Books by John Cowper Powys

DUCDAME
WOLF SOLENT
THE MEANING OF CULTURE
IN DEFENCE OF SENSUALITY

Books by Dorothy Richardson

POINTED ROOFS
BACKWATER
HONEYCOMB
THE TUNNEL
INTERIM
DEADLOCK
REVOLVING LIGHTS
THE TRAP
OBERLAND

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON

By

JOHN COWPER POWYS

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LIKE that of many another writer whose method of approach is too subtle to be fully grasped at first sight, like that of Wordsworth and of Pater and of Proust, the slow-moving, creative power of Dorothy Richardson has little by little come into its own. Dealing with the "imponderables" that mankind in the mass is so reluctant to appraise at their true value Miss Richardson's unique genius is becoming a test for the self-weighing of modern minds. It is not that she has founded a school, for no one can imitate her; nor that she has become the idol of a coterie, for her readers are of many varieties of temperament and taste. It is rather that, like Montaigne, who had the same brand of egoism—with the difference that his is a superlatively masculine egoism—Miss Richardson has sunk a new shaft into a new stratum of material, and has thereby challenged all writers to follow, *upon their own soil*, a kindred method. And so integral to her own peculiar slant of vision is the particular kind of "artesian well" she has chosen to sink into the substance of reality, that numbers of her contemporaries, without either thought or desire to copy, are profoundly influenced by her.

Her nine volumes are nine chapters of a universally significant psychic biography: the biography of a solitary human soul. Such is her subject-matter. In attempting to estimate her

work we must, therefore, ask what rivals does Miriam Henderson, the heroine of these nine books, find already existing in world literature? What has been already achieved by the human race along these lines? Miriam, simply considered as an interesting human soul, is quite the equal of the hero of Proust's work and a good deal superior to the hero of Rolland's *Jean Christophe*. To find her superiors in intellectual interest one is compelled to turn to such world-famous figures as Hamlet and Faust. But even Hamlet and Faust do not fill the spiritual gap, do not supply the sub-conscious material, claimed, as her right, by Miss Richardson's young woman. Why not? Because both of these are essentially projections of the *male* quest for the essence of human experience; and Miriam is a projection of the *female* quest for this essence.

But what of the innumerable feminine writers of our own and of other ages who have used to the limit their qualities of *feminine charm?* Do not such writers exploit their femininity as far as it will go, in the enticing, beguiling devices of what to-day is called Narcissism? What, to take a famous woman-writer, a contemporary of Miss Richardson, what of the distinguished and among literary people, the so justly popular Virginia Woolf?

And what, in a previous age, of George Eliot?

These two names introduce a very interesting consideration; for in their work the charm of gracious womanhood (always so attractive to men

and women alike) is enhanced by a great deal of sheer mental power and, moreover, exactly the kind of mental power in which men excel.

But both George Eliot and Virginia Woolf betray their deepest instincts by using, as their medium of research, not these instincts but the rationalistic methods of men. Methods in the nature of things disqualified to do justice to such instincts: congenitally and diametrically opposed to them. But Virginia Woolf, it may be objected, like many another alluring woman writer, past and present, possesses feminine charm in its entirety, charm denied in great measure to poor George Eliot, and uses it, just as do Katharine Mansfield and Rebecca West, in an appealing harmony with her use of the essentially masculine gifts of reason and cleverness? Exactly. Here is the whole point of my contention. These gifted women write of beautiful things in a beautiful way, and are full of both rational cleverness and distinguished charm. Why then, supposing either of these attempted a monumental psychic biography, like that of Miriam, would it be ridiculous to claim for it a position in the same category as Hamlet, Faust, Wilhelm Meister, and the work of Marcel Proust? Because, in this line, the great *men* of genius have already gone infinitely further than it is possible for mere feminine cleverness, combined with all the feminine charm in the world, ever to go!

What, then, has Dorothy Richardson done that puts her into a different category and makes

her masterpiece a rival—along its own pec
path—of these great world-famous producti

This is the rub, the crux, the gist of the wl
matter. Dorothy Richardson is our first pior
in a completely new direction. What she
done has never been done before. She has dra
her inspiration neither from man-imitati
cleverness nor from narcissistic feminine cha
but *from the abyss of the feminine subconscio*
Thus, in estimating the ultimate value of h
Pilgrimage, the task of appreciative criticism itsc
becomes an experiment in spiritual meten
psychosis.

A woman critic must needs express her sub
terranean knowledge of her own sex in tha
"man's language" which is the inheritance o
the ages, and which to a large extent Dorothy
Richardson herself has been compelled to use;
while a man critic "by taking thought" and
"adding a cubit to his stature"—or the reverse
—must get as much as possible of his inherent
"heavy rationalism" out of the way, and use
the rest in articulating as nearly as he can the
secret treasures of this ocean-floor of mystery.

Let us whisper the truth. Without a hard,
cold, clear, analytical core of the most ferocious
masculine reason existing at the heart of her
being, Dorothy Richardson herself would never
have been able to articulate these things. All
authentic human genius is, in some degree,
bi-sexual; and it is only because she is the first
consciously to turn the two elements upon each other

in a reciprocal fury of psychological interpretation that her achievement is so startling, so important and so new. All the way through this extra-ordinary book the abysmal difference between the soul of a man and the soul of a woman is empha-sized and enlarged upon. Upon this "tragic tension," as Keyserling well calls it, depends the whole method of Dorothy Richardson's art. And it is because she has against her the entire weight of man-made civilization, or, as Spengler would put it, of our own particular man-made Faustian Culture, that it is so difficult to win for her, for her daring pioneer-genius, the recognition that we give so quickly and so easily to conventional charm and conventional masculine cleverness.

But how far is this stupendous achievement of Dorothy Richardson's unique at the present hour?

It *is* almost unique. It *is* almost alone. And that is why it is so extremely difficult to do full justice to what she is about. In reading *Pilgrimage*, we are unconsciously on the look-out for those particular renderings of the Good, the True and the Beautiful which have become an inheritance of our very blood and bones. We have to learn the art of taking these with a difference. To a large extent we must overcome this exigency that goes so deep, and is so intricately entangled with the conventional feelings of ten thousand years. We must cease to look for "charm and clever-ness," and learn to look for something rich and strange, for something that has always been there and yet has never been given utterance.

