APPENDIX No. 3.

THE TALES

In readableness, in sheer artistic finish, the tales of D.H. Lawrence are superior to his novels. Swift and straight to the point in narration, well pruned and right in structure, they reveal an incomparable objectivity and poise, often a sense of light irony, a horrible supernatural grin at times, but always an unfailingly an air of artistic ease and assurance. Though they lack, by the very nature of the canvas, the depth and intensity of his novels, they are distinguished by a certain smartness, and a certain first-shot precision as against the incremental repetition of his novels. They are, however, unlike the Pensies, which are naive attempts to record the "transcendent liveliness of the immediate present."

Since the tales do not adequately mirror the development, the sweat and agony of the artist, it is not necessary to follow the method adopted so far. Some of the stories, however, may be barely mentioned here, with the sole purpose of indicating the recurring Lawrentian themes and "conflicts." The fifty tales that he wrote may be grouped under five headings: stories which -

1) contain an autobiographical element, such as

A Modern Lover, The Shades of Spring and

The Second Best;
(2) deal with the phallic polarity and pull, and the evil effects of sex-suppression: Adam and Eve, The Blind Men, You Touched Me, None of That, Samson and Delilah, Daughters of The Vicar, Horse Dealer's Daughter, The Princes, The Lovely Lady, Mother and Daughter, Sun, etc.

(3) record matters rather trivial and local, such as A Sack Collier, Strike Pay, Her Turn, Tickets Please, Monkey Bites;

(4) contain a reference to war, such as The Prussian Officer, England, By England;

(5) have a supernatural air, such as The Border Line, Glad Ghosts, The Last Laugh, A Fragment of Striped Glass.

A Modern Lover and The Shades of Spring contain more or less the same situation with variations in the ending of the tales. Both these stories are free from any overtones. In A Modern Lover, the girl's difficult position, while the old lover talks to the new one, is precisely conveyed. The three characters are vividly portrayed. The transition from the world of poetry to the warmth of a real kiss, is revealed retrospectively. Incidentally, it contains a crisp report about the books that influenced early Lawrence.
"There, by that hearth, they had threshed the harvest of their youth's experience, gradually burning the chaff of sentimentality and false romance that covered the real grain of life. How infinitely far away, now seemed Jane Eyre and George Eliot. These had marked the beginnings. He smiled as he traced the graph onwards, plotting the points with Carlyle, and Ruskin, Schopenhauer and Darwin and Huxley, Omar Khayyam, the Russians, Ibsen and Balzac; then Guy de Maupassant and Madame Bovary. Since then had come only Nietzsche and William James.”

The new lover, Mr. Vickers, is old-fashioned and inarticulate. He cannot be a serious rival to Mr. Mersham, who has shared, three years before, glorious moments of poetry, mirth and merriment with Muriel. Mr. Mersham, the modern lover, can never be blindly in love, though he feels sad that his girl is swerving away from him. He recognises in her the woman, "defensive, playing the coward against her own inclinations, and even against her knowledge." At the end of the story, she is overcome with "grief and fear and a little resentment." He says good-bye with a heavy heart; but she does not.

"The Shades of Spring" is a variation on the same situation. Syson, the first lover of Hilda Millership, meets by chance Arthur Pilbeam, the gamekeeper and present lover of Hilda. Syson is now married, but he has kept up correspondence with Hilda. The illusion of old love and friendship is destroyed, when she reveals that she gave

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herself to the gamekeeper on the day when Syson got married. She reproaches him for getting everything from her and finally discarding her. Syson says that it was she who wanted him to rise in society, but every success of his had brought a separation between them. Her counter-charge is that he was a wilful child always wishing for a change. Syson feels a pain inside his breast. He remembers a poem of William Morris,

"there in the Chapel of Lyonesse a knight lay wounded, with the truncheon of a spear deep in his breast, lying always as dead, yet did not die, while day after day the coloured sunlight dipped from the painted window across the channel, and passed away. He knew now it never had been true,—not even for a moment,—that which was between him and her. The truth had stood apart all the time."

