous, I suppose?"

"Sort of famous?" - This time he seemed ~~saddened~~ rather than angry. His eyes, moist with sorrowful love, stared through me without seeing me. - "She is the Pride of the Bellevue," he stated at last, nodding gravely. ~~He still seemed strangely absentminded~~ ^{High-203} "His Imperial used to call her 'my darling butterfly'..." - How soft his voice ~~now~~

^{now}
sounded. He shook his head - absorbed in memories. "The Pride of the Bellevue..." he repeated musingly. "The Pride of the Bellevue - for twenty-seven years..."

"For twenty-seven years?"

He started as if awakening from a ghastly dream. - "You'll excuse me, Sir," he said briefly, in a ^{strangely} ~~hoarse~~ peremptory ^{tone} ~~way~~ - : it was almost rude - I had never seen him in such a state. "I am very busy."

He finished the conversation as a monarch finishes an audience. - ^(graciously)

When I passed by the next morning, however, he beckoned, and as I stopped in front of his throne-like desk, he ^(whispered) ~~whispered~~ to me with a sort of restrained passion: "How are you this morning, Herr Baron?" (He knew, of course, that I am no Baron, and had never called me so before.) "I hope you had a good night and forgot all about that rubbish I've told you yesterday."

I feigned not to understand. - "The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière", he murmured - enjoying, this time, the pleasure of pronouncing her name with a certain apprehensive hastiness as if disturbed by a feeling of guilt. "How foolish I was to say that she lives here for twenty-five years!" - "Twenty-seven years," I corrected him, mildly but firmly.

- "What's the difference?" He had a tormented chuckle. "It's a silly lie, anyway. I just tried to be funny - that's all. I have no idea, really, how long the Baroness lives here, at the Bellevue. It may be five years, or nine - or thirty... In any case, I should be more careful about what I say. That stupid twaddle of mine could do harm to her reputation."

Her reputation? - I couldn't help smiling somewhat sardonically. Herr Tulpitz, guessing my thoughts, nodded gloomily. "I know, I know - people are malicious nowadays - : nasty and narrowminded - that's what they are. All that sordid gossip - I know it only too well..." - There was a silence while he seemed to brood over some depressing mystery. ←

caressing the silky silver of his magnificent whiskers. Finally he pulled himself together as if he had come to a grim but imperative conclusion. "I may as well tell you right away," he ^{began} ~~started~~, his voice trembling with grave emotion. He paused, then continued with a sort of desperate ^{bluntness} ~~directness~~: "She is no Baroness, really. She might have been married, of course, to a Baron de La Motte-Tribolière - somewhere, in Monte Carlo or Cairo - ^{many years} ~~a very long time~~ ago... But now - under the present circumstances - she is just a woman, who..." - He didn't find the right word, and announced at last: "A courtesan - that's what she really is."

"A courtesan"... What a queer, pretentious designation! It sounded old-fashioned and somehow fantastic... "So she is simply a wh...?"

- He interrupted me with a scathing look and a majestic gesture. "Now, listen to me, young man!" he said slowly, in an ominously lowered voice. "^{When} ~~I~~ say 'a courtesan', I mean a courtesan - not a whore. I am sorry to notice that you - as most young men nowadays - don't know the difference between a cheap prostitute and a grande cocotte. The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière is a master in her profession - just as Signor Caruso or Madame Sarah Bernhardt are masters in their own respective realms. Gentlemen of great fortune and reputation flock to her attractive personality. I could show you pictures of our sumptuous apartment in Paris..." He faltered and blushed - which ^{made} ~~gave~~ a ~~strange~~ pathetic impression - his wrinkled, paternal face, glowing with that momentary flush. Then he continued - composed and dignified again: "However, she is a lady of great talents and considerable background. I daresay, indeed, that she is the last one - the last worthy representative of the great style, the authentic tradition. I have seen many of them in my time; but only few who matched the Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière - and none, actually none, who surpassed her.

- My word of honor!" he concluded in a firm, though slightly trembling

voice. "She is absolutely first-rate. ^{Believe} ~~I am~~ an old connoisseur ~~and know~~
^{who} surely knows what ~~I am~~ ^{what she is} talking about."

^{(made a considerable impression upon me.}
Mr. Tulpitz's solemn little harangue had ~~impressed me rather consider-~~
~~ably.~~ I recalled his words while I kept watching the Baroness - increas-
singly attracted by her appearance, ~~and unusual attitude.~~ So that's
what she looks like - I wondered as I gazed at her - : the last of the
grandes cocottes ~~(the last veritable courtesan...~~

It so happened, time and again, that she and myself were the only per-
sons present in the lobby or in the bar - for an hour, or even longer.
She would sit there - numbed with boredom or melancholy, absorbed in
bleak and mysterious dreams. She was much alone - dallying her time
with yellowed magazines or just staring in front of her with unfocussed,
empty eyes. Sometimes she smiled at me - a momentary, meaningless smile
- or she gave me a hasty glance, full of suffering and seduction.

How did she manage to make her living, being so extremely languid
and inactive? How could a professional courtesan afford to waste valuable
hours on an arm-chair - supine, lethargic, motionless like a brittle
statue - a precious doll made of glass, silk, and a very delicate, almost
transparent marble?

She changed, of course, and suddenly ~~seemed~~ ^{and} turned sparkling, animated,
when she received visitors - which occurred but rarely: ^{once} about every
other day, in the late afternoon. Then she showed off and glittered -
quivering with alluring caprices and pearling laughters. How enthralling
she was! - how delightful, with the swift elegance of her nimble move-
ments! At the same time, however, the dazzling performance she gave
was apt to depress me a little. Hers was a certain perfunctory verve
- a routine frolicsomeness as you may notice it in the feats and smiles
of an ageing prima ballerina - still celebrated, though already weary -
who executes the same ballet for the thousandth time. - Partly it was

^{(due}

to the appearance of her cavaliers, I suppose, that the whole picture seemed so sinister. Most of them were rather dreary, indeed - elderly chaps with worn-out, flaccid faces, nasty old debauchees, grotesque figures with ~~and~~ monocles and ridiculous wigs - trying desperately to look dashing and youthfully wicked. Where did they come from, and why did they gather just here? What was their social background, their function and position in life? Did the Baroness pick up her lovers in hospitals and asylums? Had she no boy friends under seventy? What was wrong ^{with} ~~about~~ her, anyhow? For there was something wrong - undeniably...

Why did she never go out?

This was the weirdest feature of her puzzling conduct - : that she never left the hotel; never breathed a bit of open air, never set foot on the street. She seemed a prisoner of the Hotel Bellevue - doomed to spend the rest of her sinful days in that gloomy lobby, guarded by the grim tenderness of Herr Tulpitz. Like a nun, ^{bound} ~~obliged~~ by a solemn oath never to leave the monastery, she kept wandering - a spectral and perfumed saint - between the dusty lobby, the sultry bar, and her own apartment - Nr. 36 - : that notorious ^{refuge of depravity -} ~~dwelling~~, scandalously opened to a vicious public, but, for some mysterious reason, inaccessible to me...

Was she ^{wanted} ~~persecuted~~ by the police, and The Bellevue was the only place where she felt out of reach - as, in the pious days of antiquity, safety ~~was~~ used to be granted even to murderers, as long as they remained within the ^{walls} ~~boundaries~~ of a sanctuary? - Or was she bound by an ^{contract} ~~agreement~~ with the managements, obliging her to restrict her activities strictly to the rooms of this ^{hotel} ~~establishment~~? - Or, perhaps, she had to avoid any contact with the outside world, ^{because} ~~for~~ the smooth and artificial mask of her ~~ageless~~ face could not stand the natural touch of sun, wind, and rain? Even the ^{mild breezes} ~~pleasant air~~ of a spring day might prove fatal to the perishable substance of her delicate flesh: it would dissolve presently under the ~~nude~~ carresses of the lively air - just as certain

mummies, excellently preserved in the dark cosiness of their grave chambers, ~~would~~ dissolve promptly when exposed to humidity, cold and heat. -

~~How old was the Baroness, really? - Much older, at any rate, than she seemed in the merciful twilight of her narrow hunting-grounds. Or was she simply~~
scared by the ugliness and cruel sobriety of ~~the~~ our modern world? ~~I remember~~
I remembered what Herr Tulpitz had told me about her being "the last one" - the last legitimate representative of a proud tradition that had reached its end... Was it because she felt estranged to the greedy voidness of Twentieth Century-life, that she preferred this haughty and sad seclusion? -

I had started to jot down some fragmentary notes concerning her character and plight - the intricate phenomenon of her existence. It was a thorough analysis of that odd character - the last courtesan - I was pondering on. The gradual disappearance of that female type, called ^{la} ~~grande~~ ^{that deserved the} ~~cocotte or great courtesan~~ - wasn't this a fact ~~both significant and depressing?~~ ^(most serious consideration?) She just died away - like certain gigantic salamanders, dwarfish dogs, or dated literary mannerisms. How could chroniclers of current history neglect so stirring a development - so bitter and cruel a loss? After all, they used to play a crucial rôle in world history - those grand and colourful ladies, from Aspasia to the aristocratic vamps of the Renaissance, from Pompadour and Du Barry to the splendid demi-mondaines of the Ninetienth Century - half-^{outcasts,} ~~pariahs~~ half-queens; abused and desired by hypocrits, boycotted and envied by ^{bourgeois} ~~poor~~ women, courted by princes and exploited by pimps - living in glamour, dying in misery, and finally immortalized by Balzac and Heinrich Heine, Maupassant and Zola, Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec. - And nowadays? - in these dreary times of ours? - Of course, there still are ladies of dubious reputation - kept women, des femmes fatales of many different shades - "Oumph girls", pretentious flappers, greedy adventuresses. But their style and taste - their tricks and their ambitions have deplorably changed. Now, they want to make a

career in the movies or in the secret service of a Totalitarian State, ~~or they get simply married to a millionaire.~~ The whole game has become rather business-like and prosaic -: no romanticism, any more.

A world convulsing in the ~~strain~~^{fever} of a permanent crisis has no room or time for the luxurious whims of individuals. These are bad days, indeed, for the ars amandi. A new militant pathos, ~~both innocent and re-~~^{noisy, crude,} lentless, sweeps away the sins and charms of a more settled society. A new perfunctory libertinism depreciates the traditional rites and subtle circumstantialities of costly vices: the ~~odd~~^{odd} morality of 1940 has no objection to the bombing of open cities, but disapproves strictly of sensual refinements that might be pernicious to the national strength. The rich finance political parties instead of expensive women; the poor get intoxicated by the thuding eloquence of dictators; tyrants turn ascetic - youngsters murderous - and the Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière spends her days in gloomy loneliness - musing upon the cruel change of all worldly things... Doesn't she resemble, indeed, those tragic witches whom we meet occasionally in the sophisticated fairy-tales of a baroque German romanticism? They are very lonely, too - those last sorcer^{ye}esses - , very grand and sad - , terribly forsaken in a world from which the philosophy of Enlightenment and the invention of the electric light have banished all mystery and magic...

Thus I speculated and dreamed - writing down, from time to time, a few sporadic words and sentences - when the Baroness suddenly stood behind me. She had approached - noiseless and feline - : I only noticed her as I felt, with a slight and rather pleasant shudder, the icy tenderness of her fingertips on my glowing temples. This was her silvery laugh - melodious, though somewhat forced. "How shockingly busy you are! I can't stand this any more. For half-an-hour I keep watching you. It makes me incredibly nervous to see ~~any~~ a man working with such ugly zeal. - What are you scribbling there, anyhow? Is it about me?"

Naughty boy you are!" - She lifted a white, brittle finger, waving it with playful severity - an unsuitable and rather ludicrous gesture. Never before I had seen her so completely deprived of all charm and dignity.

~~I told her that I hadn't even noticed her presence, and that I was working on a history of the religious struggles in the Seventeenth Century. She was glad to hear this. "For it would be preposterous to write on me, of all things," she observed, all sensible modesty.~~

~~(she inquired, full of anxious suspicion)~~
"And, besides, what do you know about me, anyhow?" ~~Nothing, I suppose - except those ridiculous tales of Herr Tulpitz - poor old thing...~~

The last words she pronounced very slowly, with a strangely lurking ~~twinkle~~ ^{twinkle} in her eyes. ~~Obviously, she was eager to find out what kind of informations the concierge had given me.~~ I assured her hastily:

"Herr Tulpitz is as discreet as he could be. I never heard from him a single word of gossip." - She shrugged her shoulders and seemed slightly disappointed. "Poor old thing," she repeated; and then - while she began to examine her make-up in a tiny mirror - "He is nuts," she added. "Mad like hell. Poor old darling, ~~he is.~~"

There was something surprisingly hard and vulgar in her words and the abrupt little laugh that followed. Her smile and voice, however, turned softer as she continued: "He lives in a world of his own. I am sure he believes, ~~really,~~ ^{really,} ~~all his fantastic stories...~~ that he used to be very rich, and people called him Excellency, and ~~we~~ ^{that lived in} a fine apartment in Paris - he and I - , many years ago. It's quite a ~~story~~ ^{story} - very romantic and moving... I was the great courtesan - and he the nobleman who had decided to save me... But I fell in love with the Imperial Prince, and there was a scandal in Vienna - a tremendous scandal, with tout le monde talking about... So we fled to Paris, and there I betrayed him again; for I was the incorrigible one, the indomitable one - and he loved me, and then there was a war, and he lost all his

money, and his title, and everything: all he kept was his love for me - his eternal love - , and I made money for him. He was not jealous any more - simply couldn't afford it. But he still did love me. We had a wonderful time - I and he - lots of fun we had; before we stranded in this dreary place... But this, of course, was a long long time ago..."

Her voice had assumed that singing and drowsy rhythm in which mothers recite fairy-tales to their children. But then there was again that hard, aggressive little clink of her ~~desperate~~ ^{nervous} laugh. "It's all sheer invention, of course," she concluded. "But he really believes it. And why shouldn't he, after all? If it makes him feel better..."

Then she asked me, very casually, if I cared to take her out for dinner tonight.

When I met her again in the lobby, only two or three hours later, she had changed clothes and looked strikingly handsome, indeed - with that delicate face of hers, shining in its translucent pallor under the heavy crown of her rich, auburn hair. I asked her where she wanted to go - whereupon she pierced me with a sad, reproachful glance. - "There is no place to go." - She shuddered as if an icy wind had touched her bare shoulders and effulgent décolleté. There she stood, her lips tightly closed - haunted by mysterious fears or bound by secret oaths and obligations - : frail and beautiful in her gorgeous costume. It was the most astounding sort of an evening gown she wore - a complicated creation with an endless trail; overburdened with feathers, jewels, colored laces, all kinds of fanciful draperies. It might have been a curious model of 1890 - or the saucy caprice of a super-modern dress-maker... Her fingers twisted nervously the purple feathers of an enormous fan. I said to her: "You look more exciting than ever," - which made her presently smile again.

"The restaurant of our charming hotel," she announced with a grandiose

gesture towards the dining room that laid in gloomy darkness. "It still is the most dandy spot far and wide." - Then she added, with that false note of jocularly that sometimes made her conversation so embarrassing: "Unless you think it compromising to dine in the view of your friends with a wicked girl like me..."

I replied, rather drierly, that I did not expect, really, to meet many acquaintances in that desolate place. But she insisted, with a disquieting merriment: "Oh, there are plenty of them... You'll see, mon ami - you'll see..."

But all I saw as we entered the restaurant, were empty tables and chairs. Only one table was set and scarcely lightened by an old-fashioned lamp - as ^{though} ~~if~~ the waiter had expected us, but nobody else.

"Gaston has reserved my favourite corner for us!" cooed the Baroness. "C'est charmant! The Duchess will explode with rage... Don't look now! There she is..."

I felt rather alarmed as she sent her haughty, distracted smile through the murky twilight of the deserted room. - "The Duke cuts me too," she whispered, very close to me - angry and amused. "Ah, comme c'est rigolo! - But what else could he do, after all? She would certainly kill him if he dared to have a glimpse at me..."