But although Dorothy Richardson is alone in articulating the secret acceptance of life in this peculiarly feminine way-of-life as something that underlies both pain and pleasure, and returns upon the memory, when the pain is over, as sweet dregs to a bitter draught, one must remember that all the most interesting writers of fiction in our time, while aiming at some sort of rational synthesis, pick up on the shore of their effort much irrational flotsam. The difference is that, while the most significant discoveries of her contemporaries are made incidentally, hers are deliberate and premeditated. What she has achieved in this modern Pilgrim's Progress is a strange kind of "salvation" only to be attained by a certain peculiar awareness of an apparently purposeless life-flow.

Of this great secret there are to be found certain "intimations in marginalia" in the work of several of her more remarkable European contemporaries.

In the solid, massive edifices, the huge psychic sculptures of Thomas Mann, for instance—assuredly inspired milestones in the great Faustian quest—we come upon bits of masonry whereon, their seeds brought thither perhaps by the birds of the air, are growing the little green mosses which in the Miriam books would be the chief interest. James Joyce, in his ferocious, erudite, solipsistic fashion, hacks now and again—though indeed it seems to be by accident—in the course of the phantasmagoric experiences of Stephen and Bloom, at the little rooted grasses by the side of

his philological stone-quarry; which, again, in the Miriam books would be the chief thing!

Nor does it require much penetration to detect running through every one of D. H. Lawrence's books at least one tattered thread of the life-tapestry (*The White Unicorn amid the Mille Fleurs*) which so captivates Miriam. It is indeed this particular thread that helps to make these queer books so exciting; though it is twisted in a sufficiently taut, galvanic knot in *Lady Chatterley*. It is the thinnest, frailest, darkest thread of his own turbulent epicene pilgrimage, projected like a trailing broken string of hieroglyphic beads, in these prophetic and ribald incarnations, that he was doomed to follow; and there are many things in common between it and Miriam's discoveries. Virginia Woolf might have drifted in the evolution of her quick-silvery talent into a few chance revelations of the same order if the gods had not cursed her with a fatal trickiness and a still more dangerous tendency to debouch from essentials into airy niceties. It is interesting to note, too, how a writer as shrewdly conversant with modern philosophy as May Sinclair, and one who appreciates Miss Richardson's power, has been herself unable to resist the temptation of playing with exciting subjects rather than undergoing the long, bitter, laborious discipline of projecting her inmost self into a really considerable work.

The Sitwell brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, come much nearer to this patient concentration,

this pruning away from an imaginative work of everything that is not intimately, awkwardly, disquietingly, obscurely, disconcertingly *personal*; but the fretted petulance of an amateur arbitrariness side-tracks them from the main issue. Dorothy Richardson is the only one who really continues—in her new, feminine way—the great egoist life-quest of Montaigne, Goethe, Wordsworth, Pater and Proust. And it is just because she has not deviated from this path that the rank-and-file find her so difficult an author. She *is* difficult. She is difficult in a way totally different from the way in which the objectively clever writers, the intellectual puzzle-mongers and riddle-makers are difficult. She is difficult, too, in a different way from Henry James, whose "difficulty" lies entirely in convolution of presentment.

The feminine secrets revealed in Miriam's pilgrimage are like so many forest paths in Spenser's *Faery Queen*. They lead, some of them, to new revelations of the "Salvage" Man; some of them to new and unexpected "Fêtes Champêtres" of intellectual Neo-Platonism. One of the most characteristic of these revelations is that one which has to do with "atmosphere." Perhaps no writer has ever devoted so much attention to the "atmospheric" aspects of her backgrounds. The way the morning light falls upon furniture and *bric-à-brac* in rooms; the way the evening light falls from passage-windows upon staircases and woodwork; the way shadows

fall and slide and drift and lift and sink upon roadways and pavements; the way lamps and fires and candlelight affect the psychic temper of a room; the way the greyness of a colourless sky impregnates the simplest things in a room, the very tea-cups on the table, the very wash-basin on an attic chest-of-drawers; the way the mistiness of an autumn afternoon glides through the cracks and crannies of the most shuttered and cluttered boarding-house, bringing with it a smell of dead leaves, of leaves that have travelled far from the trees that shed them; the way the mystery of the rain is felt behind closed windows as the drops follow one another down the streaming panes; the way such rain in London is different from all other rain; all these things are part of the very essence of her revelation as to what women, in their subconscious nature, respond to day by day. And London itself! How different is this London, of a woman's profoundest consciousness, from the London of Dickens, or the London of Henry James, or the London of Galsworthy. And yet these books gather themselves about London and drink up the atmospheres of London as if they were humming-bird moths at a huge smoky flower.

There are very few great fiction-writers, very few among those who have the power of creating characters that impress themselves, in every detail, upon the minds of readers, who, in addition to being fiction-writers, are also original philos-

ophers. There is no original philosophy in Jane Austen, in Scott, in Thackeray, in Dickens. There is no original philosophy in Victor Hugo, Balzac, Stendhal, Guy de Maupassant, Flaubert. It would almost seem as if the faculty for the creation of living, three-dimensional characters, characters like those of Dickens, made such demands upon personal magnetism as to drain the author of his whole vitality and leave nothing over for philosophizing. Since George Eliot, no Englishwoman has created living characters and possessed at the same time a philosophic propaganda. Not that George Eliot's philosophy can be compared, for subtle, illuminating interest, with that of Dorothy Richardson; but the author of *Middlemarch was* a novelist and, incidentally, no contemptible thinker.

Dostoievsky alone—for Tolstoy's "art" never altogether blended with his opinions—was a thinker with a mystical philosophy absolutely original and new; while, at the same time, he was an artist worthy of comparison with the very greatest. Now the remarkable thing is that the heroine of Miss Richardson's great work has an identity so real that it is only comparable to the identity in ourselves of which we alone are aware This remains true even though most of her being, even though *all* of her being, be drawn from the interior of Miss Richardson's consciousness of herself. Hamlet and Faust were, without question, drawn from the interior of Shakespeare's and Goethe's consciousness of themselves. For thus

only, only by being the projection of a deep, intimate, personal experience, can characters in fiction acquire a symbolic importance and come to be representative of the universal human situation. Even if Miriam Henderson is more closely akin to Dorothy Richardson than the Idiot is to Dostoievsky or Don Quixote to Cervantes or Wilhelm Meister to Goethe, she is not a whit more akin to her than young Marcel and Swann (taken together) are to Proust, or Dedalus and Bloom (taken together) are to Joyce. Miss Richardson's intimate friends could point, one may be sure, to countless important differences between the novelist herself and her heroine. Miss Richardson, one at least is allowed to guess, is probably five times more humane than Miriam, more humorous than Miriam, more complex than Miriam, less contrary than Miriam; for it is surely a fact that no writer can create a character and endow it with convincing vitality such as shall be more interesting, more attractive, more subtle than he is himself.

