


Atom and Eve

A Consideration of Gertrude Stein's *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights*

 **m**ore intellectually accessible than much of Gertrude Stein's early work, *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* (1938) blends her unique approach to language and structure with universal themes, which for her included feminist ones. The play represents a transition between the two periods in Stein's oeuvre that Donald Sutherland has established: "The Play as Movement and Landscape, 1922–1932" and "The Melodic Drama, Melodrama and Opera, 1932–1946."¹ In *Doctor Faustus* Stein uses identifiable characters and attributes specific dialogue to them, but the language exhibits all the idiosyncrasies of her earlier work—lack of punctuation, multiple identities for major characters, disembodied voices, punning, non sequiturs, and repetition. As Michael Hoffman writes, Stein's "language now focuses on something other than its own structure; she shifts from [that] concern to such traditional literary problems as those of moral value and human identity; but she still maintains throughout the play a style readily identifiable as her own."²

Although several essays have been published on Stein's drama in general, and on *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* in particular, few attempts have been made to connect her plays with other avant-garde work of the period. Aside from its formal similarities to the European avant-garde—in particular to the Dadaist and Surrealist drama being written and produced in early twentieth-century Paris—and that avant-garde's much smaller dramatic offshoot in the United States—*Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* is important for its explicit violations of the three fundamental elements of conventional or traditional drama, as described in the introduction to this collection: psychology, causality, and morality or providentiality. Rather than merely mimic the techniques of the Dadaists or Surrealists, Stein disrupts this triad even further than either E. E. Cummings in *Him* (1927) or Thornton Wilder in his allegedly avant-garde *Our Town* (1938), thereby establishing herself as the foremost dramatist of the early American avant-garde.

In *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights*, not only has Gertrude Stein replaced spiritual uncertainty about the existence of God with the secular amorality of modern technology; she has also replaced the psychoscientific certainty about personality that is integrated yet developing with the inability of humanity either to comprehend itself or to evolve. In this play, all the characters are reduced to the same frustrating inability to understand the world or act in it. Marguerite-Ida—Helena Annabel (the central female character, whose dual names and fluctuating identity mark her as a kind of composite woman) cannot defend herself against the man from over the seas; the devil cannot control Doctor Faustus

By Sarah Bay-Cheng. Published here for the first time.

1 Donald Sutherland, *Gertrude Stein: A Bibliography of Her Work*, 1951 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1976), 207.

2 Michael J. Hoffman, *Gertrude Stein* (Boston: Twayne, 1976), 85.

(even long enough to convince him that he has a soul); Faustus cannot regulate the lights once he has created them, and at the end of the play he fails to convince Marguerite-Ida and Helena Annabel to accompany him to hell. Neither the dog nor the boy has any power over his own life; they are manipulated by Faust—and ultimately killed by him.

Like Wilder's *Our Town*, *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* thus investigates the triumph of technology and the role of God in modern life. But rather than offer romantic nostalgia and spiritual redemption to a Depression-weary and war-wary American public, in the form of isolation—and isolationism—in a quaint New Hampshire town of the turn of the century, Stein portrays the impotence of human beings without God, without morals, and without a real sense of themselves. Indeed, in an almost Absurdist fashion, Stein's characters revel in their own frustration and ignorance. Faustus' frustrations with the world culminate in his desire to "go to hell," which neatly returns the play to its theological question—does Doctor Faustus have a soul? Paradoxically, Mephistopheles informs Faustus that he cannot enter hell without a soul, and Faustus has sold his. And, considering Stein's dismissal of traditional Judeo-Christian theology as well as conventional dramatic suspense, it should come as no surprise that she begins her play after the central religious crisis—Faustus' decision to sell his soul to the devil for knowledge—which in Goethe's or Marlowe's dramatization of the Faust legend serves as the turning point.

In order to enter hell, in any event, Faustus is told that he must commit a sin. When he asks, "What sin, how can I without a soul commit a sin," Mephistopheles peremptorily replies, "Kill anything" (116). Faust then kills his companions, the boy and the dog, and descends into hell, where he wants to go in order to escape the reality that he himself has created through his rejection of God in favor of technology. But, for Stein, the term "hell" describes that very technological reality (or nightmare): "Any light is just a light and now there is nothing more either by day or by night just a light" (91). The unrelenting light can be read as a modern analogue to the eternal fires of hell. This technological light has the capacity, with its heat and radiance (neither warm and nourishing like the sun nor gently haloed like candlelight), to overwhelm all other forms of light and, like the hell of theology, every type of faith.

Living in Europe during the 1930s, Stein thus reflects the anxiety of a continent only recently recovered from the first mechanized world war, yet now poised on the brink of a second, whose technological devastation and human destructiveness would beggar the imagination. Like other avant-garde writers of her time, she suggests that life cannot be completely understood, and she avers that no God exists to create moral order or to prevent humankind from self-extinction through technology. Again, like so many other avant-garde writers, Stein has lost faith in the traditional patriarchal God, but she has also lost faith both in unconventional feminine spirituality and, paradoxically, in the potential of any individual without absolute faith. Faust's "individual quest," after all, ends in murder, despair, and chaos. And the grim attitude that permeates Stein's *Doctor Faustus* will continue after World War II in the works of such writers as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, and Eugène Ionesco, who saw human-

kind's trust in a higher power as having been betrayed by the human folly—the hellfire of the Holocaust and atomic obliteration—of the last great war.