These two short stories sharply bring various bits of *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The image of a gamekeeper, the woods, and a hut in it, and a duplicate key and crippling rheumatism are to appear again, fifteen years later in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. These images must have been burnt deep on the adolescent mind of the artist, and a study of their incubation and sprouting would reveal a part of the mystery of the creative process.
"Samson and Delilah" presents the story of a man who has deserted his wife, and who now comes back to her after fifteen years. She is running a bar for her living. It is a successful story, vividly and completely describing the situation. But F.R. Lewis's enthusiastic and high-strung eulogy of it, though not wrong, reminds one of Wordsworth's glorification of the child as the best philosopher in the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality." "For its effects depend upon," Dr. F.R. Lewis writes, "the working of vibrations, depth and potencies — of psychic field of forces — that it takes a Lawrence to register .... The higher value communicated to us seems, nevertheless, to inhere implicitly and inevitably in the presented persons and facts——" This is the amazing acrobatics of a hyper-sensitive critic. He finds more than what is really there.

"Daughters of the Vicar" is a longish story of a girl who takes a fancy for a young man below her social status and is happily married to him. "The Thorn in the Flesh" is the fear that a housemaid feels when she shelters her fiancée who is wanted by the law for accidentally killing his sergeant. "The Lovely Lady" describes the terrible will of a mother, who has been indirectly responsible for the death of her first son. Under her will-power, the second son is also in the same death process. But the daughter-in-law breaks this spell by a cleverly managed
ventriloquism. "The Overtone" describes the married life of Mr. and Mrs. Rainshaw, who are separated by mutual distrust and by the death of Pen in both of them. "None of That" tells of an American sophisticated lady, who has "none of that" (the instinctive) and is purely mental; she is fascinated by the bull-fighter, Cuesta, who in his bedroom hands her over to half a dozen of his bull-ring gang.

"The Princess" is about a cold, passionless girl, who visits the Rockies for the mental thrill of it, and is imprisoned by her guide Romero, who has gone mad. Romero is shot by two wandering horsemen, and the princess is saved. "The Woman Who Rode Away," narrates the story of a woman who deserts her husband, because her husband, in spite of his admiration for her, was never, physically and mentally real. "Only morally he swayed her, downed her, kept her in an invincible slavery." She is taken prisoner by the strange Indians of the mountains, and is sacrificed by them to the strange gods.

"The Horse Deshay's Daughter" and "The Virgin And The Gipsy" are basically similar in their themes and plots. They are happy tales of love and life triumphing over the
anti-life elements of the proverbial aunts, and of the society. Mabel, of the Horse Dealer's Daughter, in disgust and despair, thinks of committing suicide by drowning, but she is reached by a young doctor; she loves him and he accepts her. *The Virgin and The Gipsy* is a short novel. The Vicar's wife, Cynthia, has deserted him. Aunt Cisse controls the entire house by emphasising in a hush-hush fashion the impropriety of the Cynthia affair. But Yvette, the younger of the two daughters of the Vicar, develops contact with a gypsy. There is an unexpected flood, for the dam across the water reservoir has collapsed. The gipsy saves Yvette's life, but the flood has killed the old aunt.

Another short novel, *The Fox*, is also a story of love and mating. Jill and Ellen run a farm. Henry visits them. Ellen and Henry are drawn together, which disturbs Jill, just as the fox has been disturbing their farm. Henry wills the death of Jill, the cold anti-life element. It fortunately so happens that, while Henry is cutting the branch of a tree, the branch of the tree falls on Jill, and she dies—which leaves Henry and Ellen free and triumphant.

*The Fox, and The Virgin and The Gipsy* are perfect, blemishless artistic creations. They also point to the romanticism that is at the heart of Lawrence. This element
of romanticism is manifest in the removal of the unwanted element of life (i.e., Aunt Cissie and Jill Bancroft) by accidents which are wished for, if not willed. Love among the Havestacks is another happy story of love, where there is not even this much of obstacle.