But what a triumph in portraiture Miriam is! It is hard to think of any woman in fiction more living, more real. One comes to know every cranny of her mind, every eccentricity of her feeling, every tangent of her thought. But the point I want to make is that this kind of portraiture differs completely from the outward, built-up reality which charms us so much in Jane Eyre, Becky Sharp, Beatrix in *Esmond*, Hardy's Tess. Such women are types. With Miriam it

is not what she feels but rather the way she feels that makes her symbolic.

And the peculiar genius of these extraordinary volumes lies herein: that through Miriam's heightened awareness of them all the other characters in the book imbibe an intense life of their own, making them stand out in clear-cut relief against the ebb and flow of her feelings.

From what has been already suggested three rare qualities emerge as characteristic of Miriam's pilgrimage through modern life; in the first place the genius that has made of this young woman a symbol of universal human experience; in the second place the convincing reality of the various persons who compose the drama of the girl's practical and intellectual life; in the third place, and this the greatest of all, the secrets to which we are admitted in regard to Miriam's femininity. Yes; the first two of these attributes are but the rough-hewn scaffolding of the substantial edifice of Miss Richardson's art. Other writers have made of a particular human character an epitome of the common experiences of our race. Other writers have surrounded such a person with a vivid entourage whose figures and gestures, "strained," as Henry James liked to put it, through the protagonist's vision, assume the mellow atmospheric, tactile values of the chiaroscuro of Rembrandt. It is in the feminine substratum of this work that one grows aware of an entirely new element in fiction . . . something that we look for in vain in Jane Austen, in the Brontës, in George

Eliot. These quiet and penetrating books represent, in fact, the only attempt that I am aware of to put into psychological fiction the real "philosophy," moral, æsthetic, spiritual, and that which underlies all these and escapes from all these and mocks at all these—of women where they differ most from men.

Lots of men have created living women. Lots of women have exploited their own sex-humour (as Jane Austen did), or sex-eroticism (as the Brontës did); lots of women have used the philosophy of men and given it a certain feminine twist (as George Eliot did); but no writer, as far as I know, in any country or in any age, has deliberately undertaken to represent the peculiar feminine reaction to life, not only in humour and in sentiment, but in what might be called cosmic apprehension, or planetary æstheticism. This undertaking is entirely new in literature; unknown to Montaigne, unknown to Pater, unknown to Proust. Every woman, she says somewhere, is a creative artist when it comes to projecting her personality into the appearance and character of a room, of a house; and one of the most exciting elements in these books is an analysis of this mystical power in women by which they change their natural surroundings and transform their inanimate environments in their instinctive and secret art of self-expression. Miss Richardson is a far more original writer, a far greater writer, than the clever philistine-culture of our age has the sensitivity to understand. She

is an authentic philosopher, in the great "open-secret" tradition; the tradition that *excludes* Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Russell, Whitehead, Watson, and *includes* Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Plato, Montaigne, Goethe, Emerson, Nietzsche, Spengler. The main point about this aspect of her work, however, is that she has carried this philosophy of the "a-logical, innocent eye" into a new dimension, the dimension of women's secret, instinctive sensitiveness to the mystery of life. She takes her place in the great rôle of thinkers who, like Heraclitus and Goethe and Nietzsche, are intent on Life Itself, in its mysteriously flowing stream, rather than any human hypothesis of its whence and whither. But her *novum organum*, her organ of research, in this profane cult, remains the subconscious sentiency of women rather than that of men. She is, in fact, the modern priestess of a strange and exciting Renaissance of certain lost illuminations which must have originated the unknown ritual of the Great Mother's "Mysteries" at Eleusis. One of her most devoted feminine disciples has pointed out to me only recently that it must be remembered that the planet we live upon is essentially a *feminine* planet. No mythology has ever dared to make the earth masculine. The sun, the moon, the stars, are all, so to speak, psychically bi-sexual; but Earth, under all her names, remains a goddess. And since this is so, how curious, how significant, that until Dorothy Richardson began to write her patient, convoluted, difficult books, not a

single human thinker, whether in prose or poetry, has really made of the feminine attitude to life the vantage-ground for interpreting life! Did this distinguished writer know where she was going, and what she was doing, when she wrote *Pointed Roofs*, her first book? For even there, her *method* is in full application. Where did she find this singular method? She can only have found it, like all mysterious discoveries in art-method, in some underlying fold or couch or secret volute of her own consciousness, unrolled there and brought to light for the first time. The literary student looks in vain for any earlier *fons et origo* of such daring innovation in fictional narrative.

The search for "originals" belongs rather to the "antiquarianism" of literature than to the art of interpretation, but it is a fact worth noting—if only because it is typical of this unfair world—that while the academicians go on discussing "the stream of consciousness" method, and using the work of Joyce and Proust, and even the work of Virginia Woolf, to illustrate it, it is not with Joyce, who strains it past breaking point, nor with Proust who, though his belief in it is implicit in the theory of literary art elaborated at the end of his last volume, never takes the risk of trusting it, and certainly not with Virginia Woolf that this method, which owes its very name to the work of Dorothy Richardson, is properly to be identified.

Dorothy Richardson is a Wordsworth of the city of London; only she is a Wordsworth, who,

in exchanging the mystery of mountains and lakes for the mystery of roof-tops and pavements, has purged away those teasing pedantries, puerilities and picties which spoiled and cluttered up that great poet's original revelations. But she is "after" precisely the same thing . . . something that is very old and very pagan and absolutely non-moral . . . what Wordsworth himself, indeed, calls quite simply, "the Pleasure which there is in Life itself." Most beautifully does Miriam Henderson in these books speak of her "profanity." This word "profanity" implies just exactly the non-moral, anti-social, lonely zest for the pure Life-Sensation, stripped of all surplusage, which Wordsworth, "suckled in a creed outworn," so indignantly advocates.