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See also Robinson, in the General Bibliography.

Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights

Gertrude Stein

ACT I

Faust standing at the door of his room, with his arms up at the door lintel looking out, behind him a blaze of electric light.

Just then Mephisto approaches and appears at the door.

Faustus growls out.— The devil what the devil what do I care if the devil is there.

Mephisto says.
Doctor Faustus.

But Doctor Faustus dear yes I am here.

What do I care there is no here nor there. What am I. I am Doctor Faustus who knows everything can do everything and you say it was through you but not at all, if I had not been in a hurry and if I had taken my time I would have known how to make white electric light and day-light and night light and what did I do I saw you miserable devil I saw you and I was deceived and I believed miserable devil I thought I needed you, and I thought I was tempted by the devil and I know no temptation is tempting unless the devil tells you so. And you wanted my soul what the hell did you want my soul for, how do you know I have a soul, who says so nobody says so but you the devil and everybody knows the devil is all lies, so how do you know how do I know that I have a soul to sell how do you know Mr.

Reprinted from Gertrude Stein, *Last Operas and Plays*, ed. Carl Van Vechten (New York: Rinehart, 1949), 89–118. Peter Owen Ltd., London.

Devil oh Mr. Devil how can you tell you can not tell anything and I I who know everything I keep on having so much light that light is not bright and what after all is the use of light, you can see just as well without it, you can go around just as well without it you can get up and go to bed just as well without it, and I I wanted to make it and the devil take it yes you devil you do not even want it and I sold my soul to make it. I have made it but have I a soul to pay for it

Mephisto coming nearer and trying to pat his arm.

Yes dear Doctor Faustus yes of course you have a soul of course you have, do not believe them when they say the devil lies, you know the devil never lies, he deceives oh yes he deceives but that is not lying no dear please dear Doctor Faustus do not say the devil lies.

Doctor Faustus.

Who cares if you lie if you steal, there is no snake to grind under one's heel, there is no hope there is no death there is no life there is no breath, there just is every day all day and when there is no day there is no day, and anyway of what use is a devil unless he goes away, go away old devil go away, there is no use in a devil unless he goes away, how can you remember a devil unless he goes away, oh devil there is no use in your coming to stay and now you are red at night which is not a delight and you are red in the morning which is not a warning go away devil go away or stay after all what can a devil say.

Mephisto.

A devil can smile a devil can while away whatever there is to give away, and now are you not proud Doctor Faustus yes you are you know you are you are the only one who knows what you know and it is I the devil who tells you so.

Faustus.

You fool you devil how can you know, how can you tell me so, if I am the only one who can know what I know then no devil can know what I know and no devil can tell me so and I could know without any soul to sell, without there being anything in hell. What I know I know, I know how I do what I do when I see the way through and always any day I will see another day and you old devil you know very well you never see any other way than just the way to hell, you only know one way. You only know one thing, you are never ready for anything, and I everything is always now and now and now perhaps through you I begin to know that it is all

just so, that light however bright will never be other than light, and any light is just a light and now there is nothing more either by day or by night but just a light. Oh you devil go to hell, that is all you know to tell, and who is interested in hell just a devil is interested in hell because that is all he can tell, whether I stamp or whether I cry whether I live or whether I die, I can know that all a devil can say is just about going to hell the same way, get out of here devil, it does not interest me whether you can buy or I can sell, get out of here devil just you go to hell.

Faustus gives him an awful kick, and Mephisto moves away and the electric lights just then begin to get very gay.

All right then

THE BALLET

Doctor Faustus sitting alone surrounded by electric lights.

His dog comes in and says

Thank you.

One of the electric lights goes out and again the dog says

Thank you.

The electric light that went out is replaced by a glow.

The dog murmurs.

My my what a sky.

And then he says

Thank you.

DOCTOR FAUSTUS'S SONG:

If I do it

If you do it

What is it.

Once again the dog says

Thank you.

A duet between Doctor Faustus and the dog about the electric light about the electric lights.

Bathe me

says Doctor Faustus

Bathe me

In the electric lights

During this time the electric lights come and go

What is it

says Doctor Faustus

Thank you
 says the dog.
 Just at this moment the electric lights get brighter and nothing
 comes
 Was it it
 says Doctor Faustus
 Faustus meditates he does not see the dog.
 Will it
 Will it
 Will it be
 Will it be it.
 Faustus sighs and repeats
 Will it be it.
 A duet between the dog and Faustus
 Will it be it
 Just it.
 At that moment the electric light gets pale again and in that
 moment Faustus shocked says
 It is it
 A little boy comes in and plays with the dog, the dog says
 Thank you.
 Doctor Faustus looks away from the electric lights and then he
 sings a song.