The same method of removing the unwanted character is noticed in the short novel, The Captain’s Doll. The Captain’s wife dies of an “accident” by jumping down from the window of a hotel. But there is another theme, of rectifying the wrong attitude. The Captain expects Hennele to be his doll, always adoring him. Hennele violently protests; but they are drawn together, nevertheless.

The Lady Bird was composed in 1921-22, and it is again about the philanthropic mother and her daughter. The daughter has married an adoring husband, “whereas she needs a dare devil.” Her husband is away from England on war-duty, and she helps the patients in the hospital. She meets Count Dionys, a war prisoner now in the hospital. He is a natural aristocrat, a “Pharaoh,” a king of darkness. The contrast between Count Dionys and Lady Daphne’s husband, Major Apsey, is illustrative. Apsey stands for all that Lawrence hates; Apsey tells his wife that sex is a mistake. The Count is a guest for a few days at the house of Lady Daphne and Major Apsey. His presence has awakened
her. She was the Count's wife in darkness.

"It was to the Count she belonged. This had decided itself in her down to the depth of her soul. If she could not marry him and be his wife in the world, it had nevertheless happened to her for ever." 4

The story ends with the same message as that of Aaron's Rod, the novel of this period: "A man can only be happy following his own inmost need." The story is unique for its evocative powers. There is a clever manipulation of the details to give the required total effect.

The Man Who Died is the last story written by Lawrence in 1928. It is unique in many respects. Thematically, it does not mark any further progress. The narrative style is superb, the atmosphere created is unprecedented of its kind; and its "objective correlative" is a tour de force. Its incantatory effect, its dreamlike movements, its vivid actuality impregnated with a fabulous remoteness, its combination of the exotic and the religious element, its symbolical suggestiveness are a testimony to the great artistic talents of Lawrence. The story lends itself very easily to an attempt to suck philosophy and religion out of it, for the story employs certain mythological words and images.

The man who is supposed to have died rises again, resurrected as it were. He is picked up by a peasant, who has gone out in search of his missing cock (the core of maleness). He is the guest of the peasant for some time. His former wife, and his mother and another woman he knew happen to meet him, but he has renounced his former life, his former "salvation." The Messiah is not risen. His youth is dead:

"This man was middle-aged and disillusioned, with a certain terrible indifference, and resoluteness which love would never conquer." 5

"But now he knew that virginity is a form of greed; and that the body rises again to give and to take, to take and to give, ungreedily." 6

Later he is found near Egypt, on an island. He sees a boy copulating with a girl. He is taken to the Lady, Isis of the island. She anoints his wounded body, and as a result, his body is whole and strong again. She, who was waiting for him, offers herself to him:

"He untied the string on the linen tunic and slipped the garment down, till he saw the white glow of her white-gold breasts. And he touched them, and he felt his life go molten. "Father!" he said, "why did you hide this from me?" "And he touched her with the poignancy of wonder, and the marvellous piercing transcendence of desire. "Io," he said, "this is beyond prayer." It was the deep interfolded warmth, warmth living and penetrable, the woman, the heart of the rose! My mansion is the intricate warm rose, my joy is this blossom." 7

Taken out of context this may look phoney and sentimental. But in the context, it is very powerful. The man moves away, with joy expressed thus:

"I have sowed the seed of my life and my resurrection, and put my touch for ever upon the choice woman of this day, and I carry her perfume in my flesh like essence of roses. She is dear to me in the middle of my being. But the gold am the flowing serpent is coiling up again, to sleep at the root of my tree." 8

This is untranslatable into any other mode of expression. For it contains elements of symbols, which "are organic units of consciousness" and a "dynamic complex of emotional experience," which cannot be explained away in simple mental or logical language. 9 The story has a fluidity not found anywhere else in the works of Lawrence. It is a beautiful story, attaining the level of myth, essaying to narrate a profound human experience and existence.

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