But Miriam's famous "profanity" implies much more than this. It implies far more important and serious change in our system of spiritual valuations than the literary critics of our time have had the wit to see. Miriam's "profanity" is indeed nothing more nor less than a very deep and original system of life based upon a mystical quietude; an intensity of entranced, receptive contemplation. It is no wonder, therefore, that Dorothy Richardson's inner circle of sophisticated admirers has been hit by the Great War. The raw, scoffing, unhappy, defeatist mood of after-war writers like Aldous Huxley would be naturally atrophied and paralysed in that particular nerve of exultant life-zest which it is Miriam's profane benediction to exploit. It is for this

reason that Miss Richardson's most eloquent champions, as far as her own country is concerned, have been writers like Edward Garnett and J. D. Beresford, who belong to an older, calmer and more self-possessed generation. Splendid examples of the stupidity of smart cleverness in the understanding of our author are constantly appearing; and one is secretly not altogether sorry that it should be so! One derives a certain malicious pleasure from this spectacle of critical smartness behaving as it always has behaved in the presence of the quiet, unpredictable growth of organisms that have the sap of genius in them. It is naturally the "Smart Alick" type of critic who will find the mental adventures of Miriam Henderson insufficiently documented by modern catchwords, and altogether too grave, too serious, too mystical, too obscure. As a matter of fact nowhere in modern literature, including France and Germany and America, is there a writer with more of that particular stuff of genius in her, which, of all things, is so irritating to the cheap satirist and so totally obscure to the social comedian. The obscurity of Miss Richardson is indeed, like the irony of Jane Austen, an integral part of her style and it is obscure, as I have already hinted, in the way wind-shadows on water are, or tree-creepers on trees, or caddis-worms on beautiful river-mud. It is in other words *organically*, not grammatically or philologically obscure.

This Montaignesque "Life-Cult," with its evasive and magical ramifications, as our author

tracks it so patiently along its wavering and fluctuating sun-paths, forces her to wrestle with the most recondite problems of style. Why, for instance, is it impossible to express these subtleties in an ordinary, hand-to-mouth, normal prose? Why would they lose their quintessence, their very identity, why would they become something altogether different, if they were expressed in plain, blunt words? Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell, those subtle Sophisticates, should be the ones to help us, just here, in elucidating this mystery, for they, too, have had to wrestle with that terrific problem of style which is so airily, so lightly dodged by the clever, un-childlike minds of our younger generation.

Dorothy Richardson's style has, like so many rare prose-styles, its distinct affinity with poetry, without in the least degree approximating to that bastard hybrid, "prose-poetry." Like poetry, what it desires to express is so evasive, so much a matter of what one feels, so to speak, through the pores of one's skin, that it has to be expressed in a gnomic, oracular, *idolatrous* way. To attempt to express it in plain, blunt prose would be to attempt to express logically, rationally, argumentatively, what is always killed and blown to bits by logic, reason, argument. You must remember that this pilgrimage of Miriam's is a sort of Quest of the Holy Graal. It is as serious a thing as Wilhelm Meister's search for the Æsthetic Absolute. It is as serious as the long Proustian beagle-hunt after the wild Hare of the Eternal

hid in the sour turnip-fields of Time. What Dorothy Richardson's heroine is looking for is in fact the divine object of the ecstatic contemplative life, nothing less than the Beatific Vision; and not merely for this alone; for she is looking for this as it manifests itself, in diffused glory, throughout the whole inflowing and outflowing tide of phenomena.

And for the very reason that our author's protagonist is beating up such recondite game . . . the very *Deus Absconditus* of what most of us crudely call the " Inanimate " . . . it is clear that " style " in her work becomes like the holy language of a very complicated ritual, the only effective invocation of the shy *Numen* whose presence she is summoning.

How should not the smart, fashionable critics fight shy, and the Hoi Polloi steer clear, of a work that appeals so definitely to posterity by its contempt for every single one of the chords and strings of the modern orchestral devil's dance? Naturally it is not easy to " skim " these books. Not one of your confounded quick-time readers could say to another, " I've just been glancing through the last volume of Dorothy Richardson, and it seems to me awfully swell stuff." No wonder that like Walter Pater and Flaubert Miss Richardson writes slowly, treating every paragraph as if it were as unique and exquisite a problem as a Pindaric Ode; or better still, as if it were some carefully translated oracle, stolen in the gusty wind from the tops of Dodona's oak-

trees, and puts syllable by honeyed syllable, into beautifully vowelled Attic Greek.

The disciples of Dorothy Richardson must resemble those first slowly increasing readers of Wordsworth or those groups of passionate adherents who gathered round William Blake. There are in America a much larger minority than she probably realizes who know her books by heart; but, unfortunately, few of these are book-buyers: they depend on libraries. But let that be as it may, it would seem pretty certain that even as things are there is no living writer in English with a reputation equal to hers among the adepts and the initiates. The history of literary reputation is, indeed, a curious thing; and one wonders rather bitterly how many of the famous popular English writers of our time realize, that while it is practically certain that in a hundred years not a soul will be reading any of them, it is equally certain that thousands and thousands of literary people in those days will be searching and snatching at every word, trace, sign, and relic, left of Dorothy M. Richardson.

In all the literary work of our time none retains so steady, so high, so rare, so curious a value as these Miriam books. As with Proust, people who have once read Miss Richardson with anything approaching a temperamental affinity, people who have once acquired the taste for her peculiar vision, find themselves bitten with an insatiable mania for her writing. Her work spoils

their pleasure in other writers. After reading her they can hardly read others. In this respect she resembles Henry James; and for much the same reason. There emanates from her books, in fact, just as there does from those of Henry James, a secret trick of atmosphere which amounts in reality to a completely new attitude to life, an attitude not merely new in metaphysical speculation but new in the concrete enjoyment of the whole spectacle. In certain respects Miss Richardson's view of such things is more original than that of Henry James, simply because it is a purely feminine viewpoint, and until she appeared this whole æsthetic feminine view of things was practically unknown to literature; the feminine response to the life-spectacle being confined to feelings of the heart and to feelings of a satirical and humorous kind.

Lovers of Miss Richardson's books recognize that like all great writers she really and truly creates a completely new world out of her own temperament, even while what in her deepest honesty she feels—and that is the paradox of all genius—is that she is simply *expressing the truth.* Dostoievsky would say the same of what he himself did, so would Hardy, so would Conrad, so would Couperus. The passionate zest with which genius flings itself upon the slippery, deadly, phocasmelling Proteus-Truth is something which creates incidentally and as it were "sideways," a world that is in reality a very particular and very special truth. How few English writers there are living

to-day of whom one can say in the tone in which one says "this is a Dickens scene, a Dostoievsky scene, a Henry James scene," —"this is a scene just like what happens in So-and-So's books!" But this is exactly what one does find oneself saying, and thinking too, with regard to Dorothy Richardson's work. And the matter is more subtle still; for it is not exactly that one would point to any particular person, resembling, shall we say, the landlady, Mrs. Bailey, or that frail and naughty object of ambiguous charity, Miss Dear, and say "Oh, how Dorothy-Richardson-like!" It is more as if one would exclaim when entering any unknown house, or any strange room full of people, or passing along any city-street not quite devoid of character—"what would Dorothy Richardson make of this?"