No doubt, her mind wandered a little. She saw this deserted locality swarming with enemies and admirers, rivals, lovers and bawds - she heard the familiar whirr of gossip and intrigues, the whisper of desire, envy and disapproval, as she had heard it at the same place before - how many years ago? - "La petite Lolotte!" she giggled. "Mon dieu!" All dressed up like a circus horse, isn't she. I wonder, really, what the ~~man~~ ^{colonel} finds in her..."

She calmed down a little as we had finally reached our table. - "The food is lousy here," she observed, and suddenly had, in the flickering shine of the lamp, the sullen and weary face of a very old woman.

Then, rather ~~desperately~~ and abruptly, she plunged into a swift and elegant conversation. I listened to her winged and empty chat - half-amused, half-bewildered, as ^{most of} ~~was~~ the names and events she referred to sounded strangely unfamiliar to me. Besides, it struck me as somewhat weird that she should be so thoroughly au courant as to the ~~gossip~~^s of the smart set in Venice, Cannes and Paris, the races in Auteuil and Monte Carlo, the opera season in London, the latest scandals of Biarritz and ~~the~~ Baden-Baden - though she never left this provincial place nor even this hotel... ~~her~~ swift accounts, volatil and yet graphic, reminded me of that frenzied snobbism characteristic for certain chapters by Marcel Proust. There was a natural sophistication in her voluble way of talking - something suave and brilliant, but at the same time stale, frozen, deprived of authentic life. ~~She was kind of highbrow, all right. But when she discussed books it was not the works of Paul Morand, Decobra or Colette she mentioned, but - curiously enough - novels by Maupassant, Daudet and the Goncourts books, in short, that we already count among the classics.~~ As I finally ventured on a few modest remarks about recent Hollywood films, she grew silent and seemed mysteriously hurt - her face drooping as if I had bored and offended her by endless tirades on a subject entirely beyond her understanding. - "These flowers," she interrupted me at last. "These lilacs...: gorgeous, aren't they. - You don't know what flowers mean to me, my friend." - She had a wan, mawkish smile and a fumbling gesture pointing at those flowers she saw. "I adore them," she whispered. But the table was empty. It was a barren table she smiled at.

"There are no flowers," I said, rather cruelly - with a clumsy effort to call her back, to reality.

She nodded sadly. "I know, I know... No flowers - alas! no flowers, any more..."

There was a silence, while her eyes wandered with the smoke of her cigarette. When she finally spoke again, her

infinitely sad.

voice sounded hollow, ~~full of a lament vague but overwhelming,~~ "No flowers, any more," she insisted - and then assumed the bleak dignity of Cassandra, the prophetess. "There will be hard times, my poor friend," she predicted, her voice tolling like the great bells of the last judgment. "Cruel times and bloody tribulations! The great ordeal - I can see its approach... We are doomed - all of us. You, and I, and all these ~~many~~ *lusty* men and women. ~~In this room!~~ The flowers, the champagne, the beautiful girls; all playful, creative minds; the artists, the courtesans, the princes, the adventurers, and the poets - doomed, doomed, doomed. No games any more, no luxury, no joy, no tenderness, no fancy. Only discipline, and boredom, and cruelty, and death. Only death."

"You seem in high spirits, Madame la Comtesse." - This was the paternal, reassuring bass of Herr Tulpitz, the concierge. While she raved and lamented, he had slowly approached ~~a massy, majestic figure~~ from the shadowy background - a massy, majestic figure.

"Hello, dear old little Excellency!" cooed the Baroness - renouncing her Cassandra-like attitude as abruptly as she had assumed it. "Enchantée de vous voir, cher ami!"

He kissed her fingertips; ~~all old-fashioned, pedantic gallantry~~

"How are you tonight, Madame? Enjoying yourself, I presume?"

She nodded, with a faint, conventional smile. "The Baron is good company," she observed, rather vaguely - whereupon Herr Tulpitz, with a swift and surprising motion, produced an object that he had hidden behind his imposing back. It was a bunch of lilacs - a dreary thing, completely dried out and faded.

"These beautiful flowers," he announced with a tender solemnity. "They were just delivered..."

"Where do they come from?" she asked eagerly - snatching the withered blooms. "Do they come - from him?"

"From his Imperial Highness," he confirmed, and smirked as

he saw the beatific smile upon her mouth. - "Thanks," she whispered - hiding her radiant face between the faded flowers.

What a nightmarish - what an enchanting scene! Herr Tulpitz - more Franz Joseph-like than ever in a baroque and pompous uniforme ~~epaule~~ with broad epaulets and dazzling decorations - had ~~meanwhile~~ started to preform a sort of ^{a/}fantastic pantomime, ~~trisking~~ ⁻ and tripping with the ungainly grace of a learned bear around that bedizened and bejewelled figure - that gaudy monster and ~~forgotten idol~~ brittle idol of forgotten vices - the Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière, ~~the~~ Pride of the Bellevue, the last one of the great courtesans. There she stood, askance under the flaring light, an amazing bird - overburdened with glaring feathers, baubles, and the tremendous weight of her years. Was she ninety years old? Or a hundred? In any case, excellently preserved by insanity...

Was Herr Tulpitz mad too? Was he her lover? Her doctor? Or simply her employé, whom she (a very rich woman, perhaps?) paid lavishly for his ^{i/}participation in this macabre show?

Now he capers, takes little bows - surprisingly elastic despite his age; all in raptures about her colourful set-up. "My darling butterfly!" he exclaimed. "Ma chérie! Ah! plus ravissante que jamais!" - And she acknowledges his compliment with the dreadful and entrancing smile of ~~madness~~ ^{lunacy.}

Perhaps the whole performance is just a clever trick to catch the imagination and curiosity of travellers? Herr Tulpitz, an ingenious pimp, may have had the idea of alluring innocent victims, this way, to the costly debauches of ^{a/}apartment 36... Who ~~is able to~~ ^{could} see through those sordid mysteries? Who knows, really, what Herr Tulpitz means as he now ~~cries~~ cries out - constantly fawning and bowing: "This gown! It's a dream - ma foi! These colours! What a style! How gorgeous! How divine! - Just arrived from Paris, I presume? One can easily see it... Dernier Cri - that's what it is! Dernier Cri!..."

"Dernier Cri!" she repeats - and suddenly bursts into gales of laughter. What an appalling laugh! - ~~so much~~ ^{infinitely} worse than any weeping could be. ^(distorts her face) How it shakes her fragile body! And her voice - how woeful ^(whimpers) it sounds! - at once shrill and hollow... "Dernier Cri!" she ~~says~~ again and again, convulsed with laughter and agony. "You are right, my friend! Oh, how right you are! Our last scream - here it is! I am the last scream - the last sigh - the last grin of an epoch... Le dernier ~~air~~ cri - c'est moi...."

She rises her arms, spreads and stretches them - one of her hands clasping the bloody purple of the ~~tremendous~~ ^{huge} fan, while the other hand still holds the withered bouquet. Her laugh sounds like desperate crying; but her eyes are dry - her beautiful eyes, disproportionately big in the dainty oval of her ageless face.

This tremendous pose of exuberant despair lasts for several ~~min~~ seconds. Finally Herr Tulpitz - transformed again into a sensible and humble old man - pats her trembling shoulder with his heavy hand. "Pauvre enfant!" he murmures. "Come come! Be quiet! It's time to go to bed..."

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D e r n i e r C r i

By Klaus Mann.

What a weird ^{idyll}~~mon~~ it was! - that provincial Austrian watering-place and its representative hotel - the Bellevue. I don't remember who had recommended me the dreary place, nor why I stayed there for a fortnight or even longer - instead of rushing to the next train presently when I had glimpsed at the ^{dull}~~marry~~ promenade, the sleepy Kurhaus, the dusty palm trees adorning the deserted lobby of the Bellevue.

There was something uncannily depressing about that hotel in all its faded splendor. The whole establishment - luridly pompous as it was, with its marble stair cases, vast ball rooms, sultry chambres séparées, and secret corridors - exhaled the most penetrating nostalgia for those legendary ^{days}~~periods~~ of abominable taste and tremendous fun - when Russian Grand Dukes, roaring with savage laughters, used to chase buxom chambre maids; Austrian officers sipped champagne out of a lady's slipper, while handsome princes of the House of Hapsburg kept obstinately their "icog-nito", ~~though~~ their true identity was only too well known to everybody

- : the imposing doorman - very Franz Joseph-like with his magnificent pair of whiskers - had a sardonic smirk when he addressed his Imperial Highness simply as Herr Baron... How remote it seems! how unreal! - this withered glamour of forgotten festivals - the weightless merriment of laughs and waltzes long died away... ~~What a light-minded, brilliant world it must have been! - ; in fact, as remote from us as the ~~usual~~ ~~old~~ pre-revolutionary style of life may have seemed to the generation following the French Revolution. Could we listen now to the noisy conversations of princes, bankers and adventurers who once patronized the Bellevue, we may be horrified and disgusted by their ignorant frivolity,~~

~~their ruthless selfishness, the vulgarity of their opinions, pleasures and ambitions. And yet, what a lovable - an entrancing world! - with all its pretentious forms, its complicated rites and vices...~~ I recognized ^{the} ~~its~~ charm and ^{the} ~~its~~ absurdity ^(of that down-sunken world) as I gazed dreamingly into one of the dingy mirrors decorating the ~~low~~ walls of the Bellevue Bar.

It was in that gold-framed mirror that I caught the first glimpse of the Baroness. Her fragile figure gradually emerged from the shady depth of the glass like a mermaid slowly rises from ^{the} ~~the~~ chilly hiding-place. ~~at the wall~~. She entered the bar on the arm of her ~~elderly~~ ungainly cavalier. She laughed. She was very attractive.

What I noticed first of all were her eyes - disproportionately big; inconsolably sad under a saucy hat. My heart smote me as I watched her crossing the empty bar - royally erect; shrouded in the provocative sweetness of her perfume and the triumphant cascades of her pearling laugh. I was struck, ravished, bewildered - by the glimmering pallor of her ageless face, the strange elegance of her clothes, and, above all, by the disquieting contrast between the elate melody of her laugh and the unfathomable melancholy of her eyes.

Never shall I forget this first performance of her repertoire I witnessed. Her companion was a middle-aged fellow - hook-nosed, swarthy and greasy -: probably a minor businessman from the Balkans. They drank champagne - : what else could they possibly drink? Champagne is an indispensable ingredient of the traditional set-up: it just belongs to the show - as Ophelia's flowers or the death's-head are essential for any Hamlet production.

Everything was perfectly comme il faut - arranged and acted according to the rituals of a classic pattern. His trivial jokes and her silvery giggle; the naughty refrains of dated French chansons that she recited with a provoking nonchal^{an}ce; his delight and ~~his~~ clumsy

efforts to be sparkling too - it was altogether like a scene out of a musical comedy - long-rehearsed, often-tested. ~~I always knew what would happen next. Now, he will start to sing some dirty little nonsense - whereupon she, of course, pats his mouth with her fingertips - chuckling "Hush, chérie! - You have a voice like a crow!" - full of banter and wit...~~

While she flirted with him, and called him mon choux and mon petit coco, she wanted me to know how disgusted she really was with his poor manners and his ugliness. She made faces behind his back and darted scornful glances - just to inform me that she thought him a bore and that he annoyed her to madness. Her disgust was, of course, more honest and authentic than her artificial merriment. Yet, strangely enough, even this tragic attitude of hers was not quite sincere. The suffering that she seemingly tried to conceal, was really just another aspect of the traditional pattern: Here I am, in all my sordid depravity! - my poor heart bleeding, corroded with shame and pain - while I pretend to have a wonderful time with that hideous moran...

When she had left - not without having presented me with a plaintive but promising smile - I asked the barman if he knew who she was. - "That dame?" - He shrugged his shoulders and seemed slightly shocked - either by my ignorance or else by my frivolous curiosity. - "Why, of course - it's the Baroness," he said, not very enthusiastically; then added - while he kept moving his cocktail shaker in a bored, mechanic way: "She lives here for many years." I was not quite sure if this ^{meant} ~~was~~, in his opinion, a fact speaking for the Baroness, or if he rather disapproved of her long stay at the Bellevue Hotel. As I was still musing on this puzzling question, he informed me - casually but in the discreetly lowered voice of an experienced bawd: "Apartment 36 - in case you're interested... But you'd better give her a ring before you drop by to see her. She is ~~still~~ pretty busy - sometimes..."

I assured him, rather indignantly, that I had certainly no such intentions - whereupon he shrugged again and retired.

~~Why should I make~~ ^{ludicrous} A date with her? What an ~~absurd~~ ideal - True, I liked the dainty oval of her pallid ~~delicate~~ face, and there was something in her voice and smile that affected me. She had been ^{rather} ~~kind of~~ exciting, indeed, when she gave me ~~me~~ those treacherous looks, behind the back of her lover... But - a date? It would probably be expensive - and hardly worth the price...

Yet, when I crossed the lobby I stopped at the desk from where the concierge, Herr Tulpitz, supervised majestically all goings-on of the Bellevue. He was an imposing old fellow, Herr Tulpitz - ; in fact, an ideal concierge - dignified, thoughtful and kind. He would tell me, in a plain and yet tactful way, if it was advisable to make friends with that so-called Baroness.

His reaction on my ~~simple and~~ casual question was apt to ^{astomish} ~~surprise~~, if not to frighten me. He seemed unduely pleased and at the same time alarmed, tickled as well as puzzled, and altogether muddled and overwhelmed with excitement, ~~then I inquired after that dubious lodger.~~
- "The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière?" he asked ^{back} ~~for his part~~ - pronouncing the grandiose name with a certain solemn tenderness. ~~Apparently deeply shocked by my stunning naivité.~~ There was a long, stone-like pause before he added - all severity and serious disapproval - : "I am surprised, Sir. Very surprised, indeed."

I smiled uncomfortably, feeling rather foolish and guilty. Finally I ventured to say, very timidly: "She is sort of famous, I suppose?"

"Sort of famous?" - This time he seemed ~~a~~ saddened rather than angry. His eyes, moist with sorrowful love, stared through me without seeing me. - "She is the Pride of the Bellevue," he stated at last, nodding gravely. ~~He still seemed strangely abashed.~~ ^{High noon} "His Imperial used to call her 'my darling butterfly'..." - How soft his voice ~~now~~

now!
sounded. He shook his head - absorbed in memories. "The Pride of the Bellevue...", he repeated musingly. "The Pride of the Bellevue - for twenty-seven years..."

"For twenty-seven years?"

He started as if awakening from a ghastly dream. - "You'll excuse me, Sir," he said briefly, in a ~~hasty~~ *strangely* peremptory ~~way~~ *tone* - : it was almost rude - I had never seen him in such a state. "I am very busy."

He finished the conversation as a monarch finishes an audience. -

When I passed by the next morning, however, he beckoned *graciously*, and as I stopped in front of his throne-like desk, he ~~winked~~ *whispered* to me with a sort of restrained passion: "How are you this morning, Herr Baron?" (He knew, of course, that I am no Baron, and had never called me so before.) "I hope you had a good night and forgot all about that rubbish I've told you yesterday."

I feigned not to understand. - "The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière", he murmured - enjoying, this time, the pleasure of pronouncing her name with a certain apprehensive hastiness as if disturbed by a feeling of guilt. "How foolish I was to say that she lives here for twenty-five years!" - "Twenty-seven years," I corrected him, mildly but firmly.

- "What's the difference?" He had a tormented chuckle. "It's a silly lie, anyway. I just tried to be funny - that's all. I have no idea, really, how long the Baroness lives here, at the Bellevue. It may be five years, or nine - or thirty... In any case, I should be more careful about what I say. That stupid twaddle of mine could do harm to her reputation."

