You have sold the armor, you have bought shining with
burning, one should be stronger than strength
To fight baresark in the stabbing field
In the rage of the stars: the world's unconsciousness is the
treasure, the tower, the fortress;
Referred to that one may live anything;
The temple and the tower: poor dancer on the flints and
shards in the temple porches turn home.

The Realm of Proust

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

ONE of the earliest English commentators upon the work of Marcel Proust was disturbed by what he regarded as a moral obtuseness on the part of the author, and in support of his contention that Proust lacked the most elementary sense of honor or decency he pointed to a scene in which the meticulous chronicler takes full advantage of a chance opportunity to peep through a window in order that he may observe a particularly intimate moment in the lives of two of his characters. Just what were the emotions of this commentator when he reached the opening pages of "Cities of the Plain"[1]—pages in which Proust describes, with no more shame than a naturalist, how he maneuvered himself into a hiding-place from which he could eavesdrop upon the first sensual ecstasy of the great M. de Charlus and little Jupien the tailor—it is impossible to guess; but he who cannot accept this crucial example of our author's willingness to sink the gentleman as well as the man when his curiosity is aroused had best make up his mind once and for all that Proust is not for him, because Proust would not be Proust had he not renounced all the obligations of life at the same time that he renounced life itself.

"Detachment" is a much-abused word and it can mean too many things to be used to describe the attitude of a writer unless it be given some further definition, but the secret of the nature of Proust's detachment is the secret of his quality. When, burying himself in his chamber, he brought his life as a human being to an end the result was not at all to detach himself from it in the sense of freeing the logical faculties from the bondage of the senses, since his consciousness remained, what it had always been, primarily a realm of finely discriminated sensations, and since he turned not from perceptions to thoughts, but merely from perceptions to the memory of perceptions. But the fact that he was dead in the sense that he no longer planned to take any part in life, that he no longer felt any desires capable of eventuating in an act, not only made it possible for him to live passionately in memory and to approach more nearly than, perhaps, any other man ever did to that "total recall" which is a psychological impossibility, but also made inevitable that disappearance of all ethical or conventional standards which distressed the English commentator.

Let philosophical idealists say what they will, the adherence in sentiment and fact which men ordinarily vouchsafe to moral or conventional codes is, at least in the case of persons like Proust whose world is largely perceptual, merely the result of a working agreement entered into for the purpose of orderly existence. It is a pact tacitly formed between the individual and either society or a certain section of it in the course of which the individual agrees to behave in a certain way in exchange for an assurance that this society will back him up in an insistence that others behave in the same way toward him; and the indignation which he feels against violators of this code, whether their violations do or do not directly affect him, is largely the indignation of one player against another who does not follow the rules. But such an adherence, being founded upon practical considerations, can have no meaning after death, and Proust was in this sense dead before he began to write. He was no longer playing the game and accordingly had no concern with the rules. With nothing to gain and nothing to lose he no longer cared even for the opinion which others might form of him, and he was accordingly as little concerned with the moral judgments which might be passed upon him as with those which might be passed upon his characters.

To make the most exquisitely minute discriminations always, but to judge between the things thus discriminated never—that is the essence of his method. Had he cared to do so he could doubtless have written a whole half-volume devoted to the exact nature of his ungentlemanliness in consenting to eavesdrop—he has certainly devoted many pages on more than one occasion to the analysis of much less conspicuous breaches of the code—but he would have been no more judicial in his treatment of it than he is in the treatment of M. de Charlus's erotic devotion to jockeys and trainmen. No man was ever more completely than Proust a slave to sensations; no man ever lived more entirely by and for the nerves; but by shutting himself off from all but the memory of these sensations he not only recovered them with unexampled fulness but recovered them in a state more nearly pure than would have been possible for anyone who had a living future which could occupy him with plans and desires—recovered them, that is to say, unmixed either with his own personal concerns or with those moral fervors and antipathies which, for such at least as he, are in fact part of a personal concern.

The two newly translated volumes form, like the three previous instalments of two volumes each, a recognizably distinct section of the work. They have as their central subject homosexual love—treated with an equally conspicuous absence of both salacity and moral indignation—and they are concerned chiefly with M. de Charlus, Albertine, the Verdurins, and a new character named Morel, while certain of the characters very prominent in the other parts —Swann, Odette, Gilberte, and the Guermantes—appear either incidentally or not at all. And yet the work as a whole is too marvelously one in style, spirit, and matter for these volumes to contribute anything new in any gross sense; they are fresh mines of delight of exactly the same kind which those who, like myself, read this author with almost unreserved pleasure have already found in the others. Here are the same occasional incidents which rise to an almost painful intensity, and the same endless profusion of exquisitely discriminated nuances which command the interest less because of any intrinsic importance in the things discriminated than because of the marvelous delicacy with which they are expressed—operations which awake admiration like that which one would feel for the superhuman dexterity of a skilful demonstrator dissecting under the microscope; investigations which are concerned

[1] "Cities of the Plain" By Marcel Proust. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. Printed for subscribers only. Albert and Charles Boni. $15.

not with the gross, but with the micro-anatomy of emotion, with the histology of the soul.