And the implication of this difference goes to the root of the matter because it is a beautiful illustration of that profound *feminine* insight in this writer, apart altogether from humour or sentiment, which is her grand achievement. It implies in fact that whereas Henry James or Dickens or Dostoievsky project *in vacuo*, after the manner of *men* of genius, each of his own particular brain-world or imagination-world, or nerves-world, Dorothy Richardson, after the manner of a woman of genius concentrates her power upon pursuing the evasive but ultimate essence imprinted, one might think, upon the very air itself, by every emotional and psychic and

visual promontory of consciousness. By this I mean that the impression produced upon the reader of her books—whether justly or unjustly —is that every single one of her characters has a living "original" or a dead "original;" has at any rate *not* been created *in vacuo*. On the contrary one feels sure that all three Karamazov brothers, together with Stavrogin, Svidrigailov, Peter Stepanovitch, Kirilov, Shatoff, General Epanchin, the mysterious father of the Raw Youth, etc., etc., etc., emerge from Dostoievsky's essentially masculine brain, like so many "daughters" born straight from the brain of Zeus. Now it is quite possible that if one knew the actual truth this impression would turn out to be erroneous. Dostoievsky might astonish us (in his Elysian Limbo) by naming the "originals" of all these figures. Miss Richardson might astonish us by swearing, across her heart, that neither Mrs. Bailey nor Miss Dear, nor Michael, nor the spirited young ladies she always speaks of as "the girls" nor Hypo, nor even Harriet have any original at all save in her own bosom! But even if this did turn out to be the case I think my contention would still remain true. But I should be driven to plead that, man-like, Dostoievsky treats real people *as if* they were figments of his brain, while, woman-like, Dorothy Richardson treats imaginary people *as if* she had taken them from real life. In her art of presenting all her characters our author has not a single device of style that is not saturated with her main purpose.

Never, I say, never, has a writer been less "affected," less wilfully "queer." Her intermittent omission of "inverted commas" for instance, how it increases that magical feeling of being transported into a world of pure consciousnesses, all of whom are aware of one another's peculiarities *immediately* like the angels of scholastic speculation. This of course is often the truth among people who know one another well in real life, but its implications have been neglected by most writers. One might, in fact, almost say that sometimes in Dorothy Richardson her extreme sensitiveness to what her characters are feeling is so intense that one forgets the very expressions of their faces as the conversations proceed, forgets in fact that they have bodies at all and just *feels oneself* into the moving ripples of their thoughts as if one were a water-fly crossing the criss-cross surface of that wind-blown water. In one thing indeed she greatly surpasses Joyce; and that is in her power of giving the precise nuance of feeling that her heroine Miriam awakes in all those she encounters. The cluttered tides of the thoughts of Stephen and Leopold, with their sea-weeds and dead-dogs and dead fish—their white bellies uppermost—make such a wrack and wash and whimper that the more delicate impressions produced by them upon others are swamped in these dark Cocytus-waves. But here again Dorothy Richardson shamelessly exploits her feminine sensibility; for is not one of the chief differences between men and women the way

men blunder on, in their particular egoisms, oblivious of the impression they are making; and the way women are so over-sensitive as to whether people " like " them or not and follow their ideas or not? Oh, it is a complete continent, a submerged Lost Atlantis of feminine susceptibility, this world that Dorothy Richardson brings to light. The peculiar egoism of Miriam; how different it is from the usual passionate, sentimental, humorous egoism of women-writers' heroines! And yet what an enormous tract of feminine consciousness and subconsciousness is revealed here that all women must confess to if they are honest! What, in fact, is this terrific, this insatiable, this implacable life-urge seeking? It is seeking a certain set of very intimate, half-physical half-psychic, sensations of well-being. The whole drama of these nine astonishing " book-chapters " turns upon this pivot. How is Miriam getting on? Not in regard to love—though *that* enters characteristically enough—; not in regard to " success " or money; although these things, especially negatively, play their part; but in regard to her mysterious pursuit of a certain Vision, which does not apparently arrive, as in Proust (and the present reviewer thoroughly agrees with her in this), by the pure chance of little isolated incidents, but by the premeditated plans she makes in advance, escaping from this or that intolerable situation—North London for example!—and deliberately conspiring with fate to obtain " work " or " holidays " under very

particular conditions. One naturally knows not yet what developments in Miriam future chapters will reveal; but this, I think, one may safely hazard—there will be no neat "dénouement," no rounding off of everything in the attainment of a certain spiritual "formula" as is presented to us and rather disconcertingly presented to us by Proust in those final two volumes of his. The disillusioned continental realism, implied in the absence of everything "voulu" and in the prominence given to everything that comes by accident seems to drop away in these last chapters. Time comes a little too cleverly "full-circle," and the characters of the story, with their locks so dramatically grey and their dispositions so appropriately crystallized, loom upon us now, for the first time in the whole work, as "eidola" invented by the author rather than as pure transcripts from reality, just as the anti-Platonic concept, of the Eternal Being in us nourished upon temporary nourishment, with which the whole work ends, leaving the author resolved to begin to write, rounds everything off in a manner so metaphysically satisfactory as to verge a little, a very little, on that unenviable condition "of being too good to be true." No! whatever happens in the tenth volume of *Pilgrimage* we must not allow our author even to dream of "rounding off" this book for many a long year. Perhaps this mysteriously feminine genius will discover some way, along her own lines, as Dostoievsky, alone among masculine novelists, has done

along *his* own lines, of reconciling the artist's and poet's craving for shape, for form, for a definite issue, for a desired consummation, with the philosopher's mania for slurring over no aspect, however paradoxical, however trivial, however disgusting, however recalcitrant of the truth about the way things drift and flutter and peter out.