Her reputation? - I couldn't help smiling somewhat sardonically. Herr Tulpitz, guessing my thoughts, nodded gloomily. "I know, I know - people are malicious nowadays - :nasty and narrowminded - that's what they are. All that sordid gossip - I know it only too well..." - There was a silence while he seemed to brood over some depressing mystery.

caressing the silky silver of his magnificent whiskers. Finally he pulled himself together as if he had come to a grim but imperative conclusion. "I may as well tell you right away," he ~~started~~^{began}, his voice trembling with grave emotion. He paused, then continued with a sort of desperate ~~directness~~^{bluntness}: "She is no Baroness, really. She might have been married, of course, to a Baron de La Motte-Tribolière - somewhere, in Monte Carlo or Cairo - ~~a very long time~~^{many years} ago... But now - under the present circumstances - she is just a woman, who..." - He didn't find the right word, and announced at last: "A courtesan - that's what she really is."

"A courtesan"... What a queer, pretentious designation! It sounded old-fashioned and somehow fantastic... "So she is simply a wh...?"

- He interrupted me with a scathing look and a majestic gesture. "Now, listen to me, young man!" he said slowly, in an ominously lowered voice. "I ~~say~~^{mean} 'a courtesan', I mean a courtesan - not a whore. I am sorry to notice that you - as most young men nowadays - don't know the difference between a cheap prostitute and a grande cocotte. The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière is a master in her profession - just as Signor Caruso or Madame Sarah Bernhardt are masters in their own respective realms. Gentlemen of great fortune and reputation flock to her attractive personality. I could show you pictures of our sumptuous apartment in Paris..." He faltered and blushed - which ~~gave~~^{made} a ~~strange~~ pathetic impression - his wrinkled, paternal face, glowing with that momentary flush. Then he continued - composed and dignified again: "However, she is a lady of great talents and considerable background. I daresay, indeed, that she is the last one - the last worthy representative of the great style, the authentic tradition. I have seen many of them in my time; but only few who matched the Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière - and none, actually none, who surpassed her.

- My word of honor!" he concluded in a firm, though slightly trembling

voice. "She is absolutely first-rate. ^{Believe} ~~I am~~ an old connoisseur ~~and know~~
(who) surely knows what ^{he is} ~~I am~~ talking about."

(made a considerable impression upon me.)
Mr. Tulpitz's solemn little harangue had ~~impressed me rather consider-~~
~~ably~~. I recalled his words while I kept watching the Baroness - increa=
singly attracted by her appearance. ~~and unusual attitude~~ So that's
what she looks like - I wondered as I gazed at her - : the last of the
grandes/cocottes ~~the last veritable courtesan~~...

It so happened, time and again, that she and myself were the only per=
sons present in the lobby or in the bar - for an hour, or even longer.
She would sit there - numbed with boredom or melancholy, absorbed in
bleak and mysterious dreams. She was much alone - dallying her time
with yellowed magazines or just staring in front of her with unfocussed,
empty eyes. Sometimes she smiled at me - a momentary, meaningless smile
- or she gave me a hasty glance, full of suffering and seduction.

How did she manage to make her living, being so extremely languid
and inactive? How could a professional courtesan afford to waste valuable
hours on an arm-chair - supine, lethargic, motionless like a brittle
statue - a precious doll made of glass, silk, and a very delicate, almost
transparent marble?

She changed, of course, and suddenly ~~seemed~~ ^{and} turned sparkling, animated,
when she received visitors - which occurred but rarely: about ^{once} every
other day, in the late afternoon. Then she showed off and glittered -
quivering with alluring caprices and pearling laughters. How enthralling
she was! - how delightful, with the swift elegance of her nimble move=
ments! At the same time, however, the dazzling performance she gave
was apt to depress me a little. Hers was a certain perfunctory verve
- a routine frolicsomeness as you may notice it in the feats and smiles
of an ageing prima ballerina - still celebrated, though already weary -
who executes the same ballet for the thousandth time. - Partly it was ^{due}

to the appearance of her cavaliers, I suppose, that the whole picture seemed so sinister. Most of them were rather dreary, indeed - elderly chaps with worn-out, flaccid faces, nasty old debauchees, grotesque figures with ~~and~~ monocles and ridiculous wigs - trying desperately to look dashing and youthfully wicked. Where did they come from, and why did they gather just here? What was their social background, their function and position in life? Did the Baroness pick up her lovers in hospitals and asylums? Had she no boy friends under seventy? What was wrong ^{with} ~~at~~ her, anyhow? For there was something wrong - undeniably...

Why did she never go out?

This was the weirdest feature of her puzzling conduct - : that she never left the hotel; never breathed a bit of open air, never set foot on the street. She seemed a prisoner of the Hotel Bellevue - doomed to spend the rest of her sinful days in that gloomy lobby, guarded by the grim tenderness of Herr Tulpitz. Like a nun, ^{bound} ~~delighted~~ by a solemn oath never to leave the monastery, she kept wandering - a spectral and perfumed saint - between the dusty lobby, the sultry bar, and her own apartment - Nr. 36 - : that notorious ^(refuge of depravity -) ~~dwelling~~, scandalously opened to a vicious public, but, for some mysterious reason, inaccessible to me...

Was she ^{wanted} ~~persecuted~~ by the police, and The Bellevue was the only place where she felt out of reach - as, in the pious days of antiquity, safety ~~was~~ used to be granted even to murderers, as long as they remained within the ^{walls} ~~boundaries~~ of a sanctuary? - Or was she bound by a ^{contract} ~~agreement~~ with the management, obliging her to restrict her activities strictly to the rooms of this ^{hotel} ~~establishment~~? - Or, perhaps, she had to avoid any contact with the outside world, ^{because} ~~as~~ the smooth and artificial mask of her ~~ageless~~ face could not stand the natural touch of sun, wind, and rain? Even the ^{mild breezes} ~~pleasant~~ ~~air~~ of a spring day might prove fatal to the perishable substance of her delicate flesh; it would dissolve presently under the ~~raw~~ carresses of the lively air - just as certain

mummies, excellently preserved in the dark cosiness of their grave chambers, ~~would~~ dissolve promptly when exposed to humidity, cold and heat. -
~~How old was the Baroness, really? - much older, at any rate, than she seemed~~
~~in the merciful twilight of her narrow hunting-grounds..~~ Or was she simply
scared by the ugliness and cruel sobriety of ~~the~~ our modern world? ~~I remember~~
I remembered what Herr Tulpitz had told me about her being "the last
one" - the last legitimate representative of a proud tradition that had
reached its end... Was it because she felt estranged to the greedy void=
ness of Twentieth Century-life, that she preferred this haughty and sad
seclusion? -

I had started to jot down some fragmentary notes concerning her cha=
racter and plight - the intricate phenomenon of her existence. It was a
thorough analysis of that odd character - the last courtesan - I was pon=
dering on. The gradual disappearance of that female type, called ^{la} ~~grande~~
cocotte or great courtesan - wasn't this a fact ^{(that deserved the} ~~both significant and de=~~
(most serious consideration?) ~~prejudice~~ She just died away - like certain gigantic salamanders, dwarfish
dogs, or dated literary mannerisms. How could chroniclers of current hi=
story neglect so stirring a development - so bitter and cruel a loss?
After all, they used to play a crucial rôle in world history - those grand
and colourful ladies, from Aspasia to the aristocratic vamps of the Re=
naissance, from Pompadour and Du Barry to the splendid demi-mondaines
of the Ninetienth Century - half-^{outcasts} ~~pariahs~~ half-queens; abused and desired
by hypocrits, boycotted and envied by ^{bourgeois} ~~respectable~~ women, courted by princes and
exploited by pimps - living in glamour, dying in misery, and finally im=
mortalized by Balzac and Heinrich Heine, Maupassant and Zola, Renoir and
Toulouse-Lautrec. - And nowadays? - in these dreary times of ours? -
Of course, there still are ladies of dubious reputation - kept women,
des femmes fatales of many different shades - "Oumph girls", pretentious
flappers, greedy adventuresses. But their style and taste - their tricks
and their ambitions have deplorably changed. Now, they want to make a

career in the movies or in the secret service of a Totalitarian State, ~~or they get simply married to a millionaire.~~ The whole game has become rather business-like and prosaic -; no romanticism, any more.

A world convulsing in the ~~face~~^{fever} of a permanent crisis has no room or time for the luxurious whims of individuals. These are bad days, indeed, for the ars amandi. A new militant pathos, ~~both innocent~~^{moisy, crude,} and relentless, sweeps away the sins and charms of a more settled society. A new perfunctory libertinism depreciates the traditional rites and subtle circumstantialities of costly vices; the ~~same~~^{odd} morality of 1940 has no objection to the bombing of open cities, but disapproves strictly of sensual refinements that might be pernicious to the national strength. The rich finance political parties instead of expensive women; the poor get intoxicated by the thuding eloquence of dictators; tyrants turn ascetic - youngsters murderous - and the Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière spends her days in gloomy loneliness - musing upon the cruel change of all worldly things... Doesn't she resemble, indeed, those tragic witches whom we meet occasionally in the sophisticated fairy-tales of a baroque German romanticism? They are very lonely, too - those last sorceresses - , very grand and sad - , terribly forsaken in a world from which the philosophy of Enlightenment and the invention of the electric light have banished all mystery and magic...

Thus I speculated and dreamed - writing down, from time to time, a few sporadic words and sentences - when the Baroness suddenly stood behind me. She had approached - noiseless and feline - ; I only noticed her as I felt, with a slight and rather pleasant shudder, the icy tenderness of her fingertips on my glowing temples. This was her silvery laugh - melodious, though somewhat forced. "How shockingly busy you are! I can't stand this any more. For half-an-hour I keep watching you. It makes me incredibly nervous to see ~~any~~ a man working with such ugly zeal. - What are you scribbling there, anyhow? Is it about me?"

Naughty boy you are!" - She lifted a white, brittle finger, waving it with playful severity - an unsuitable and rather ludicrous gesture. Never before I had seen her so completely deprived of all charm and dignity.

~~I told her that I hadn't even noticed her presence, and that I was working on a history of the religious struggles in the Seventeenth Century. She was glad to hear this. "For it would be preposterous to write on me, of all things," she observed, all sensible modesty.~~

(she inquired, full of anxious suspicion.)
"And, besides, what do you know about me, anyhow?" "Nothing, I suppose - except those ridiculous tales of Herr Tulpitz - poor old thing..."

The last words she pronounced very slowly, with a strangely lurking *twinkle* in her eyes. ~~Obviously, she was eager to find out what kind of informations the concierge had given me.~~ I assured her hastily: "Herr Tulpitz is as discreet as he could be. I never heard from him a single word of gossip." - She shrugged her shoulders and seemed slightly disappointed. "Poor old thing," she repeated; and then - while she began to examine her make-up in a tiny mirror - "He is nuts," she added. "Mad like hell. Poor old darling, ~~he is~~."

There was something surprisingly hard and vulgar in her words and the abrupt little laugh that followed. Her smile and voice, however, turned softer as she continued: "He lives in a world of his own. I am sure he believes, *really,* ~~all his fantastic stories...~~ that he used to be very rich, and people called him Excellency, and we ~~had~~ *that lived in* a fine apartment in Paris - he and I - , many years ago. It's quite a *story* - very romantic and moving... I was the great courtesan - and he the nobleman who had decided to save me... But I fell in love with the Imperial Prince, and there was a scandal in Vienna - a tremendous scandal, with tout le monde talking about... So we fled to Paris, and there I betrayed him again; for I was the incorrigible one, the indomitable one - and he loved me, and then there was a war, and he lost all his

money, and his title, and everything: all he kept was his love for me - his eternal love - , and I made money for him. He was not jealous anymore - simply couldn't afford it. But he still did love me. We had wonderful time - I and he - lots of fun we had: before we stranded in this dreary place... But this, of course, was a long long time ago..."

Her voice had assumed the // singing and drowsy rhythm in which mothers recite fairy-tales to their children. But then there was again that hard, aggressive little clink of her ~~desperate~~ ^{nervous} laugh. "It's all sheer invention, of course," she concluded. "But he really believes it. And why shouldn't he, after all? If it makes him feel better..."

Then she asked me, very casually, if I cared to take her out for dinner tonight.

When I met her again in the lobby, only two or three hours later, she had changed clothes and looked strikingly handsome, indeed - with that delicate face of hers, shining in its translucent pallor under the heavy crown of her rich, auburn hair. I asked her where she wanted to go - whereupon she pierced me with a sad, reproachful glance. - "There is no place to go." - She shuddered as if an icy wind had touched her bare shoulders and effulgent décolleté. There she stood, her lips tightly closed - haunted by mysterious fears or bound by secret oaths and obligations - ; frail and beautiful in her gorgeous costume. It was the most astounding sort of an evening gown she wore - a complicated creation with an endless trail; overburdened with feathers, jewels, colored laces, all kinds of fanciful draperies. It might have been a curious model of 1890 - or the saucy caprice of a super-modern dress-maker... Her fingers twisted nervously the purple feathers of an enormous fan. I said to her: "You look more exciting than ever," - which made her presently smile again.

"The restaurant of our charming hotel," she announced with a grandiose

gesture towards the dining room that laid in gloomy darkness. "It still is the most dandy spot far and wide." - Then she added, with that false note of jocularly that sometimes made her conversation so embarrassing: "Unless you think it compromising to dine in the view of your friends with a wicked girl like me..."

I replied, rather drierly, that I did not expect, really, to meet many acquaintances in that desolate place. But she insisted, with a disquieting merriment: "Oh, there are plenty of them... You'll see, mon ami - you'll see..."

But all I saw as we entered the restaurant, were empty tables and chairs. Only one table was set and scarcely lightened by an old-fashioned lamp - as ^{though} the waiter had expected us, but nobody else.

"Gaston has reserved my favourite corner for us!" cooed the Baroness. "C'est charmant! The Duchess will explode with rage... Don't look now! There she is..."

I felt rather alarmed as she sent her haughty, distracted smile through the murky twilight of the deserted room. - "The Duke cut^s me too," she whispered, very close to me - angry and amused. "Ah, comme c'est rigolo! - But what else could he do, after all? She would certainly kill him if he dared to have a glimpse at me..."

No doubt, her mind wandered a little. She saw this deserted locality swarming with enemies and admirers, rivals, lovers and bawds - she heard the familiar whirr of gossip and intrigues, the whisper of desire, envy and disapproval, as she had heard it at the same place before - how many years ago? - "La petite Lolotte!" she giggled. "Mon dieu!" All dressed up like a circus horse, isn't she. I wonder, really, what the ^{colonel} ~~general~~ finds in her..."

She calmed down a little as we had finally reached our table. - "The food is lousy here," she observed, and suddenly had, in the flickering shine of the lamp, the sullen and weary face of a very old woman.

Then, rather ~~desperately and~~ abruptly, she plunged into a swift and elegant conversation. I listened to her winged and empty chat - half-amused, half-bewildered, as ^{most of} ~~all~~ the names and events she referred to sounded strangely unfamiliar to me. Besides, it struck me as somewhat weird that she should be so thoroughly au courant as to the ~~gossip~~^s of the smart set in Venice, Cannes and Paris, the races in Auteuil and Monte Carlo, the opera season in London, the latest scandals of Biarritz and ~~A~~ Baden-Baden - though she never left this provincial place nor even this hotel... ~~her swift accounts, volubil and yet graphic, reminded me of that frennied snobbism characteristic for certain chapters by Marcel Proust.~~ There was a natural sophistication in her voluble way of talking - something suave and brilliant, but at the same time stale, frozen, deprived of authentic life. ~~She was kind of highbrow, all right. But when she discussed books it was not the works of Paul Morand, Decobra or Colette she mentioned, but - curiously enough - novels by Maupassant, Daudet and the Goncourts - books, in short, that we already count among the classics.~~ As I finally ventured on a few modest remarks about recent Hollywood films, she grew silent and seemed mysteriously hurt - her face drooping as if I had bored and offended her by endless tirades on a subject entirely beyond her understanding. - "These flowers," she interrupted me at last. "These lilacs....: gorgeous, aren't they. - You don't know what flowers mean to me, my friend." - She had a wan, mawkish smile and a fumbling gesture pointing at those flowers she saw. "I adore them," she whispered. But the table was empty. It was a barren table she smiled at.