There is, however, one other problem to which I should like to allude because its solution did not become clear, to me at least, until the reading of the volumes from which "Cities of the Plain" is translated. I refer to the question, so hotly discussed pro and con, of whether or not Proust can be charged with a vulgar snobbishness upon the basis of his great preoccupation with the world of fashion. If we consider the part which the standards of this world play in the artistic structure of the work, I think there is no reason, in spite of the extent to which they are used, to doubt the sincerity of his expressed indifference toward them. We cannot discuss the varieties of human conduct, character, or emotion without reference to certain fixed norms any more than we can discuss the position of a point in space without reference to certain other fixed lines or points; and since all the moral, legal, or even aesthetic standards by which the deviations of character are normally measured in fiction had disappeared from Proust's realm it was necessary that certain others should be set up. The traditions of fashionable society are the x- and y-axes of his spiritual geometry. Meaning nothing in themselves, being merely fixed lines by which locations can be indicated and relationships established, their arbitrariness is the thing which makes them useful. Unlike moral or other standards, which might seem to have an importance in themselves, they make it possible to bring order into his universe without introducing anything extraneous to his view of it, and he chooses them for the very reason that he and his readers can agree to give them nothing except a purely formal meaning.

God's Children

By JAMES RORTY

All God's children got wings.
The white rooster flaps his wings in a perfect New England stage set.
"Pure, pure!" crows the white rooster, between dawn and dark of a transcendental day.
The white rooster dies. The sun also rises. Some gentleman of color must have strutted in the barnyard:
Hear, what remembered lust in the hen's cackle; see, what spotted malice in the chicks!

All God's children got wings.
The blind bats hang head down from the cobwebbed corners of the courtroom.
Bat wings brush the face of the late-working Governor, hell's padlocks rattle as the watchman goes his rounds.
The President sleeps badly; the witches have come again on bat wings to suck his blood.
Twelve o'clock in the editor's office; the rats in the composing-room have grown wings—what lewd squeals as the cold presses grind the news!
A cold fear, a cold hate, a cold lust—cold bats mewing the covenant of the coldest hell—
Come, death, come in a great burning, come!
Come, death, and loose these bats out of hell!

All God's children got wings.
Elijah's chariot stops in front of the death-house at Charlestown.
Swing low, sweet chariot, good children, brave children, coming to carry you home.
"Barthol! Niccolo!". Death's voice is like the trumpets of the Gracchi, great Michael's angels beat their wings.
What though the people sleep? The graves are opened, the great dead shout and sing in the streets.
This midnight blooms in power and passion, lit from this burning the waste lands burn and are healed.

All God's children got wings, got wings,
All God's children got wings.

The Education of Woodrow Wilson

By JOSEPH JASTROW

ON Wilson the statesman my complete and profound ignorance of politics either as art or as science enjoins silence. But his academic pursuits and his preparation for them I can follow with the sympathy and experience of a colleague, and for that reason I was particularly interested in Ray Stannard Baker's recently published volumes on Wilson's early years. My residence at Johns Hopkins University overlapped his. We were all specialized as graduate students headed (we hoped) for specialized chairs. But the congenial simplicity of those days provided easy contacts; departments exchanged hospitalities, and even the psychological laboratory was not estranged from the historical seminary. As chance would have it, my marching mate in the procession to receive the Ph.D. was Wilson. He was already a *primus inter pares* and the envy of many because he held a position at Bryn Mawr (at the enviable salary of $1,500) and had returned after a year's teaching to receive his degree.

Unlike Henry Adams, whose "education" confesses the superiority of its author to the need of all education, Wilson, with no less definite a view of his capabilities and career, showed how the conventions of the higher education could be bent to the program of a gifted mind. The keynote is struck early, though by scholastic standards Wilson was neither precocious nor unusual. He was a youth with a formulated purpose suitable to maturity. From the picture of Gladstone which the boy enshrined above his desk to the cards on which he wrote half in jest and half in prophecy: "Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Senator from Virginia" he knew clearly where he was going.

However effective the written phrase of Wilson was, the added effect of its delivery remains with me as I recall his address as president of the American Association of American Universities. My assurance of its value seemed welcome to him; for he felt, as I did, that it was coldly received by the company of college presidents and deans, most of whom were not ready for his educational reforms, could not perceive the wide gap between an idealist with a practical-minded zest and their own opportunist advocacies and canvassings. I still hold that Woodrow Wilson contributed as significantly as any other leader in the higher education to the ideals that universities must live by, that his views are an oasis in the dreary desert of the sayings of college presidents.