It has become a silly trick among superficial reviewers to use such expressions as "Epic" and "Saga" for any long prose work. Whatever these nine volumes are, for heaven's sake, let us not be tempted into the meaningless banality of calling them a Saga. Let us keep these ridiculous appellations for the works of authors whose lengthy books, and their own names too, will be completely swallowed up in the real epic of time's oblivious Lethe. As Coleridge so profoundly remarked, "every original writer must *create the taste* by which he is appreciated." Dorothy Richardson had probably not the remotest conception as to where, as to how far, her Daimón was going to drive her, when she began the now famous first chapters of *Pointed Roofs*. This book was her "Almayer's Folly"; and it is an interesting piece of critical history that both these surprising inaugurations of completely new "genres" in literature should have been ushered into the light under the "imprimatur" of Edward Garnett. Lovers of Dorothy Richardson have good reason, too, to feel gratitude to the distinguished writer, J. D. Beresford, who, at the very

start, had the wisdom to see how far this new Pentecostal wind threatened to carry its Possessed. The chances are, however, that in spite of these two eminent men's appreciation it will be left to some more reckless and daring thinker than any produced by our generation to do full justice to the new gospel of the art of life which these nine volumes contain within their choice, scrupulous, suggestive, pondered pages. The creation of Miriam Henderson has sent these books forth, through the English-speaking world, "numbering the intellects," and a whole new way of taking life is revealed here for those who have the wit to catch its drift. They are much more than a novel; much more than a study in feminine psychology. They contain the seed of a new philosophy of the senses, indeed of a new philosophy of life. That crude, disagreeable and yet suggestive book, Max Sterner's *Ego and Its Own*, might have inaugurated this philosophy. It missed its aim, as did also the work of Walter Pater, by a certain curious distance, on account of his masculine scrupulosity and his masculine fastidiousness. Women are far less fastidious, as well as far less rational than men, and any "philosophy of the senses" that is really going to mount up to a mystical vision, and embrace the essence of things, must not be too "picky and choosy." While Pater, because of his fastidiousness, could get his sense-ecstasies only from things several times removed from the chaos of reality, our gallant Miriam has the courage (just as when

she smoked to the bitter end her first cigarette) to chew the apples of experience in a much more wholesale manner; to swallow in fact those old profane apples, picked up from the ground, as they fall from the mystic tree of knowledge, wasp-eaten as they are in so many places. She has the courage, too, not to spit out the green skin, not to spit out the perilous juice, not to make too wry a face, when, throwing the remains away, she catches sight of the snug maggot at the core! I think it will be along these lines, along the lines of the presence in the feminine sensibility of something almost Rabelaisian in its unfastidiousness, certainly of something Montaignesque, that posterity, losing the very names of most of us, will come to find so much grist for its cosmic mill in the work of Dorothy Richardson. For she accepts *the mystery of what is* in all the terrible-sweet flavour of its stabbing, raking, harsh, gritty chaos; neither extenuating aught nor setting down aught in malice! With that maternal acceptance so puzzlingly indiscriminate (not ironical) such as only women have, she accepts us all, at our back-and-belly value, at our face-value, at our pit-of-the-stomach value; and she accepts the works of our hands, too, in all their painted, shiny, oil-reeking, childish crudity! That is why her books are obscure to many men. That is why Mrs. G. B. Stern finds them so appallingly tedious. They are as they are because the nature of things is as it is. There must have been something (let us admit it) of

Dorothy Richardson's comprehensive, stoical, all-embracing aplomb about the creative energy that originally started this singular world—and something, too, of her capricious aversions and antipathies when the world's contrarieties began to appear! How does she work? She works with "memory." But her method is not mere recapitulation. She by no means uses *all* the memories which one knows she *must* possess. On the other hand many "artistic," and even genuinely æsthetic people must, one feels, frequently pause in astonishment, as they read, before *the kind of thing* that she chooses to pluck forth from her reservoirs of memory and enlarge upon and elaborate and spin out so fine!

What must amaze such people is the apparently wilful choice of unpicturesque, unpromising, unideal, and in many instances actually unpleasant aspects of reality. And yet all these queer things and all these queer aspects of things, with the weather stains of chaos thick upon them, are treated by her with their ramifications and convolutions as if they were carefully selected, ideal symbols of human life. Elaborately, patiently, intensively does she treat them. She treats them as Walter Pater treats his noble platonic essences, as Proust treats his meticulous narrations, as Goethe treats his fossils, his herbarium, his *musée d'art*. And all the while, to the romantically artistic temperament they are devoid, these quaint collections of actuality, of everything that is

significant or that possesses an ideal meaning. They have no ideal meaning. They are simply *there*; purposelessly, wantonly, hopelessly there! The deeper one goes in the attempt to fathom the method of Dorothy Richardson the more mysterious it all becomes. She is absolutely unique in this method of hers. Joyce could not imitate her if he tried. No one could imitate her. No one can. Her extraordinary style is not a rationally invented thing. It is oracular. It is a kind of poetry. I tell you this woman is a Pythian soothsayer. One can only surmise that what she does is to cast a deep-sea net, weighted down with heavy leaden weights, into her memory and then make a blind, almost prophetic, use of all she finds in that occult scoop. Not into her normal rational memory. It is a far more exciting and mysterious plunge than that. It is into her profoundest subconscious nature that this deep-sea net descends. It is for this reason that there is a doom upon her to guard and protect with a kind of maternal fury *all* she brings up to the surface? Does she feel that to exercise rational or ideal or purposeful *selection* upon what this net brings up would be a betrayal of the very secret of creation? Think for a minute of the emotional *purpose* of Hardy, of the romantic *purpose* of Conrad, of the psycho-æsthetic *purpose* of Henry James. All these diffused underlying "purposes" give unity, glamour, interest to their books. Proust himself, with his grand cult of the creative and destructive processes of time, has his

ultimate intention, the rounding off of the whole dramatic "scenario." Dorothy Richardson, to the most devoted appreciation, offers no such "purpose," no such hope of a rational "rounding off," no such mounting-up to an architectural dénouement. Is this because of a weakness in her compared with these masters of fiction? I think not. I think it is strength. I think it is because her genius is that of the nature of all women. Women represent the eternal growth of life itself. And of life, as we know, there is necessarily no end. The only end of the pilgrimage of Miriam that one can contemplate with equanimity is Miriam's own death. Dorothy Richardson has this in common with the old, immemorial story-teller of our race, with those ancient, bardic "fabulators," (for whom adventure must follow adventure while the hero lives) that the only unity given to this chaos of impressions is the identity of the consciousness that welcomes them. It is not the outrage of chaos, of purposelessness in things, from which Miriam suffers. She rather enjoys in her stoic heathen way, all that. It is a series of very definite miseries that make her cry, that hit her to the heart, that send her reeling and staggering into the inner sanctum of her soul. One of the worst of these miseries is what she suffers when only eighteen-years-old at that boarding-school of the three Miss Pernes in North London. One of the most pathetic touches in the whole literature of lonely adventure, a touch of the kind that, I suppose, women

alone can understand to the full, is that passage about the veil, in fact the two veils, which the youthful Miriam kept in a drawer in that unconsecrated shared bedroom. But even in the book called *Backwater*, where this heart-breaking imbroglio at the very threshold of her life occurs, she has her moments of ecstasy.