"There are no flowers," I said, rather cruelly - with a clumsy effort to call her back, to reality.

She nodded sadly. "I know, I know... No flowers - alas! no flowers, any more..."

There was a silence, while her eyes wandered with the smoke of her cigarette. When she finally ~~at~~ spoke again, her

voice sounded hollow, ^{infinitely sad.} ~~full of a lament vague but overwhelming.~~ "No flowers, any more," she insisted - and then assumed the bleak dignity of Cassandra, the prophetess. "There will be hard times, my poor friend," she predicted, her voice tolling like the great bells of the last judgment. "Cruel times and bloody tribulations! The great ordeal - I can see its approach... We are doomed - all of us. You, and I, and all these ^{lusty} ~~men~~ men and women. ~~in this room.~~ The flowers, the champagne, the beautiful girls; all playful, creative minds; the artists, the courtesans, the princes, the adventurers, and the poets - doomed, doomed, doomed. No games any more, no luxury, no joy, no tenderness, no fancy. Only discipline, and boredom, and cruelty, and death. Only death."

"You seem in high spirits, Madame la Comtesse." - This was the paternal, reassuring bass of Herr Tulpitz, the concierge. While she raved and lamented, he had slowly approached ~~a massy, majestic figure~~ from the shadowy background - a massy, majestic figure.

"Hello, dear old little Excellency!" cooed the Baroness - renouncing her Cassandra-like attitude as abruptly as she had assumed it. "Enchantée de vous voir, cher ami!"

He kissed her fingertips: ~~all old-fashioned, pedantic gallantry.~~
"How are you tonight, Madame? Enjoying yourself, I presume?"

She nodded, with a faint, conventional smile. "The Baron is good company," she observed, rather vaguely - whereupon Herr Tulpitz, with a swift and surprising motion, produced an object that he had hidden behind his imposing back. It was a bunch of lilacs - a dreary thing, completely dried out and faded.

"These beautiful flowers," he announced with a tender solemnity. "They were just delivered..."

"Where do they come from?" she asked eagerly - snatching the withered blooms. "Do they come - from him?"

"From his Imperial Highness," he confirmed, and smirked as

he saw the beatific smile upon her mouth. - "Thanks," she whispered - hiding her radiant face between the faded flowers.

What a nightmarish - what an enchanting scene! Herr Tulpitz - more Franz Joseph-like than ever in a baroque and pompous uniforme ~~epaule~~ with broad epaulets and dazzling decorations - had ~~meanwhile~~ started to perform a sort of ^a/fantastic pantomime, ^T/frisking and tripping with the ungainly grace of a learned bear around that bedizened and bejewelled figure - that gaudy monster and ~~forgotten idol~~ brittle idol of forgotten vices - the Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière, ~~the~~ Pride of the Bellevue, the last one of the great courtesans. There she stood, askance under the flaring light, an amazing bird - overburdened with glaring feathers, baubles, and the tremendous weight of her years. Was she ninety years old? Or a hundred? In any case, excellently preserved by insanity...

Was Herr Tulpitz mad too? Was he her lover? Her doctor? Or simply her employé whom she (a very rich woman, perhaps?) paid lavishly for his ⁱparticipation in this macabre show?

Now he capers, takes little bows - surprisingly elastic despite his age; all in raptures about her colourful set-up. "My darling butterfly!" he exclaimed. "Ma chérie! Ah! plus ravissante que jamais!" - And she acknowledges his compliment with the dreadful and entrancing smile of ^{lunacy} ~~madness~~.

Perhaps the whole performance is just a clever trick to catch the imagination and curiosity of travellers? Herr Tulpitz, an ingenious pimp, may have had the idea of alluring innocent victims, this way, to the costly debauches of ^aapartment 36... Who ^{could} ~~is able to~~ see through those sordid mysteries? Who knows, really, what Herr Tulpitz means as he now ~~cries~~ cries out - constantly fawning and bowing: "This gown! It's a dream - ma foi! These colours! What a style! How gorgeous! How divine! - Just arrived from Paris, I presume? One can easily see it... Dernier Cri - that's what it is! Dernier Cri!..."

"Dernier Cri!" she repeats - and suddenly bursts into gales of laughter. What an appalling laugh! - ^{infinitely} ~~so much~~ worse than any weeping could be. ^(distorts her face) How it shakes her fragile body! And her voice - how woeful it sounds! - at once shrill and hollow... "Dernier Cri!" she ^{whimpers} ~~says~~ again and again, convulsed with laughter and agony. "You are right, my friend! Oh, how right you are! Our last scream - here it is! I am the last scream - the last sigh - the last grin of an epoch... Le dernier ~~our~~ cri - c'est moi...."

She rises her arms, spreads and stretches them - one of her hands clasping the bloody purple of the ^{large} ~~tremendous~~ fan, while the other hand still holds the withered bouquet. Her laugh sounds like desperate crying; but her eyes are dry - her beautiful eyes, disproportionately big in the dainty oval of her ageless face.

This tremendous pose of exuberant despair lasts for several ~~minutes~~ seconds. Finally Herr Tulpitz - transformed again into a sensible and humble old man - pats her trembling shoulder with his heavy hand. "Pauvre enfant!" he murmures. "Come come! Be quiet! It's time to go to bed..."

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D e r n i e r C r i

By Klaus Mann.

What a weird idyll it was! - that provincial Austrian watering-place and its representative hotel - the Bellevue. I don't remember who had recommended the dreary place to me, nor why I stayed there for a fortnight or even longer - instead of rushing to the next train at once when I had glimpsed the dull promenade, the sleepy Kurhaus, the dusty palm trees adorning the deserted lobby of the Bellevue.

There was something uncannily depressing about that hotel in all its faded splendor. The whole establishment - luridly pompous as it was, with its marble stair cases, vast ball rooms, sultry chambres séparées, and secret corridors - exhaled the most penetrating nostalgia for those legendary days of abominable taste and tremendous fun - when Russian Grand Dukes, roaring with savage laughter, used to chase buxom chamber maids; Austrian officers sipped champagne out of a lady's slipper, while handsome princes of the House of Hapsburg kept their "incognito" obstinately, though their true identity was only too well known to everybody-: the imposing doorman - very Franz Joseph-like with his magnificent pair of whiskers - had a sardonic smirk when he addressed his Imperial Highness simply as Herr Baron...How remote it seems! how unreal!- this withered glamour of forgotten festivals - the weightless merriment of laughs and waltzes long died away ... I recognized the charm and the absurdity of that sunken-down world as I gazed dreamily into one of the dingy mirrors decorating the

walls of the Bellevue Bar.

It was in that gold-framed mirror that I caught the first glimpse of the Baroness. Her fragile figure gradually emerged from the shady depth of the glass like a mermaid slowly rises from her chilly hiding-place. She entered the bar on the arm of her ungainly cavalier. She laughed. She was very attractive.

What I noticed first of all were her eyes -disproportionately big: inconsolably sad under a saucy hat. My heart smote me as I watched her crossing the empty bar - royally erect; shrouded in the provocative sweetness of her perfume and the triumphant cascades of her pearly laugh. I was struck, ravished, bewildered - by the glimmering pallor of her ageless face, the strange elegance of her clothes, and, above all, by the disquieting contrast between the elated melody of her laugh and the unfathomable melancholy of her eyes.

Never shall I forget this first performance of her repertoire I witnessed. Her companion was a middle-aged fellow - hook-nosed, swarthy and greasy-: probably a minor businessman from the Balkans. They drank champagne-: what else could they possibly drink? Champagne is an indispensable ingredient of the traditional set-up: it just belongs to the show- as Ophelia's flowers or the death's-head are essential for any Hamlet production.

Everything was perfectly comme il faut - arranged and acted according to the rituals of a classic pattern. His trivial jokes and her silvery giggle; the naughty refrains of dated French chansons that she recited with a provoking nonchalance; his delight and clumsy efforts to be sparkling too -: it was altogether like

a scene out of a musical comedy - long-rehearsed, often-tested.

While she flirted with him, and called him mon choux and mon petit coco, she wanted me to know how disgusted she really was with his poor manners and his ugliness. She made faces behind his back and darted scornful glances - just to inform me that she thought him a bore and that he annoyed her to madness. Her disgust was, of course, more honest and authentic than her artificial merriment. Yet, strangely enough, even this tragic attitude of hers was not quite sincere. The suffering that she seemingly tried to conceal, was really just another aspect of the traditional pattern: Here I am, in all my sordid depravity! - my poor heart bleeding, corroded with shame and pain - while I pretend to have a wonderful time with that hideous moron...

When she had left - not without having presented me with a plaintive but promising smile - I asked the barman if he knew who she was. - "That dame?" - He shrugged his shoulders and seemed slightly shocked - either by my ignorance or else by my frivolous curiosity. - "Why, of course - it's the Baroness", he said, not very enthusiastically; then added - while he kept moving his cocktail shaker in a bored, mechanical way: "She's been living here for many years." I was not quite sure if this meant, in his opinion, a fact that spoke for the Baroness, or rather if he disapproved of her long stay at the Bellevue Hotel. While I was still musing on this puzzling question, he informed me - casually but in the discreetly lowered voice of an experienced bawd: "Apartment 36 - in case you're interested...But you'd better give her a ring before you drop by to see her. She is pretty busy - sometimes..."

I assured him, rather indignantly, that I certainly had no such intentions - whereupon he shrugged his shoulders again and retired.

A date with her? What a ludicrous idea! - True, I liked the dainty oval of her pallid face, and there was something in her voice and smile that affected me. She had been rather exciting, indeed, when she gave me those treacherous looks, behind the back of her lover ... But - a date? It would probably be expensive - and hardly worth the price...

Yet, when I crossed the lobby I stopped at the desk from where the concierge, Herr Tulpitz, majestically supervised all goings-on of the Bellevue. He was an imposing old fellow, Herr Tulpitz-; in fact, an ideal concierge - dignified, thoughtful and kind. He would tell me, in a plain and yet tactful way, if it was advisable to make friends with that so-called Baroness.

His reaction to my casual question was apt to astonish if not to frighten me. He seemed unduly pleased and at the same time alarmed, tickled as well as puzzled, and altogether muddled and overwhelmed with excitement. - "The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière?" he asked- pronouncing the grandiose name with a certain solemn tenderness. There was a long, stony pause before he added- all severity and serious disapproval-: " I am surprised, Sir. Very much surprised, indeed."

I smiled uncomfortably, feeling rather foolish and guilty. Finally I ventured to say, very timidly: " She is sort of famous, I suppose?"

"Sort of famous?" - Now he seemed saddened rather than

angry. His eyes, moist with sorrowful love, stared through me without seeing me . - "She is the Pride of the Bellevue". he stated at last, nodding gravely. "His Imperial Highness used to call her ' my darling butterfly'..." - How soft his voice sounded now! He shook his head - absorbed in memories. " The Pride of the Bellevue...", he repeated musingly. " The Pride of the Bellevue - for twenty-seven years..."

"For twenty-seven years?"

He started as if awakening from a ghastly dream. - "You'll excuse me, Sir," he said briefly, in a strangely peremptory tone -: it was almost rude - I had never seen him in such a state. " I am very busy."

He concluded the conversation as a monarch concludes an audience.-

When I passed by the next morning, however, he beckoned graciously, and as I stopped in front of his throne-like desk, he whispered to me with a sort of restrained passion: "How are you this morning, Herr Baron?" (he knew, of course, that I am no Baron, and had never called me so before.) " I hope you had a good night and forgot all about that rubbish I've told you yesterday."

I pretended not to understand. - " The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière", he murmured - enjoying, this time, the pleasure of pronouncing her name with a certain apprehensive hastiness as if disturbed by a feeling of guilt. " How foolish I was to say that she has been living here for twenty-five years!" - "Twenty-seven years", I corrected him, mildly but firmly. - "What's the difference?" He gave a tormented chuckle. "It's a silly lie, anyway. I just tried

to be funny- that's all. I have no idea, really, how long the Baroness lives here, at the Bellevue. It may be five years, or nine- or thirty...In any case, I should be more careful about what I say. That stupid twaddle of mine could do harm to her reputation."

Her reputation? - I couldn't help smiling somewhat sardonically. Herr Tulpitz, guessing my thoughts, nodded gloomily. "I know, I know - people are malicious nowadays - : nasty and narrowminded- that's what they are. All that sordid gossip - I know it only too well..." - There was a silence while he seemed to brood over some depressing mystery-caressing the silky silver of his magnificent whiskers. Finally he pulled himself together as if he had come to a grim but imperative conclusion. "I may as well tell you right away," he began, his voice trembling with grave emotion. He paused, then continued with a sort of desperate bluntness: "She is no Baroness, really. She may have been married, of course, to a Baron de La Motte- Tribolière - somewhere, in Monte Carlo or Cairo - many years ago ...But now - under the present circumstances - she is just a woman, who..." - He didn't find the right word, and announced at last: "A courtesan - that's what she really is."

"A courtesan"...What a queer, pretentious designation! It sounded old-fashioned and somehow fantastic... "So she is simply a wh...?" - He interrupted me with a scathing look and a majestic gesture. "Now, listen to me, young man!" he said slowly, in an ominously lowered voice. "When I say 'a courtesan', I mean a courtesan- not a whore. I am sorry to see that you - as most young men nowadays - don't know the difference between a cheap prostitute and a grande cocotte. The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière is a

master in her profession - just as Signor Caruso or Madame Sarah Bernhardt are masters in their own respective realms. Gentlemen of great fortune and reputation flock to her attractive personality. I could show you pictures of our sumptuous apartment in Paris..." He faltered and blushed - which made a pathetic impression -: this wrinkled, paternal face, glowing with that momentary flush. Then he continued - once more composed and dignified: " However, she is a lady of great talents and considerable background. I daresay, indeed, that she is the last one - the last worthy representative of the great style, the authentic tradition. I have seen many of them in my time; but only few who matched the Baroness de La Motte- Tribolière - and none, actually none, who surpassed her. - My word of honor!" he concluded in a firm, though slightly trembling voice. "She is absolutely first-rate. Believe an old connoisseur who definitely knows what he is talking about."

Mr. Tulpitz's solemn little harangue had made a considerable impression on me. I recalled his words while I kept watching the Baroness - increasingly attracted by her appearance. So that's what she looks like - I wondered as I gazed at her - : the last of the grandes cocottes...

It so happened, time and again, that she and I were the only persons present in the lobby or in the bar - for an hour, or even longer. She would sit there - numbed with boredom or melancholy, absorbed in bleak and mysterious dreams. She was much alone - dallying her time with yellowed magazines or just staring in front of her with unseeing empty eyes. Sometimes she smiled at me - a

momentary, meaningless smile - or she gave me a hasty glance, full of suffering and seduction.

How did she manage to make her living, being so extremely languid and inactive? How could a professional courtesan afford to waste valuable hours in an arm-chair/supine, lethargic, motionless like a brittle statue- a precious doll made of glass, silk, and a very delicate, almost transparent marble?

She changed, of course, and suddenly turned sparkling and animated, when she received visitors - which occurred but rarely; about once every other day, in the late afternoon. Then she showed off and glittered - quivering with alluring caprices and pearly laughter. How enthralling she was! - how delightful, with the swift elegance of her nimble movements! At the same time, however, the dazzling performance she gave was apt to depress me a little. Hers was a certain perfunctory verve - a routine frolicsomeness as one may detect in the feats and smiles of an ageing prima ballerina - still celebrated, though already weary - who executes the same ballet for the thousandth time. - It was due partly to the appearance of her cavaliers, I suppose, that the whole picture seemed so sinister. Most of them were rather dreary, indeed - elderly chaps with worn-out, flaccid faces, nasty old debauchees, grotesque figures with monocles and ridiculous wigs - trying desperately to look dashing and youthfully wicked. Where did they come from, and why did they gather just here? What was their social background, their function and position in life? Did the Baroness pick up her lovers in hospitals and asylums? Had she no boy

friends under seventy? What was wrong with her, anyhow? For there was something wrong - undeniably ...

Why did she never go out?

This was the weirdest feature of her puzzling conduct -: that she never left the hotel; never breathed a bit of open air, never set foot on the street. She seemed a prisoner of the Hotel Bellevue - doomed to spend the rest of her sinful days in that gloomy lobby, guarded by the grim tenderness of Herr Tulpitz. Like a nun, bound by a solemn vow never to leave the convent, she kept wandering - a spectral and perfumed saint - between the dusty lobby, the sultry bar, and her own apartment - Nr. 36 -: that notorious refuge of depravity-, scandalously opened to a vicious public, but, for some mysterious reason, inaccessible to me ...

Was she wanted by the police, and The Bellevue, was it the only place where she felt out of reach -as, in the pious days of antiquity, safety used to be granted even to murderers, as long as they remained within the walls of a sanctuary? - Or was she bound by contract with the management, obliging her to restrict her activities ~~strictly~~ to the rooms of this hotel? - Or, perhaps, she had to avoid any contact with the outside world, because the ~~smooth~~ and artificial mask of her face could not stand the natural touch of sun, wind, and rain? Even the mild breezes of a spring day might prove fatal to the perishable substance of her delicate flesh: it would dissolve presently under the caresses of the lively air- just as certain mummies, excellently preserved in the dark coziness of their grave chambers, dissolve promptly when exposed to humidity, cold and heat. - Or was she simply frightened by the ugliness and

cruel sobriety of our modern world? ~~I remembered what Herr Tulpitz~~
~~had told me about her being "the last one" - the last legitimate~~
~~representative of a proud tradition that had reached its end/...~~ Was
it because she felt estranged to the greedy void of Twentieth-
Century -life, that she preferred this haughty and sad seclusion? -

I had started to jot down some fragmentary notes concerning her
character and plight - the intricate phenomenon of her existence.
It was a thorough analysis of that odd character - the last courtesan-
I was pondering on. The gradual disappearance of that female type,
called la grande cocotte or great courtesan - wasn't this a fact
that deserved the most serious consideration? She just died away -
like certain gigantic salamanders, dwarfish dogs, or dated literary
mannerisms. How could chroniclers of current history neglect so
stirring a development - so bitter and cruel a loss? After all,
they used to play a crucial role in world history - those ~~grand~~ and
colorful ladies, from Aspasia to the aristocratic vamps of the Re-
naissance, from Pompadour and Du Barry to the splendid demi-mon-
daines of the Nineteenth Century - half-outcasts, half-queens:
abused and desired by hypocrites, boycotted and envied by bourgeois
women, courted by princes and exploited by pimps - living in gla-
mour, dying in misery, and finally immortalized by Balzac and Hein-
rich Heine, Maupassant and Zola, Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec.-
And nowadays? - in these dreary times of ours? - Of course, there
still are ladies of dubious reputation - kept women, des femmes
fatales of many different shades - "Oumph girls", pretentious
flappers, greedy adventuresses. But their style and taste- their
tricks and their ambitions have changed deplorably. Now, they want

to make a career in the movies or in the secret service of a Totalitarian State. The whole game has become rather business-like and prosaic: no romanticism, any longer.

A world convulsed by the fever of a permanent crisis has no room or time for the luxurious whims of individuals. These are bad days, indeed, for the ars amandi. A new militant pathos, noisy, crude, and relentless, sweeps away the sins and charms of a more settled society. A new perfunctory libertinism depreciates the traditional rites and subtle circumstantialities of costly vices: the odd morality of 1940 has no objection to the bombing of open cities, but disapproves strictly of sensual refinements that might be pernicious to the national strength. The rich finance political parties instead of expensive women; the poor get intoxicated by the thudding eloquence of dictators; tyrants turn ascetic - youngsters murderous - and the Baroness de La Motte- Tribollière spends her days in gloomy loneliness - musing upon the cruel change of all worldly things ...Doesn't she resemble, indeed, those tragic witches whom we meet occasionally in the sophisticated fairy-tales of a baroque German romanticism? They are very lonely, too - those last sorceresses-, very grand and very sad-, terribly forsaken in a world from which the philosophy of Enlightenment and the invention of the electric light have banished all mystery and magic...

Thus I speculated and dreamed - writing down, from time to time, a few sporadic words and sentences - when the Baroness suddenly stood behind me. She had approached - noiseless and feline -: I only noticed her as I felt, with a slight and rather

pleasant shudder, the icy tenderness of her fingertips on my glowing temples. This was her silvery laugh - melodious, though somewhat forced. - "How shockingly busy you are! I can't stand this any more. For half an hour I have been watching you. It makes me incredibly nervous to see a man working with such ugly zeal. - What are you scribbling there, anyhow? Is it about me? Naughty boy you are!" - She lifted a white, brittle finger, waving it with playful severity - an unsuitable and rather ludicrous gesture. Never before had I seen her so completely deprived of all charm and dignity.

"And, besides, what do you know about me, [?]~~anyhow?~~" she inquired, full of anxious suspicion. " Nothing, I suppose - except those ridiculous tales of Herr Tulpitz - poor old thing..." The last words she pronounced very slowly, with a strangely lurking twinkle in her eyes. I assured her hastily: " Herr Tulpitz is as discreet as he could be. I never heard a single word of gossip from him." - She shrugged her shoulders and seemed slightly disappointed. " Poor old thing," she repeated; and then- while she began to examine her make-up in a tiny mirror-, " He is nuts", she added. " Mad as hell. Poor old darling."

There was something surprisingly hard and vulgar in her words and the abrupt little laugh that followed. Her smile and voice, however, turned softer as she continued: " He lives in a world of his own. I am sure he believes, really, that he used to be very rich, and people called him Excellency, and that we lived in a fine apartment in Paris - he and I -, many years ago. It's quite a story- very romantic and moving ...I was the great

courtesan- and he the nobleman who had decided to save me ... But I fell in love with the Imperial Prince, and there was a scandal in Vienna - a tremendous scandal, with tout le monde talking about it...So we fled to Paris, and there I betrayed him again; for I was the incorrigible one, the indomitable one - and he loved me, and then there was a war, and he lost all his money, and his title, and everything: all he kept was his love for me - his eternal love -, and I made money for him. He was not jealous anymore-simply couldn't afford it. But he still did love me. We had a wonderful time - I and he - lots of fun we had: before we got stranded in this dreary place... But this, of course, was a long long time ago..."

Her voice had assumed the singing and drowsy rhythm in which mothers recite fairy-tales to their children. But then again there was that hard, aggressive little clink of her nervous laugh. "It's all sheer invention, of course," she concluded. "But he really believes it. And why shouldn't he, after all? If it makes him feel better..."

Then she asked me, very casually, if I cared to take her out for dinner tonight.

When I met her again in the lobby, only two or three hours later, she had changed clothes and looked strikingly handsome, indeed - with that delicate face of hers, shining in its translucent pallor under the heavy crown of her rich, auburn hair. I asked her where she wanted to go- whereupon she pierced me with a sad, reproachful glance. - "There is no place to go." - She shuddered

as if an icy wind had touched her bare shoulders, ~~and extravagant~~
~~decorate~~. There she stood, her lips tightly closed - haunted
by mysterious fears or bound by secret vows and obligations -:
frail and beautiful in her gorgeous costume. It was the most
astounding sort of an evening gown she wore - a complicated crea-
tion with an endless train; overloaded with feathers, jewels,
colored laces, all kinds of fancy draperies. It might have been
a curious model of 1890 - or the saucy caprice of a super-modern
dressmaker ... Her fingers twisted nervously about the purple fea-
thers of an enormous fan. I said to her: " You look more exciting
than ever," - which made her smile again presently.

"The restaurant of our charming hotel", she announced with
a grandiose gesture toward the dining room that lay in gloomy darkness
"It still is the most dandy spot far and wide." - Then she added,
with that false note of jocularly that sometimes made her conver-
sation so embarrassing: "Unless you think it compromising to dine
in full view of your friends with a wicked girl like me..."

I replied, rather dryly, that I did not expect, really, to meet
many acquaintances in that desolate place. But she insisted, with
a disquieting merriment: " Oh, there are plenty of them...You'll
see, mon ami - you'll see..."

But all I saw as we entered the restaurant, were empty tables
and chairs. Only one table was set and dimly lit by an old-fashioned
lamp- as though the waiter had expected us, but nobody else.

"Gaston has reserved my favorite corner for us!" cooed the
Baroness. "C'est charmant! The Duchess will explode with rage...
Don't look now! There she is..."

I felt rather alarmed as she sent her haughty, distracted smile through the murky twilight of the deserted room.- "The Duke cuts me too," she whispered, very close to me - angry and amused. "Ah, comme c'est rigolo! - But what else could he do, after all? She would certainly kill him if he dared to have a glimpse at me..."

No doubt, her mind wandered a little. She saw this deserted place swarming with enemies and admirers, rivals, lovers and bawds- she heard the familiar whirr of gossip and intrigues, the whisper of desire, envy and disapproval, as she had heard it at the same place before-: how many years ago? - "La petite Lolotte!" she giggled. "Mon dieu!" "All dressed up like a circus horse, isn't she. I wonder, really, what the colonel finds in her..."

She calmed down a little as we finally reached our table.- "The food is lousy here," she observed, and suddenly had, in the flickering shine of the lamp, the sullen and weary face of a very old woman. Then, rather abruptly, she plunged into a swift and elegant conversation. I listened to her winged and empty chatter - half-amused, half-bewildered, as most of the names and events she referred to sounded strangely unfamiliar to me. Besides, it struck me as somewhat weird that she should be so thoroughly au courant as to the gossip of the smart set in Venice, Cannes and Paris, the races in Auteuil and Monte Carlo, the opera season in London, the latest scandals of Biarritz and Baden-Baden- though she never left this provincial place nor even this hotel... There was a natural sophistication in her ~~valuable~~ way of talking - something suave and brilliant, but at the same time stale, frozen, deprived of

authentic life. As I finally ventured on a few modest remarks about recent Hollywood films, she grew silent and seemed mysteriously hurt - her face drooping as if I had bored and offended her by endless tirades on a subject entirely beyond her understanding.- "These flowers", she interrupted me at last. " These lilacs....: gorgeous, aren't they.- You don't know what flowers mean to me, my friend." - She had a wan, mawkish smile, and the gesture was a fumbling one, as she pointed to those flowers she saw. " I adore them", she whispered. But the table was empty. It was a barren table she smiled at.

"There are no flowers," I said, rather cruelly - with a clumsy effort to call her back to reality.

She nodded sadly. " I know, I know...No flowers - alas! no flowers, any more ..."

There was a silence, while her eyes wandered with the smoke of her cigarette. When she finally spoke again, her voice sounded hollow, infinitely sad. " No flowers, any more," she insisted - and then assumed the bleak dignity of Cassandra, the prophetess. "There will be hard times, my poor friend, " she predicted, her voice tolling like the great bells of the Last Judgment. "Cruel times and bloody tribulations! The great ordeal - I can see its approach...We are doomed - all of us. You, and I, and all these lusty men and women. The flowers, the champagne, the beautiful girls; all playful, creative minds; the artists, the courtesans, the princes, the adventurers, and the poets - doomed, doomed, doomed. No games any more, no luxury, no joy, no tenderness, no fancy.

Only discipline, and boredom, and cruelty, and death. Only death."

"You seem in high spirits, Madame la Comtesse." - This was the paternal, ~~reassuring~~ bass of Herr Tulpitz, the concierge. While she raved and lamented, he had slowly approached from the shadowy background - a massy, majestic figure.

"Hello, dear old little Excellency!" cooed the Baroness - renouncing her Cassandra-like attitude as abruptly as she had assumed it. "Enchantée de vous voir, cher ami!"

He kissed her fingertips: "How are you tonight, Madame? Enjoying yourself, I presume?"

She nodded, with a faint, conventional smile. "The Baron is good company," she observed, rather vaguely - whereupon Herr Tulpitz, with a swift and surprising motion, produced an object that he had hidden behind his ~~imposing~~ back. It was a bunch of lilacs- a dreary thing, completely withered and faded.

"These beautiful flowers," he announced with a tender solemnity. "They were just delivered..."

"Where do they come from?" she asked eagerly - snatching the withered blooms. "Do they come - from him?"

"From His Imperial Highness," he confirmed, and smirked as he saw the beatific smile upon her mouth. - "Thanks", she whispered - hiding her radiant face between the faded flowers.

What a nightmarish- what an enchanting scene! Herr Tulpitz - more Franz Joseph-like than ever in a baroque and pompous uniform with broad epaulets and dazzling decorations - had started to

perform a sort of fantastic pantomime- frisking and tripping with the ungainly grace of a trained bear around that bedizened and bejewelled figure - that gaudy monster and brittle idol of forgotten vices - the Baroness de La Motte- Tribolière, Pride of the Bellevue, the last one of the great courtesans. There she stood, askance under the flaring light, an amazing bird - overloaded with glaring feathers, baubles, and the tremendous weight of her years. Was she ninety years old? Or a hundred? In any case, excellently preserved by insanity...

Was Herr Tulpitz mad too? Was he her lover? Her doctor? Or simply her employé whom she (a very rich woman, perhaps) paid lavishly for his participation in this macabre show?

Now he capers, takes little bows - surprisingly elastic despite his age; all in raptures about her colorful set-up. " My darling butterfly!" he exclaims. "Ma chérie! Ah! plus ravissante que jamais!" - And she acknowledges his compliment with the dreadful and entrancing smile of lunacy.

Perhaps the whole performance is just a clever trick to catch the imagination and curiosity of travellers? Herr Tulpitz, an ingenious pimp, may have had the idea of luring innocent victims, this way, to the costly debauches of apartment 36...Who could see through those sordid mysteries? Who knows, really, what Herr Tulpitz means as he now cries out- constantly fawning and bowing: "This gown! It's a dream - ma foi! These colors! What a style! How gorgeous! How divine! - Just arrived from Paris, I presume? One can easily see it... Dernier cri - that's what it is! Dernier Cri!..."

"Dernier Cri!" she repeats - and suddenly bursts into gales of laughter. What an appalling laugh! - infinitely worse than any weeping could be. How it distorts her face, shakes her fragile body! And her voice - how woeful it sounds! - at once shrill and hollow... "Dernier Cri!" she whimpers again and again, convulsed with laughter and agony. "You are right, my friend! Oh, how right you are! Our last scream - here it is! I am the last scream - the last sigh - the last grin of an epoch ... Be dernier cri - c'est moi..."

She raises her arms, spreads and stretches them - one of her hands clasping the bloody purple of the huge fan, while the other hand still holds the withered bouquet. Her laugh sounds like desperate crying; but her eyes are dry- her beautiful eyes, disproportionately big in the dainty oval of her ageless face.

This tremendous pose of exuberant despair lasts for several seconds. Finally Herr Tulpitz - transformed again into a sensible and humble old man - pats her trembling shoulders with his heavy hand. "Pauvre enfant!" he murmurs. "Come, come! It's time to go to bed..."



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D e r n i e r C r i

By Klaus Mann.

What a weird idyll it was! - that provincial Austrian watering-place and its representative hotel - the Bellevue. I don't remember who had recommended the dreary place to me, nor why I stayed there for a fortnight or even longer - instead of rushing to the next train at once when I had glimpsed the dull promenade, the sleepy Kurhaus, the dusty palm trees adorning the deserted lobby of the Bellevue.