"Gathering up the newspaper she folded it neatly, put it on the hall table and went slowly upstairs, watching the faint reflection of the half-lowered hall gas upon the polished balustrade. The staircase was cold and airy. Cold rooms and landings stretched up away above her into the darkness. She became aware of a curious buoyancy rising within her. It was so strange that she stood still for a moment on the stair. For a second, life seemed to cease in her, and the staircase to be swept from under her feet . . . 'I'm alive' . . . It was as if something had struck her, struck right through her impalpable body, sweeping it away, leaving her there shouting silently without it. I'm alive . . . I'm alive . . . She tried once or twice deliberately to bring back the breathless moment standing still on a stair. Each time something of it returned. 'It's me, *me*; this is *me* being alive,' she murmured with a feeling under her like the sudden drop of a lift."

The chapter containing this passage ends with the words, "What's the use of feeling like that if it doesn't stay? It doesn't change anything. Next time I'll make it stay. It might whisk

me right away. There's something in me that can't be touched or altered. Me. If it comes again— If it's stronger every time . . . Perhaps it goes on getting stronger till you die."

May it not be that the only possible purpose or unity or meaning in this story of Miriam is to be found in those words—" perhaps it goes on getting stronger till you die "? It is here doubtless that Miss Richardson is the grand Heretic of Fiction. The very rudiments of the art of *the novel*, as distinct from the old story-telling of the famous " fabulators " of early times, are surely from the orthodox point of view that all " notes " should be gathered up in one crashing crescendo at the close. In the Miriam-story one begins to feel, as one reaches *Oberland*, that there has been no preparation at all, certainly no artful and elaborate preparation, for any kind of dramatic " finale." Miriam's life has been, and still is, an epitome, just as Faust's is an epitome of the spiritual growth of the human soul. Are we not justified in feeling that it is just because our common human soul is here considered as a feminine one that the whole orthodox character-developing drama, including such things as the seduction of Gretchen and the cultivation of barren land (both such masculine achievements), and ending with a final apotheosis, is eliminated in favour of a more devious, a more lyrical, a more subjective method of spiritual progress? Faust is, as we remember, soothed and healed by the

contemplation of a non-human magic in natural scenery. But our Miriam-Fausta makes of such non-human contemplations the very "entelechy" of her life. She began doing this when she was six years old; but it was down on a lonely strip of beach at Brighton, out of reach of the crowds, that she first realized all its full implications. I quote again from *Backwater*.

"She must keep the secret to herself . . . In Germany she had found it again and again; and at Banbury Park, though it could never come out and surround her, it was never far off. . . . It lay now (at Brighton) all along the deserted promenade and roadway as you went home to lunch and at night it spoke in the plump, plump of the invisible sea—against the lower woodwork of the pier pavilion."

This secret cult of hers, this furtive pursuit of a non-human Holy Graal, is what Miriam is thinking about when she describes herself as "profane" and her happiness a "profane" thing. She means that it is an egoist's happiness (as indeed it is) and she means that it is a happiness that would be seriously imperilled (as indeed it would be) by any too-close, too-devoted, too-exacting a human love.

The most powerful passages in all the nine volumes are, in my opinion, those in which she pursues this furtive cult; and perhaps the most powerful of all she has written is the passage describing her strange, cold, heathen

ecstasy when she decides to preserve her liberty and independence as against her feeling for Michael.

It is very significant of what Dorothy Richardson has had the genius to do, thus tracking down in the dim unconscious labyrinths of its desire, and in the subterranean channels of its blind impetus, the will to pure, unalloyed, unspoiled *life* that she would never regard it as a derogation from her talents, but rather as a high commendation of them, if anyone were to say " how woman-like your books are ! " And the more one ponders on the un-used, un-developed, un-exploited treasures of sensibility that exist in the simplest women, and are constantly being perverted and side-tracked by both stupid and clever men, does this new departure appear startling and tremendous.

One amusing and perhaps scandalous piece of literary psychology the present writer would like to be daring enough to hazard, and that is that no very sensual or very vicious man (in an erotic sense) would endure to read a vast mass of Dorothy Richardson's work. Her subtle and penetrating art might indeed in this sense be used by cynical persons as a sort of Ithuriel wand to test the virtue or the reverse, of any æsthetic, wayfaring Comus among males! The point I am fumbling after is this, that there is so much description of women when they are alone together (and in anything but provocative moods and postures), that any satyrishly inclined epicure

in feminine charm would be constantly shocked and horrified. One might be even tempted to think, as one notes the difference, that most famous feminine writers always write with half an eye upon the sex-interest of their male readers. Certainly one of the most beguiling and (from a "best-seller" point of view) one of the most popular of feminine devices in writing, when a woman ceases from just being "clever" or playing "copy-cat" to the men-writers they especially admire, is a sort of deliberate literary "narcissism." This is a most seductive trick and lends itself, better than anything else to the kind of "fine writing" that the crowd can follow. But Dorothy Richardson's Miriam is so entirely free from this that she does not even betray a conscious suppression of it by erring on the other side. Her attitude to herself is neither mock-modest nor erotically sentimental. It is a fascinating compound of the most mystical sensationalism and the most natural, honest, realistic analysis.

One deeply rooted trait in Miriam stems backwards, it is hard not to feel, directly to her author. I refer to her abnormal ear for musical euphonies and dissonances. Like Joyce, Miss Richardson is a born philologist; but, unlike Joyce, she uses her talent for word-coining not as an end in itself, full of metaphysical and scholastic revelations as to the cosmic constitution of things, but as a short-cut to the understanding and the exposition of human character. She is more than a

philologist; she is a purist in the "King's English," and all deviations from this perfect speech strike her as both whimsically illuminating and a deplorable lapse from the true æsthetic standard. They appeal, too, to a vigorous and lively sense of humour in her; a humour sometimes as mischievous as a romping young girl's and sometimes as austere as a magisterial scholar. She is indeed a most sardonic mimic; and these mimicries of deviations from "King's English" play a larger part in her method than they do in any other living writer that I know of. It is not only a matter of coining new words for subtle feelings. It is a matter of expressing—by the humour of clipping words and tumbling and towzling words —many shades of affectional and pathetical understandings and misunderstandings between intimate relations and friends. In this humorous breaking up of the dignity of the language, in this lively mimicry of the actual sound of human speech, Dorothy Richardson is profoundly English. She is English, too, in a much deeper and more important matter, to which it is very necessary that critical allusion should be made, if we are to understand her underlying psychology. I refer to her contempt for the sort of human-too-human melodrama which has had such an appeal to writers of the Latin race. She gets rid of this human melodrama in a way that would cause, one feels, much nervous irritation to any French or to any Italian reader. Where Latin writers—even the most cynical—display passionate serious-

ness she will ramble off, at any tangent, into all manner of whimsical, irresponsible *jeux d'esprit*, and where they—even the most sentimental—display levity she will display a profound, eager and disconcerting earnestness. Deeply English is her steady, persistent, undeviating preference for *the sensation of life* at all costs over the sentiment, or the passion, of the appropriate *gesture*.