There was something uncannily depressing about that hotel in all its faded splendor. The whole establishment - luridly pompous as it was, with its marble stair cases, vast ball rooms, sultry chambres séparées, and secret corridors - exhaled the most penetrating nostalgia for those legendary days of abominable taste and tremendous fun - when Russian Grand Dukes, roaring with savage laughter, used to chase buxom chamber maids; Austrian officers sipped champagne out of a lady's slipper, while handsome princes of the House of Hapsburg kept their "incognito" obstinately, though their true identity was only too well known to everybody:- the imposing doorman - very Franz Joseph-like with his magnificent pair of whiskers - had a sardonic smirk when he addressed his Imperial Highness simply as Herr Baron...How remote it seems! how unreal!- this withered glamour of forgotten festivals - the weightless merriment of laughs and waltzes long died away ... I recognized the charm and the absurdity of that sunken-down world as I gazed dreamily into one of the dingy mirrors decorating the

walls of the Bellevue Bar.

It was in that gold-framed mirror that I caught the first glimpse of the Baroness. Her fragile figure gradually emerged from the shady depth of the glass like a mermaid slowly rises from her chilly hiding-place. She entered the bar on the arm of her ungainly cavalier. She laughed. She was very attractive.

What I noticed first of all were her eyes -disproportionately big: inconsolably sad under a saucy hat. My heart smote me as I watched her crossing the empty bar - royally erect; shrouded in the provocative sweetness of her perfume and the triumphant cascades of her pearly laugh. I was struck, ravished, bewildered - by the glimmering pallor of her ageless face, the strange elegance of her clothes, and, above all, by the disquieting contrast between the elated melody of her laugh and the unfathomable melancholy of her eyes.

Never shall I forget this first performance of her repertoire I witnessed. Her companion was a middle-aged fellow - hook-nosed, swarthy and greasy-: probably a minor businessman from the Balkans. They drank champagne-: what else could they possibly drink? Champagne is an indispensable ingredient of the traditional set-up: it just belongs to the show- as Ophelia's flowers or the death's-head are essential for any Hamlet production.

Everything was perfectly comme il faut - arranged and acted according to the rituals of a classic pattern. His trivial jokes and her silvery giggle; the naughty refrains of dated French chansons that she recited with a provoking nonchalance; his delight and clumsy efforts to be sparkling too: it was altogether like

a scene out of a musical comedy - long-rehearsed, often-tested.

While she flirted with him, and called him mon choux and mon petit coco, she wanted me to know how disgusted she really was with his poor manners and his ugliness. She made faces behind his back and darted scornful glances - just to inform me that she thought him a bore and that he annoyed her to madness. Her disgust was, of course, more honest and authentic than her artificial merriment. Yet, strangely enough, even this tragic attitude of hers was not quite sincere. The suffering that she seemingly tried to conceal, was really just another aspect of the traditional pattern: Here I am, in all my sordid depravity! - my poor heart bleeding, corroded with shame and pain - while I pretend to have a wonderful time with that hideous moron...

When she had left - not without having presented me with a plaintive but promising smile - I asked the barman if he knew who she was. - "That dame?" - He shrugged his shoulders and seemed slightly shocked - either by my ignorance or else by my frivolous curiosity. - "Why, of course - it's the Baroness", he said, not very enthusiastically; then added - while he kept moving his cocktail shaker in a bored, mechanical way: "She's been living here for many years." I was not quite sure if this meant, in his opinion, a fact that spoke for the Baroness, or rather if he disapproved of her long stay at the Bellevue Hotel. While I was still musing on this puzzling question, he informed me - casually but in the discreetly lowered voice of an experienced bawd: "Apartment 36 - in case you're interested...But you'd better give her a ring before you drop by to see her. She is pretty busy - sometimes..."

I assured him, rather indignantly, that I certainly had no such intentions - whereupon he shrugged his shoulders again and retired.

A date with her? What a ludicrous idea! - True, I liked the dainty oval of her pallid face, and there was something in her voice and smile that affected me. She had been rather exciting, indeed, when she gave me those treacherous looks, behind the back of her lover ... But - a date? It would probably be expensive - and hardly worth the price...

Yet, when I crossed the lobby I stopped at the desk from where the concierge, Herr Tulpitz, majestically supervised all goings-on of the Bellevue. He was an imposing old fellow, Herr Tulpitz-; in fact, an ideal concierge - dignified, thoughtful and kind. He would tell me, in a plain and yet tactful way, if it was advisable to make friends with that so-called Baroness.

His reaction to my casual question was apt to astonish if not to frighten me. He seemed unduly pleased and at the same time alarmed, tickled as well as puzzled, and altogether muddled and overwhelmed with excitement. - "The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière?" he asked- pronouncing the grandiose name with a certain solemn tenderness. There was a long, stony pause before he added- all severity and serious disapproval-: " I am surprised, Sir. Very much surprised, indeed."

I smiled uncomfortably, feeling rather foolish and guilty. Finally I ventured to say, very timidly: " She is sort of famous, I suppose?"

"Sort of famous?" - Now he seemed saddened rather than

angry. His eyes, moist with sorrowful love, stared through me without seeing me. - "She is the Pride of the Bellevue". he stated at last, nodding gravely. "His Imperial Highness used to call her 'my darling butterfly'..." - How soft his voice sounded now! He shook his head - absorbed in memories. "The Pride of the Bellevue...", he repeated musingly. "The Pride of the Bellevue - for twenty-seven years..."

"For twenty-seven years?"

He started as if awakening from a ghastly dream. - "You'll excuse me, Sir," he said briefly, in a strangely peremptory tone - it was almost rude - I had never seen him in such a state. "I am very busy."

He concluded the conversation as a monarch concludes an audience.-

When I passed by the next morning, however, he beckoned graciously, and as I stopped in front of his throne-like desk, he whispered to me with a sort of restrained passion: "How are you this morning, Herr Baron?" (he knew, of course, that I am no Baron, and had never called me so before.) "I hope you had a good night and forgot all about that rubbish I've told you yesterday."

I pretended not to understand. - "The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière", he murmured - enjoying, this time, the pleasure of pronouncing her name with a certain apprehensive hastiness as if disturbed by a feeling of guilt. "How foolish I was to say that she has been living here for twenty-five years!" - "Twenty-seven years", I corrected him, mildly but firmly. - "What's the difference?" He gave a tormented chuckle. "It's a silly lie, anyway. I just tried

to be funny- that's all. I have no idea, really, how long the Baroness lives here, at the Bellevue. It may be five years, or nine- or thirty...In any case, I should be more careful about what I say. That stupid twaddle of mine could do harm to her reputation."

Her reputation? - I couldn't help smiling somewhat sardonically. Herr Tulpitz, guessing my thoughts, nodded gloomily. "I know, I know - people are malicious nowadays - : nasty and narrowminded- that's what they are. All that sordid gossip - I know it only too well..." - There was a silence while he seemed to brood over some depressing mystery-caressing the silky silver of his magnificent whiskers. Finally he pulled himself together as if he had come to a grim but imperative conclusion. "I may as well tell you right away," he began, his voice trembling with grave emotion. He paused, then continued with a sort of desperate bluntness: "She is no Baroness, really. She may have been married, of course, to a Baron de La Motte- Tribolière - somewhere, in Monte Carlo or Cairo - many years ago ...But now - under the present circumstances - she is just a woman, who..." - He didn't find the right word, and announced at last: "A courtesan - that's what she really is."

"A courtesan"...What a queer, pretentious designation! It sounded old-fashioned and somehow fantastic... "So she is simply a wh...?" - He interrupted me with a scathing look and a majestic gesture. "Now, listen to me, young man!" he said slowly, in an ominously lowered voice. "When I say 'a courtesan', I mean a courtesan- not a whore. I am sorry to see that you - as most young men nowadays - don't know the difference between a cheap prostitute and a grande cocotte. The Baroness de La Motte-Tribolière is a

master in her profession - just as Signor Caruso or Madame Sarah Bernhardt are masters in their own respective realms. Gentlemen of great fortune and reputation flock to her attractive personality.

(tell you stories about men in the highest positions whom she
~~I could show you pictures of our sumptuous apartment in Paris.~~ *he =*
awitohad
and ruined.

He faltered and blushed - which made a pathetic impression -; this wrinkled, paternal face, glowing with that momentary flush. Then he continued - once more composed and dignified: "However, she is a lady of great talents and considerable background. I daresay, indeed, that she is the last one - the last worthy representative of the great style, the authentic tradition. I have seen many of them in my time; but only few who matched the Baroness de La Motte- Tribolière - and none, actually none, who surpassed her. - My word of honor!" he concluded in a firm, though slightly trembling voice. "She is absolutely first-rate. Believe an old connoisseur who definitely knows what he is talking about."

Mr. Tulpitz's solemn little harangue had made a considerable impression on me. I recalled his words while I kept watching the Baroness - increasingly attracted by her appearance. So that's what she looks like - I wondered as I gazed at her - : the last of the grandes cocottes...

It so happened, time and again, that she and I were the only persons present in the lobby or in the bar - for an hour, or even longer. She would sit there - numbed with boredom or melancholy, absorbed in bleak and mysterious dreams. She was much alone - dallying her time with yellowed magazines or just staring in front of her with unseeing empty eyes. Sometimes she smiled at me - a

momentary, meaningless smile - or she gave me a hasty glance, full of suffering and seduction.

How did she manage to make her living, being so extremely languid and inactive? How could a professional courtesan afford to waste valuable hours in an arm-chair/supine, lethargic, motionless like a brittle statue- a precious doll made of glass, silk, and a very delicate, almost transparent marble?

She changed, of course, and suddenly turned sparkling and animated, when she received visitors - which occurred but rarely; about once every other day, in the late afternoon. Then she showed off and glittered - quivering with alluring caprices and pearly laughter. How enthralling she was! - how delightful, with the swift elegance of her nimble movements! At the same time, however, the dazzling performance she gave was apt to depress me a little. Hers was a certain perfunctory verve - a routine frolicsomeness as one may detect in the feats and smiles of an ageing prima ballerina - still celebrated, though already weary - who executes the same ballet for the thousandth time. - It was due partly to the appearance of her cavaliers, I suppose, that the whole picture seemed so sinister. Most of them were rather dreary, indeed - elderly chaps with worn-out, flaccid faces, nasty old debauchees, grotesque figures with monocles and ridiculous wigs - trying desperately to look dashing and youthfully wicked. Where did they come from, and why did they gather just here? What was their social background, their function and position in life? Did the Baroness pick up her lovers in hospitals and asylums? Had she no boy

friends under seventy? What was wrong with her, anyhow? For there was something wrong - undeniably ...

Why did she never go out?

This was the weirdest feature of her puzzling conduct -: that she never left the hotel; never breathed a bit of open air, never set foot on the street. She seemed a prisoner of the Hotel Bellevue - doomed to spend the rest of her sinful days in that gloomy lobby, guarded by the grim tenderness of Herr Tulpitz. Like a nun, bound by a solemn vow never to leave the convent, she kept wandering - a spectral and perfumed saint - between the dusty lobby, the sultry bar, and her own apartment - Nr. 36 -: that notorious refuge of depravity-, scandalously opened to a vicious public, but, for some mysterious reason, inaccessible to me ...

Was she wanted by the police, and The Bellevue, was it the only place where she felt out of reach - as, in the pious days of antiquity, safety used to be granted even to murderers, as long as they remained within the walls of a sanctuary? - Or was she bound by contract with the management, obliging her to restrict her activities ~~strictly~~ to the rooms of this hotel? - Or, perhaps, she had to avoid any contact with the outside world, because the ~~smooth~~ artificial mask of her face could not stand the natural touch of sun, wind, and rain? Even the mild breezes of a spring day might prove fatal to the perishable substance of her delicate flesh: it would dissolve presently under the caresses of the lively air- just as certain mummies, excellently preserved in the dark coziness of their grave chambers, dissolve promptly when exposed to humidity, cold and heat. - Or was she simply frightened by the ugliness and

cruel sobriety of our modern world? ~~I remembered what Herr Tulpitz~~
~~had told me about her being "the last one" - the last legitimate~~
~~representative of a proud tradition that had reached its end...~~ Was
it because she felt estranged to the greedy void of Twentieth-
Century -life, that she preferred this haughty and sad seclusion? -

I had started to jot down some fragmentary notes concerning her
character and plight - the intricate phenomenon of her existence.
It was a thorough analysis of that odd character - the last courtesan-
I was pondering on. The gradual disappearance of that female type,
called la grande cocotte or great courtesan - wasn't this a fact
that deserved the most serious consideration? She just died away -
like certain gigantic salamanders, dwarfish dogs, or dated literary
mannerisms. How could chroniclers of current history neglect so
stirring a development - so bitter and cruel a loss? After all,
they used to play a crucial role in world history - those ~~grand~~-and
colorful ladies, from Aspasia to the aristocratic vamps of the Re-
naissance, from Pompadour and Du Barry to the splendid demi-mon-
daines of the Nineteenth Century - half-outcasts, half-queens:
abused and desired by hypocrites, boycotted and envied by bourgeois
women, courted by princes and exploited by pimps - living in gla-
mour, dying in misery, and finally immortalized by Balzac and Hein-
rich Heine, Maupassant and Zola, Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec.-
And nowadays? - in these dreary times of ours? - Of course, there
still are ladies of dubious reputation - kept women, des femmes
fatales of many different shades - "Oumph girls", pretentious
flappers, greedy adventuresses. But their style and taste- their
tricks and their ambitions have changed deplorably. Now, they want

to make a career in the movies or in the secret service of a Totalitarian State. The whole game has become rather business-like and prosaic-: no romanticism, any longer.

A world convulsed by the fever of a permanent crisis has no room or time for the luxurious whims of individuals. These are bad days, indeed, for the ars amandi. A new militant pathos, noisy, crude, and relentless, sweeps away the sins and charms of a more settled society. A new perfunctory libertinism depreciates the traditional rites and subtle circumstantialities of costly vices: the odd morality of 1940 has no objection to the bombing of open cities, but disapproves strictly of sensual refinements that might be pernicious to the national strength. The rich finance political parties instead of expensive women; the poor get intoxicated by the thudding eloquence of dictators; tyrants turn ascetic - youngsters murderous - and the Baroness de La Motte- Tribolière spends her days in gloomy loneliness - musing upon the cruel change of all worldly things ...Doesn't she resemble, indeed, those tragic witches whom we meet occasionally in the sophisticated fairy-tales of a baroque German romanticism? They are very lonely, too - those last sorceresses-, very grand and very sad-, terribly forsaken in a world from which the philosophy of Enlightenment and the invention of the electric light have banished all mystery and magic...

Thus I speculated and dreamed - writing down, from time to time, a few sporadic words and sentences - when the Baroness suddenly stood behind me. She had approached - noiseless and feline -: I only noticed her as I felt, with a slight and rather

pleasant shudder, the icy tenderness of her fingertips on my glowing temples. This was her silvery laugh - melodious, though somewhat forced. - "How shockingly busy you are! I can't stand this any more. For half an hour I have been watching you. It makes me incredibly nervous to see a man working with such ugly zeal. - What are you scribbling there, anyhow? Is it about me? Naughty boy you are!" - She lifted a white, brittle finger, waving it with playful severity - an unsuitable and rather ludicrous gesture. Never before had I seen her so completely deprived of all charm and dignity.

"And, besides, what do you know about me, [?]~~anyhow~~" she inquired, full of anxious suspicion. " Nothing, I suppose - except those ridiculous tales of Herr Tulpitz - poor old thing..." The last words she pronounced very slowly, with a strangely lurking twinkle in her eyes. I assured her hastily: " Herr Tulpitz is as discreet as he could be. I never heard a single word of gossip from him." - She shrugged her shoulders and seemed slightly disappointed. " Poor old thing," she repeated; and then- while she began to examine her make-up in a tiny mirror-, " He is nuts", she added. " Mad as hell. Poor old darling."

There was something surprisingly hard and vulgar in her words and the abrupt little laugh that followed. Her smile and voice, however, turned softer as she continued: " He lives in a world of his own. I am sure he believes, really, that he used to be very rich, and people called him Excellency, and that we lived in a fine apartment in Paris - he and I -, many years ago. It's quite a story- very romantic and moving ...I was the great

courtesan- and he the nobleman who had decided to save me ... But I fell in love with the Imperial Prince, and there was a scandal in Vienna - a tremendous scandal, with tout le monde talking about it... So we fled to Paris, and there I betrayed him again; for I was the incorrigible one, the indomitable one - and he loved me, and then there was a war, and he lost all his money, and his title, and everything: all he kept was his love for me - his eternal love -, and I made money for him. He was not jealous any-more-simply couldn't afford it. But he still did love me. We had a wonderful time - I and he - lots of fun we had: before we got stranded in this dreary place... But this, of course, was a long long time ago..."

Her voice had assumed the singing and drowsy rhythm in which mothers recite fairy-tales to their children. But then again there was that hard, aggressive little clink of her nervous laugh. "It's all sheer invention, of course," she concluded. "But he really believes it. And why shouldn't he, after all? If it makes him feel better..."

Then she asked me, very casually, if I cared to take her out for dinner tonight.

When I met her again in the lobby, only two or three hours later, she had changed clothes and looked strikingly handsome, indeed - with that delicate face of hers, shining in its translucent pallor under the heavy crown of her rich, auburn hair. I asked her where she wanted to go- whereupon she pierced me with a sad, reproachful glance. - "There is no place to go." - She shuddered

as if an icy wind had touched her bare shoulders, ~~and extravagant~~
~~decorate~~ There she stood, her lips tightly closed - haunted
by mysterious fears or bound by secret vows and obligations -:
frail and beautiful in her gorgeous costume. It was the most
astounding sort of an evening gown she wore - a complicated crea-
tion with an endless train; overloaded with feathers, jewels,
colored laces, all kinds of fancy draperies. It might have been
a curious model of 1890 - or the saucy caprice of a super-modern
dressmaker ... Her fingers twisted nervously about the purple fea-
thers of an enormous fan. I said to her: " You look more exciting
than ever," - which made her smile again presently.

"The restaurant of our charming hotel", she announced with
a grandiose gesture toward the dining room that lay in gloomy darkness
"It still is the most dandy spot far and wide." - Then she added,
with that false note of jocularly that sometimes made her conver-
sation so embarrassing: "Unless you think it compromising to dine
in full view of your friends with a wicked girl like me..."

I replied, rather dryly, that I did not expect, really, to meet
many acquaintances in that desolate place. But she insisted, with
a disquieting merriment: " Oh, there are plenty of them...You'll
see, mon ami - you'll see..."

But all I saw as we entered the restaurant, were empty tables
and chairs. Only one table was set and dimly lit by an old-fashioned
lamp- as though the waiter had expected us, but nobody else.

"Gaston has reserved my favorite corner for us!" cooed the
Baroness. "C'est charmant! The Duchess will explode with rage...
Don't look now! There she is..."

I felt rather alarmed as she sent her haughty, distracted smile through the murky twilight of the deserted room.- "The Duke cuts me too," she whispered, very close to me - angry and amused. "Ah, comme c'est rigolo! - But what else could he do, after all? She would certainly kill him if he dared to have a glimpse at me..."

No doubt, her mind wandered a little. She saw this deserted place swarming with enemies and admirers, rivals, lovers and bawds- she heard the familiar whirr of gossip and intrigues, the whisper of desire, envy and disapproval, as she had heard it at the same place before-: how many years ago? - "La petite Lolotte!" she giggled. "Mon dieu!" "All dressed up like a circus horse, isn't she. I wonder, really, what the colonel finds in her..."

She calmed down a little as we finally reached our table.- "The food is lousy here," she observed, and suddenly had, in the flickering shine of the lamp, the sullen and weary face of a very old woman. Then, rather abruptly, she plunged into a swift and elegant conversation. I listened to her winged and empty chatter - half-amused, half-bewildered, as most of the names and events she referred to sounded strangely unfamiliar to me. Besides, it struck me as somewhat weird that she should be so thoroughly au courant as to the gossip of the smart set in Venice, Cannes and Paris, the races in Auteuil and Monte Carlo, the opera season in London, the latest scandals of Biarritz and Baden-Baden- though she never left this provincial place nor even this hotel... There was a natural sophistication in her ~~valuable~~ way of talking - something suave and brilliant, but at the same time stale, frozen, deprived of

authentic life. As I finally ventured on a few modest remarks about recent Hollywood films, she grew silent and seemed mysteriously hurt - her face drooping as if I had bored and offended her by endless tirades on a subject entirely beyond her understanding.- "These flowers", she interrupted me at last. " These lilacs...: gorgeous, aren't they.- You don't know what flowers mean to me, my friend." - She had a wan, mawkish smile , and the gesture was a fumbling one, as she pointed to those flowers she saw. " I adore them", she whispered. But the table was empty. It was a barren table she smiled at.

"There are no flowers," I said, rather cruelly - with a clumsy effort to call her back to reality.

She nodded sadly. " I know, I know...No flowers - alas! no flowers, any more ..."

There was a silence, while her eyes wandered with the smoke of her cigarette. When she finally spoke again, her voice sounded hollow, infinitely sad. " No flowers, any more," she insisted - and then assumed the bleak dignity of Cassandra, the prophetess. "There will be hard times, my poor friend, " she predicted, her voice tolling like the great bells of the Last Judgment. "Cruel times and bloody tribulations! The great ordeal - I can see its approach...We are doomed - all of us. You, and I, and all these lusty men and women. The flowers, the champagne, the beautiful girls; all playful, creative minds; the artists, the courtesans, the princes, the adventurers, and the poets - doomed, doomed, doomed. No games any more, no luxury, no joy, no tenderness, no fancy.

Only discipline, and boredom, and cruelty, and death. Only death."

"You seem in high spirits, Madame la Comtesse." - This was the paternal, ~~reassuring~~ bass of Herr Tulpitz, the concierge. While she raved and lamented, he had slowly approached from the shadowy background - a massy, majestic figure.

"Hello, dear old little Excellency!" cooed the Baroness - renouncing her Cassandra-like attitude as abruptly as she had assumed it. "Enchantée de vous voir, cher ami!"

He kissed her fingertips: "How are you tonight, Madame? Enjoying yourself, I presume?"

She nodded, with a faint, conventional smile. "The Baron is good company," she observed, rather vaguely - whereupon Herr Tulpitz, with a swift and surprising motion, produced an object that he had hidden behind his ~~imposing~~ back. It was a bunch of lilacs - a dreary thing, completely withered and faded.

"These beautiful flowers," he announced with a tender solemnity. "They were just delivered..."

"Where do they come from?" she asked eagerly - snatching the withered blooms. "Do they come - from him?"

"From His Imperial Highness," he confirmed, and smirked as he saw the beatific smile upon her mouth. - "Thanks", she whispered - hiding her radiant face between the faded flowers.

What a nightmarish- what an enchanting scene! Herr Tulpitz - more Franz Joseph-like than ever in a baroque and pompous uniform with broad epaulets and dazzling decorations - had started to

perform a sort of fantastic pantomime- frisking and tripping with the ungainly grace of a trained bear around that bedizened and bejewelled figure - that gaudy monster and brittle idol of forgotten vices - the Baroness de La Motte- Tribolière, Pride of the Bellevue, the last one of the great courtesans. There she stood, askance under the flaring light, an amazing bird - overloaded with glaring feathers, baubles, and the tremendous weight of her years. Was she ninety years old? Or a hundred? In any case, excellently preserved by insanity...

Was Herr Tulpitz mad too? Was he her lover? Her doctor? Or simply her employé whom she (a very rich woman, perhaps) paid lavishly for his participation in this macabre show?

Now he capers, takes little bows - surprisingly elastic despite his age; all in raptures about her colorful set-up. " My darling butterfly!" he exclaims. " Ma chérie! Ah! plus ravissante que jamais!" - And she acknowledges his compliment with the dreadful and entrancing smile of lunacy.

Perhaps the whole performance is just a clever trick to catch the imagination and curiosity of travellers? Herr Tulpitz, an ingenious pimp, may have had the idea of luring innocent victims, this way, to the costly debauches of apartment 36...Who could see through those sordid mysteries? Who knows, really, what Herr Tulpitz means as he now cries out- constantly fawning and bowing: "This gown! It's a dream - ma foi! These colors! What a style! How gorgeous! How divine! - Just arrived from Paris, I presume? One can easily see it... Dernier cri - that's what it is! Dernier Cri!..."

"Dernier Cri!" she repeats - and suddenly bursts into gales of laughter. What an appalling laugh! - infinitely worse than any weeping could be. How it distorts her face, shakes her fragile body! And her voice - how woeful it sounds! - at once shrill and hollow... "Dernier Cri!" she whimpers again and again, convulsed with laughter and agony. "You are right, my friend! Oh, how right you are! Our last scream - here it is! I am the last scream - the last sigh - the last grin of an epoch ... Be dernier cri - c'est moi..."

She raises her arms, spreads and stretches them - one of her hands clasping the bloody purple of the huge fan, while the other hand still holds the withered bouquet. Her laugh sounds like desperate crying; but her eyes are dry- her beautiful eyes, disproportionately big in the dainty oval of her ageless face.

This tremendous pose of exuberant despair lasts for several seconds. Finally Herr Tulpitz - transformed again into a sensible and humble old man - pats her trembling shoulders with his heavy hand. "Pauvre enfant!" he murmurs. "Come, come! It's time to go to bed..."



Derwent Cove

There is a sad and significant fact, not yet noticed or sufficiently emphasized by the chroniclers of recent history. The type of the great comedian, of the grand cocothe is on the point of dying out - in fact, almost vanished. I am told that there are still a few of these, ladies, with the big, fat, womanly features, but they are few and far between. Nowadays, however, those reduction and pinched features, those have the ambition to become more than the part of a totalitarian in the search for a millionaire state, or simply many a millionaire. The professional career of a professional comic de luxe on the grand scale, has somehow lost its attraction and allowing itself to be immortalized by the cocothe - as immortalized by the Balzac, Zola and in the drawings of Toulouze-Lautrec -

No use to fool ourselves ;
~~thinking this~~ ~~and then~~ ~~point of view~~ ~~of our~~
is on the point of killing ~~ourselves~~
understanding certain human types
and characters who, hitherto,
made
it has to be said, though it
is dreary

Are there still great constants
certain human types ~~and~~ ~~constants~~
have these ~~types~~ ~~of~~ ~~prime~~ ~~and~~
These are the ~~old~~ ~~human~~ ~~types~~ ~~populations~~
indeed, the ~~old~~ ~~human~~ ~~types~~ ~~populations~~
types who ~~gradually~~ ~~have~~ ~~historical~~
who are ~~the~~ ~~old~~ ~~human~~ ~~types~~ ~~populations~~
dated ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~old~~ ~~human~~ ~~types~~ ~~populations~~
are ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~old~~ ~~human~~ ~~types~~ ~~populations~~
of dated ~~basque~~ ~~man~~ ~~of~~ ~~dying~~
The ~~people~~ ~~don't~~ ~~see~~ ~~the~~ ~~doomed~~ ~~types~~
themselves may ~~try~~ ~~to~~ ~~for~~
and the professional ~~constant~~ ~~of~~
the ~~current~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~great~~ ~~looking~~
concerned ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~great~~ ~~looking~~
habit ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~daily~~ ~~life~~

is more and more becoming a historical
figure — just as has Rome for
late and glamorous, with the
great remains of the decadent Imperial
Roman and the of Athens.

The grand epoch of the late XIX.
and the early XX. Century was at
once a faria and a prison;
by married women — and consisted
by royalty, bycolled; imbedded
by bankers; intriguing, dominating
by arranging careers ...

There may still be a few of ~~some~~
them, keeping alive the sumable
tradition, in Shanghai or Rio de
Janeiro. But they hardly count,
being deprived of any contact
with the center of Western Civilization
— half-exotic, half-provincial
figures; rather stale and drab
in a state of fashion in all
this and ~~exotic~~ glamour — woefully
inadequate in their appearance and
their dated tricks. They are, indeed,
of infinite capacity
of self-deception ...

[illegible]

They are my family, too —
those last 20 new ones —
my grand and dad —
entirely for taken on the 10th
world ^{from which} ~~phase~~ Vollmer of E.
sit ~~friend~~ try to and
the invention of the light
invention of the other light
have banished all mystery
and magic

-3-

When I saw her for the first time,
in the ~~middle~~ twilight of the hotel
bar, my ~~heart~~ ^{heart} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~least~~ ^{least} ~~away~~ ^{away}, as in a
~~moment~~ ^{moment} ~~presently~~, without hesitation:
Have she is, the last one! La Noilà!
— there can be no doubt: the silver
cascades of her experienced hair of
the incomparable manner of her
shady ~~as~~ ^{eyes} — the self-conscious
perfection of her attitude, the slightly
shocking ~~contrast~~ ^{contrast} of her form and
the somewhat ~~contrast~~ ^{contrast} of her ~~appearance~~ ^{appearance}
of her clothes — all the details
and the at once vanishing and deepening
intensity of her ~~appearance~~ ^{appearance} ~~strengthened~~ ^{strengthened}
and confirmed my ~~spontaneous~~ ^{spontaneous} impression:
She was the last great composition of
this one time.

I shall now forget this first performance
of her reputation that I watched.
The ~~you~~ ^{you} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~with~~ ^{with} her was middle-
aged, book-moved ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~man~~ ^{man} ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~past~~ ^{past} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~fat~~ ^{fat}
rather ~~resolving~~ ^{resolving} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~man~~ ^{man} ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~past~~ ^{past} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~fat~~ ^{fat}
happy ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~man~~ ^{man} ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~past~~ ^{past} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~fat~~ ^{fat}
but to ~~see~~ ^{see} ~~how~~ ^{how} ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~hated~~ ^{hated} ~~him~~ ^{him} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~delight~~ ^{delight}
They drank ~~possibly~~ ^{possibly} ~~what~~ ^{what} ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~hated~~ ^{hated} ~~him~~ ^{him} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~delight~~ ^{delight}
could they ~~possibly~~ ^{possibly} ~~what~~ ^{what} ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~hated~~ ^{hated} ~~him~~ ^{him} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~delight~~ ^{delight}
is tradition ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~belongs~~ ^{belongs} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~past~~ ^{past} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~fat~~ ^{fat}
performance, just as

[illegible]

They ~~seem~~ seemed to have a
grand time, - dining
Everything was exactly as it
should be - a very properly
undamped - military community
from the typical Jones
has forced growth

She made faces behind his back, and
dashed scornful glances, just to inform
me of her true feelings.... She ~~disparaged~~ ^{disparaged}
~~the humiliating and suffering as though~~
~~the added and deplorable character of~~
~~her doing....~~ Strongly enough, however,
even this tragic attitude was to quite
diminish a ~~little~~ ^{little} ~~more~~ ^{more} as obviously
artificial as ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~disparaging~~ ^{disparaging} ~~gait~~ ^{gait}.
The ~~little~~ ^{little} ~~more~~ ^{more} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~diminishing~~ ^{diminishing}
trend to ~~hide~~ ^{hide} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~conventional~~ ^{conventional} ~~pattern~~ ^{pattern} — another
of the ~~features of her~~ ^{features of her} ~~position~~ ^{position} — another
in all my ~~added~~ ^{added} ~~degradation~~ ^{degradation}! — my
head bleeding, suffering in the
depth of my ~~most~~ ^{most} ~~while~~ ^{while} ~~drinking~~ ^{drinking}
champagne with that ~~more~~ ^{more} ~~....~~ ^{....} ~~of~~ ^{of}
was as to ~~conventional~~ ^{conventional} ~~a~~ ^a ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~as~~ ^{as}
that ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~baggage~~ ^{baggage} ~~who~~ ^{who} ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~to~~ ^{to}
give ~~and to~~ ^{and to} ~~while~~ ^{while} ~~biting~~ ^{biting} ~~me~~ ^{me} ~~remembrance~~ ^{remembrance}
that ~~mangling~~ ^{mangling} ~~his~~ ^{his} ~~most~~ ^{most} ~~being~~ ^{being}
.....
I asked the ~~conventional~~ ^{conventional} ~~who~~ ^{who} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~was~~ ^{was}.
"Thank lady...." the ~~glanced~~ ^{glanced} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~her~~ ^{her}
"as she ~~rolled~~ ^{rolled} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~more~~ ^{more} ~~casual~~ ^{casual}.
"Why? it's the ~~reason~~ ^{reason}, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~last~~ ^{last} ~~month~~ ^{month} =

me, I want to know more
much how? — why?
you want me to know more
A. I hesitated, the biography and pictures
details of the Masons: the composition
fraternal of the brotherhood —
a brotherly love —
had known how human —
Mason did in an Egyptian prison.
Recently died of a guy! — the com-
An odd sort of a guy! — the com-
ring. Had been maddy in love with
it. Had been who somebody
the Masons — him. "The door man reported,
the first to the lobby, "the door man reported,
this way that I thought in to his
"the fact that he had nothing to do
face with him, and had married him
only because of his title, and
How old-fashioned, and
somehow marital, and
intimistal positions

I know, I know, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~men~~
"People talk... That Lot, of
gonit, nowadays... lot,
of making gonit..."