It is a queer and significant thing that you either love Dorothy Richardson's writings deeply, quietly, intimately—like a large and yet minutely-detailed landscape by Hobbema—or you just find them "dull." Strange to think that there are so many people in the world who would find them to be *just that* of all things! These must be the "too-human" gregarious people—not precisely, not necessarily, stupid, but obtuse in *one* direction, people not exactly philistine but going about with that one window, that one door, of their soul, always shut—the people who have so much preferred the human to the non-human that the non-human has almost, in *its* secret pride, taken itself off, out of their consciousness, altogether! This is, as has been hinted above, the one, great, diffused, triumphant secret, emerging from this unfinished *Pilgrimage*, that there is something waiting, for every lonely spirit, in the quietness of the non-human, of the inanimate, waiting always there and ready to do much more than soothe and reassure; ready, in fact, to summon you forth, like Alice or like Jack, *through* the

looking-glass or *up* the bean-stalk, into that inner fairy-land of a reality within reality, which is better than any future heaven; but which *may* be, for all anyone can tell, the real heaven into which we all shall fall, or rise, when our last breath has left our body. What good luck to belong to the profane freemasonry of that irresponsible, happy, inner-circle, who, all their lives, have the clue to this "Great Good Place"! In one respect these volumes contain a tragedy as appalling as Dante's Inferno; for though Miriam, we know, like the wayfarer in the Inferno, will herself come forth "to re-behold the stars," there remain those others who never can, those others, like the despairing little servant Flora and the unhappy half-foreigner Julia, whom we look at and pass under Miriam's guidance. Only those of us who know these volumes well get the full implication of the fate of some of these useful figures—and some of them are very near to Miriam Henderson's heart—a fate that the author pities so profoundly that the way she writes about them makes us feel—as we now and then do in real life and as we do when we are reading Dostoievsky—that *if there is not another life* after this life it is all a ghastly shame and a disgrace, in spite of a few people's good luck.

Dorothy Richardson, as I have already said, belongs to the company of those writers who, like Dostoievsky, are not limited to what is called "the art of the novel," but who are concerned with digging at the root of the great mystic

Mandrake that grows in the Cimmerian land beyond sun and moon. After all it is possible that the astonishing "verisimilitude" she evokes is far less based upon real remembered actuality than seems to appear. It may easily be her realistic artfulness that makes everything seem, like Rosemary, "for remembrance." Certainly if they were only nice, refined, selected transcripts of life that come up—like the little green growths adhering to a sod of earth above a gleaming shade—when she sinks into her subconscious being, there would not be half this convincingness. *That* is the answer to the fastidious ones and the vicious ones who are so often shocked as they turn her pages. It is just these unweeded, unraked-over lumps of raw sod, that give to her magical wild-flowers their overpowering fragrance. Certainly she is one of the master-realists of our tongue; and if there were not so many passages that the frivolous could call "dull" this realism would not work its gradual, its insidious, its saturating spell upon our minds.

One grand advantage does the peculiar *proud-humbleness* of this writer give her above her sophisticated contemporaries—above Virginia Woolf, above the Sitwells, above Aldous Huxley. It enables her to retain her strong, fresh, exuberant, child-like zest for the old simple great things in philosophy and literature. She has not any need, as so many of us seem to have in these jaded days, to stir up her response to life by all manner of tricky "originalities." There is a

certain obstinate, humorous, massive, deliberate *naiveté* about her approach to life that is not in the least degree ashamed of appearing pedantic. In this matter she is a true disciple of the wise Goethe. And it is just this refusal to play tricks with her natural intelligence that enables her authentic originality to sprout forth spontaneously, at its own sweet will, and that gives it, when it does so, that calm, magical, oracular quality that makes one think of those Pre-Socratic "logoi" of the old, great, natural philosophers, from whose vision of truth the direct, concrete, feminine insight has not been yet squeezed out by any dry, syllogistic, super-masculine Aristotle. The last of the nine volumes—or "chapters" if you will—of Miriam's *Pilgrimage* finds her pausing to look round, as it were, and take stock of what she has attained out of so many sharp experiences; and this pause, in a sort of quiet Pisgah contemplation, is represented by the snowy heights and the lonely tobogganing of *Oberland*. Here Miriam meets an entirely new set of people, in entirely new surroundings, and one watches a little anxiously to see how she will feel, how she will behave. All is well. One need not have been nervous. London is still faithfully there in the background of her consciousness, lodged there still in the deepest core of her inalienable self. And, with London as its secret sanctuary, her strong, un-doctrinaire, feminine socialism, and all her indignant awareness of "the armies of the homeless and the unfed" gather themselves

together and harden themselves for resistance, among so many lovely sights, and among these rich inexperienced holiday-makers. Mrs. Harcourt, Eaden, the little Daphne, all these (like water-colour sketches suddenly come to life in a high mountain-lodge), rouse her to put forth the new integrity, the new independence which she has so desperately gained. But all these, like faint brownish blotches of humanity against the white snow, she escapes from even while they arrest her and while she influences them. Yet Switzerland gave her what she wanted, what she had come there to seek—"fresh interpretations of familiar thought." In many ways, hard to define, Miriam found herself "grown-up." Not for nothing, with that background of untraversed snow, does she—characteristically enough—burst out into a eulogy upon *soap!* With an almost Nietzchean detachment, in that high cold air, she watches her chance-given companions; and here, in her re-bound from a chance-roused argument she articulates, crystallizes, holds up in relief between the white snow and the cold sky, her "anti-man" conclusions. Directly opposite to Nietzsche's male-invalid attacks upon women are these austere matriarchal thoughts. Man's works of art—composed for the praise of other men and all about "meanings" in life and "purposes" of life, in place of Life Itself—are they the only things in existence that will be "immortal"? From those high snows, in her renewed defiance of the "philosophies" of men,

came back to her, stronger than ever in th frozen silence, the old feminine battle-cry of he free soul. "It was as if all her life she ha travelled towards this radiance and was nov within it, clear of the past, at an ultimate des tination."

May 1931.