She had been rather charming, ^{it}
indeed, when she gave me
all those free shows, look,
behind her magnificence to
the strict back of her
magnificence look.

Put a date? Am I not
acquainted? At could be
what for? How? My world is
but costly for a dipping...

and as I stopped near his door
he dark whispered with a look of
destruction intensity:

~~My hot son for you~~
How are you? a man
a woman who... He didn't find the
whom... night would. He said
in a station with
ambassador

had paid him for it, and that
he should go to hell. — So he
did, at last, he concluded
cheerfully. — Oblivious of all the
Near went out. — He was for a few days
before he was tired on a first conser-
vation. She was very much alone —
dallying herself with dated magazines
or with the complicated maze of
her hair, or just staring straight
in front of her with a dreamy
and lifelike eyes. She smiled at me
as I passed by and yet a class-
y rather plain face indeed — with
She was very a Martine, gleam of
that strangely maroon, apron face.
her smooth and artificial, golden
Sometimes she seemed a little
always, a lovely chap-arran
with a magnificent pair of whiskers
or an imposing banker with a con-
spicuously domed belly. — Then she
showed off a and sparkled, generously
waving her melodious laughter and
looks. She was strikingly
as she turned off in
grand evening gown & gloriously
bedizen'd, overladen with
flowers, feathers and
jewels.

I wonder how the spirit has
been brought to make an
effort to bring a new
life.

How whole atmosphere and
way of man's mind to me
increasingly wise and a distinctly
fully beam.

You don't
if I say a constant
mean a constant — not
whom. I am not
troubled that you don't
know the difference between
a cheap prostitute and a
grand prostitute. You have
no culture, you young
people, nowadays! No
notion of tradition
No refinement, no
interest for anything.
That's why they're —
you're in this world
of sin — because the
young generation has
no culture any more
... As a long time,
he added, solemnly.

She had an manner of putting things in things in
advice, nature and beauty, her age in the

But I liked her more better in that
close-fitting black jacket that she
usually wore in the afternoon - a
simple and elegant costume, buttoned up
to the neck, and lining to the
elbow of her ^{tail} fingers.

..... Didn't dare talk to her - Was
she really so ^{perfectly} demure - minded?
Then she was likely to be ^{what} the
expression of her ^{face} ^{was} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{afternoon} ^{however}
I found her in the bar. She looked

incredibly lovely - married
with ~~unusually~~ radiant, beautiful
and ~~transparent~~ radiant, beautiful
face - ^{transparent} ^{thing} ^{under}
the heavy crown of her rich, amber
hair. ^{That} ^{kind} ^{glamorous} ^{she} ^{accepted};

^(meanwhile) ^{she} ^{offered} ^{her} ^a ^{drink} ^{...}
tried to be more and charming
- but in a rather offensive way.
..... Her mood imposed after the second
cocktail. She turned away to read
~~some~~ ^{chattered} ^{about} ^{French} ^{novels}
and American films. ^{that} ^{note}
Fairly ^{embodied} ^{though} ⁱⁿ ^a
imperfect, conventional way.

Manzanita, Dandelion...

Sh. did not explain if there was
an ^{old} opinion, any normal commu-
nication between the two locations, and
if not, why not?

[illegible]

When I asked if she would have
tripped with me - almost offended -
"Of course" I will. What do you

ask for (changed) clothes. Grand costume. Strangely
- But she refused to leave the "fashioned"
hotel. Tell about the Monte Carlo

- I studied the multitude of things surrounding
her eyes that were it with a flash in
her head - pink, macaroni, dark
blue, purple, almost black - and
gold - which I thought ~~was~~ fasten-
lusty old me existing through the pastures

"We are doomed" she announced, to
all black dignity, sobriety, to
has a timer, indeed ~~equally~~ ^{very} Camille's
A new sort of mobility - the

Strange... of Clotilde
This fatal figure of Clotilde
m. l. and only splendor of
What a wise spectacle!
A lone in that vast pale a

Bigarré
l'antiquaire
Casabianca
"Dwelling"
etc.

... The vague and ^{entwining} ~~lovely~~ ^{black} ~~only~~ ^{only}
... The insanity ...
... The last ... last
... The last ... last
... The last ... last

The last ... the last ... last
... The last ... last
... The last ... last

This was the accident feature of her
strange conduct — that she
never breathed open air, never visited
her foot on the ground, never visited
any low bar, or night club,
she seemed a prisoner of the
Hotel Moll — she stayed at
— doomed to spend the rest of her
in-laid days in that gloomy lobby
guarded by the grim undertaker
and his assistants.
The only way to get out of
the lobby was by going up
and away from the lobby
at night (the door was
locked) and the only way
to the room — out, placed
— and — in-laid days,
Moll of whom we saw every
year seemed now a new person
in appearance, that the whole
Party it was due to the lobby

The Bedford
118 EAST 40TH STREET
NEW YORK

October 15, 1940

To whom it may concern,
I confirm herewith that I know Mr. Adolf Buttner
for many years. He is an old friend of my children
Erika and Klaus, and used to be a frequent visitor
of our home in Munich. When I entertained many people,
it occurred more often than not that I asked him
to help my butler to mix in mixing drinks and
offering them to my guests. He has charming manners

An new militant father
sweep away the ^{new} and
charm of a more graceful
society. There is a new
year of moral allowing
the bombardment of open
cities but it strictly
disappointing of women who
make a art and business
of the amandis is
forgotten: oogae: ha you'll
and dictator

luxon
lawn

and added, flippantly
and swiftly,

..... her lips tightly closed

..... her face working

breath

bedangered

the dainty oval
of her face

..... the curve of a smile

..... plaintive smile

..... Eye : disproportionately big
How tedious smile

Man

mimble

["that damn"]

gandg
band

[But nothing of the sort
happened. drooping ^{implied a little}
uncon-
fessably

— "My may as well tell you
right away —"

Supine

This royal son of Tsumenda
was last for several records.
Finally the carrier — Tsumenda
again into a terrible and simple
daddy — ~~awfully~~ ~~exactly~~ 1st
his form



113/72

Emery, Suiq. 7-9340 (or 9328)

Was the grandmother married? Was there
 father? Or her brother - her younger
 brother, perhaps? Was he married? Was
 she about seventy, but she might
 have been a hundred years old? Was he her
 lover? How grand was he? Did he know
 the house she was married? Was he
 married as well? Was she very rich
 and paid him for getting in the
 comedy? Or was the whole performance
 just a show taken to ~~interest~~ ^{attract} them
 catch the curiosity of those men whom
 she hoped to receive at Adm. 26?

What a ~~macabre~~ lurid sequel
of that great and illustrious
epic that was the ~~earliest~~ of
the great compositions through the
centuries! The Splendor has fair
waxed — the Mirey has ~~an~~
the grotesque horrors of a ghastly
phantom — around a
bedimmed figure ~~the~~ — that gaudy
monstrous, ~~has~~ ~~over~~ fragile idol
of forgotten vice — overburdened
with gliding fables.

"Plus l'âge que j'aurai, plus j'aurai
la traversée de la mer en esprit
and she asked me if I was comfortable
with the boat and the weather
with of course."

"This year I have been - constantly
sitting and talking about the
boat - It's a dream! The Alps
then What a thing! Absolutely
dislike!"

"Just arrived from Paris. She continued
it with an abrupt and mod."

"Dernière adieu..." she repeated.

Ah, then it was again - her
soft voice - hollow and
lamenting.

And her last remark - then it was:
her ghostly laughter and her
frightful guitar - away and
threatening with despair.

The water who serving in
was the same when we
had met before in the
bar and who had told
the number of Engineers
apartment.
He did not go
His uncommercial conduct
for the Barom III station
Washington grew more and more
embarrassing to the
his management of the dinner
honorary a.

After his mandarin observations
regarding the war in general
and the modern aristocrat like
in literature, the

Empty... Empty and doomed
the co- that's what the was
An empty inferno, looking

There will be hard times
The people did - all pleat
disparity and a few
beauty - a few
bloody
times

Then she smiled again —
a pallid, distracted smile —
and asked me if I cared to
have ~~some~~ supper with her
tonight. — When I met her
in the lobby, only two hours
later, she had changed clothes
and looked strikingly handsome
— with that transparent delicacy
face of her, shining in its
translucent pallor, and
she gave me a suspended and
glance. "Where could there be
no place to go?" This was
again her hollow, humming voice.
She shuddered as if an icy wind
had touched her bare shoulder.
On her effulgent disc then
she turned cheek again, whom
she stood by haunted by my
face, and ~~bound by respect, duty, and obligation~~ her fantastic
beautiful and frail rim
and colorful portrait rose of
my was the most astonishing sort of
own design gone the way
kind of same feather, Jewels and all
from the most rapid of a
modern idiom —

which made her smile again, and
The Restaurant of one charming
hotel, she said with a graceful
invitation that laid in gloomy dark
room. Then she added, with flat
peculiarly that the room was more
her conversation of an ordinary
"Under your think if comparing
to dine in the window of your friend,
with a wicked girl like me..."
I replied, rather dully, that I
did not expect many acquaintances
in that dilapidated dining room. But
she insisted, with a touch of
disgusting melancholy, "There
are plenty of them... 100..."
But all I saw as we entered the
restaurant was a very empty table
and chairs, only by accident had
was left as if the room had
my favourite room
has now the "Don't will explode
charm with the "Don't will explode
with the "Don't will explode
how we felt the "Don't will explode
she sent her hand as
disappointed through the doorway

/ Like a man who has
taken an oath now to
leave the monastery, the
moved - a spectral and
formed being - between
the dusty lobby, the
military bar and the
own apartment, No. 36,
that of new entrance.

~~Was the reason~~ by the police,
Was the reason by the police,
and the turned by the police,
where she was the only place
as criminal, in the only place
time, enjoyed the only place
within the walls of the place
sanctuary, On had the
an agreement with the
management of the lobby
obliging her to visit
her activities to the lobby
quite exclusively, the lobby
she had there was a contact
with the floor, on with the
all over, grant her
position

~~known~~ showed himself in
at any other place,
not even in the street.

On the other hand
that made him avoid any
contact with the outside
world.

Perhaps the smooth and polished
mark of his apple face
could not stand the
touch of iron, the wire of a

chain. Even a may be
loosely spring day ~~over~~ delicate
fatal to his old war sh?

chance... How old was he?

Much older, in any case,
than he looked of his hiding-
move: full twilight of his

easy localization of simply
place... On the other hand
reared by the engine and
could a Robert of our modern
world a multitude of what
this about the had told the
last on "bring the
last of a tradition...

The great conspiracy, after all
They have played, their entire
role in world history —
those grand and colossal part
leading from Africa to
the antiochian name of Ph.
Renaissance, from Pompadour
and De Bracy to the glories
of XIX. Cent. —
into creation of half-
Brazil — half-godica, half-
Yuan, boycotted by decent
womanhood, controlled by
~~business~~ ^{politics} and a
politician, glorified by
Kalyan and Tom Low. Lament
Rmoin How T. was probably
right — this war a most
great tradition T and
it faded away ...
The who game has turned nature
A barometer - like and people
accents in the midst of an
has no noon of time formations,
the luxuriant sapling of individuality.

(Antiquity)

Was it because the field
was arranged to the hands, and
more of that ~~to~~ twentieth century
- life, that the first
this hungry and ~~under~~ had
reduction? - How enigmatic
the war - that reduction
was.

I had started to ~~write~~ ^{not}
down notes ~~on~~ ^{about} the
concerning ~~the~~ ^{problem of}
the existence of the ~~disaster~~ ^{kind}
of a ~~disaster~~ ^{theory} that was ~~been~~
it was an ~~array~~ ^{of} the ~~of~~ ^{odd}
phenomenon of the last
consideration that I had in
mind. I was pondering on
the racial, moral, ~~from~~ ^{the}
political, psychological implications
of this ~~in~~ ^{from} ~~the~~ ^{from}
which I kept on ~~was~~ ^{watching}
the ~~masses~~ ^{few} ~~obsession~~ ^{obsession}
the ~~stillness~~ ^{on} ~~quiescent~~ ^{quiescent}
agility - while I
pondered on their
and ~~significant~~ ^{significant}
such that

Dernier Cri

By Klaus Mann.

There are certain professions and human types that have long passed the prime of their historical career and are in a dreary process of ^{acute} decline, and ~~gradual fading~~. They are, in fact, gradually dying out - as do certain dwarfish sorts of dogs, or old-fashioned linguistic mannerisms, or certain baroque pieces of furniture. Most people are too busy or too obtuse to think about those inconspicuous tragedies - and as to the professional observers and commentators of current history, they are exclusively concerned with the "great events". Some poets may have lamented the vanishing of Viennese coachmen - those picturesque and popular Fiakers, full of serene wisdom and sordid gossip - , or the disappearance of Russian royalties and Indian chieftains. But who has, up to now, really noticed and deplored the sad and significant fact that the venerable type of the great courtesan is on the point of fading away?

Mr. was in the ~~blinded~~ ^{blinded} Hall
of that gold-framed mirror
that I noticed the ~~reason~~
for the first time. She was
sitting at one of the small
round tables, opposite to my
own place. gradually ~~remained~~
How fragile the figure, gradually ~~of~~
from the di-⁹⁴³ ~~shady~~ ^{like} a ~~man~~
the new maid from the ~~hiding~~ ^{hiding} ~~will~~
dinner

I don't know who had
recommended me the Hotel
Bellevue: it must have been
a very malicious friend of
mine. It was a truly nasty
place, indeed. God knows why I didn't
leave it. ... Gloomy ... pompous ...
Whole atmosphere, kind of
unhealthy ... stale perfume ...
Dusty palm ... No view ...

..... The coming (which was)
And the "baroque" (the baroque spirit of the
ghostly and grotesque)
(Obviously a low mind was
wandring a little ...)

His visitors - either tall, bony ...
or fat, greasy, flaccid ...

By Klaus Mann.

There are certain professions and human types that have long passed the prime of their historical career and are in a dreary process of decline and ~~gradual~~ fading. They are, in fact, gradually dying out - as do certain dwarfish sorts of dogs, or old-fashioned linguistic mannerisms, or certain baroque pieces of furniture. Most people are too busy or too obtuse to think about those inconspicuous tragedies - and as to the professional observers and commentators of current history, they are exclusively concerned with the "great events". Some poets may have lamented the vanishing of Viennese coachmen - those picturesque and popular Fiakers, full of serene wisdom and sordid gossip - , or the disappearance of Russian royalties and Indian chieftains. But who has, up to now, really noticed and deplored the sad and significant fact that the venerable type of the great courtesan is on the point of fading away?

It may have been a very dandy
house - thirty and 40 years ago.
It was a house.

Besides, it was a house of
- As became of its grand father and
dignified traditions of
The state performs the duty of the
young people, the state performs
mentioned in the shabby flesh of the
carpet, that with the appearance
of the dog with the appearance
of the dog with the appearance