LET ME ALONE

Let me alone
 Oh let me alone
 Dog and boy let me alone oh let me alone
 Leave me alone
 Let me be alone
 little boy and dog
 let let me alone
 He sighs
 And as he sighs
 He says
 Dog and boy boy and dog leave me alone let me let me be alone.
 The dog says
 Thank you
 but does not look at Faustus
 A pause
 No words
 The dog says
 Thank you
 I say thank you

Thank you
 The little boy
 The day begins today
 The day
 The moon begins the day
 Doctor Faustus
 There is no moon today
 Dark silence
 You obey I obey
 There is no moon today.
 Silence
 and the dog says
 I obey I say
 Thank you any day
 The little boy says
 Once in a while they get up.
 Doctor Faustus says
 I shall not think
 I shall not
 No I shall not.
 Faustus addresses little boy and dog
 Night is better than day so please go away
 The boy says
 But say
 When the hay has to be cut every day then there is the devil to pay
 The dog starts and then he shrinks and says
 Thank you
 Faustus half turns and starts
 I hear her
 he says
 I hear her say
 Call to her to sing
 To sing all about
 to sing a song
 All about
 daylight and night light.
 Moonlight and starlight
 electric light and twilight
 every light as well.
 The electric lights glow and a chorus in the distance sings
 Her name is her name is her name is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel.
 Faustus sings
 I knew it I knew it the electric lights they told me so no dog can know no boy
 can know I cannot know they cannot know the electric lights they told me so
 I would not know I could not know who can know who can tell me so I know

you know they can know her name is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and when I tell oh when I tell oh when I when I when I tell, oh go away and go away and tell and tell and tell and tell, oh hell.

The electric lights commence to dance and one by one they go out and come in and the boy and the dog begin to sing.

Oh very well oh Doctor Faustus very very well oh very well, thank you says the dog oh very well says the boy her name her name is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel, I know says the dog I know says the boy I know says Doctor Faustus no no no no nobody can know what I know I know her name is not Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel, very well says the boy it is says the boy her name is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel, no no no says Doctor Faustus, yes yes yes says the dog, no says the boy yes says the dog, her name is not Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and she is not ready yet to sing about daylight and night light, moonlight and starlight electric light and twilight she is not she is not but she will be. She will not be says Doctor Faustus never never never, never will her name be Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel never never never never well as well never Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel never Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel.

There is a sudden hush and the distant chorus says
It might be it might be her name her name might be Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel it might be.

And Doctor Faustus says in a loud whisper
It might be but it is not, and the little boy says how do you know and Faustus says it might be it might not be not be not be, and as he says the last not be the dog says
Thank you.

SCENE II

I am I and my name is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel, and then oh then I could yes I could I could begin to cry but why why could I begin to cry.

And I am I and I am here and how do I know how wild the wild world is how wild the wild woods are the wood they call the woods the poor man's overcoat but do they cover me and if they do how wild they are wild and wild and wild they are, how do I know how wild woods are when I have never ever seen a wood before.

I wish (she whispered) I knew why woods are wild why animals are wild why I am I, why I can cry, I wish I wish I knew, I wish oh how I wish I knew. Once I am in I will never be through the woods are there and I am here and am I here or am I there, oh where oh where is here oh where oh where is there and animals wild animals are everywhere.

She sits down.

I wish (says she conversationally) I wish if I had a wish that when I sat down it would not be here but there there where I could have a chair there

where I would not have to look around fearfully everywhere there where a chair and a carpet underneath the chair would make me know that there is there, but here here everywhere there is nothing nothing like a carpet nothing like a chair, here it is wild everywhere I hear I hear everywhere that the woods are wild and I am here and here is here and here I am sitting without a chair without a carpet, oh help me to a carpet with a chair save me from the woods the wild woods everywhere where everything is wild wild and I I am not there I am here oh dear I am not there.

She stands up with her hands at her sides she opens and closes her eyes and opens them again.

If my eyes are open and my eyes are closed I see I see, I see no carpet I see no chair I see the wild woods everywhere, what good does it do me to close my eyes no good at all the woods the woods are there I close my eyes but the green is there and I open my eyes and I have to stare to be sure the green is there the green of the woods, I saw it when my eyes were closed I saw the wild woods everywhere and now I open my eyes and there there is the wild wood everywhere.

Would it do as well if my name were not Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel would it do as well I would give up even that for a carpet and a chair and to be not here but there, but (and she lets out a shriek,) I am here I am not there and I am Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and it is not well that I could tell what there is to tell what there is to see and what do I see and do I see it at all oh yes I do I call and call but yes I do I see it all oh dear oh dear oh dear yes I am here.

She says

In the distance there is daylight and near to there is none.

There is something under the leaves and Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel makes a quick turn and she sees that a viper has stung her.

In the distance there is daylight and near to there is none.

There is a rustling under the leaves and Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel makes a quick turn and she sees that a viper has stung her, she sees it and she says and what is it. There is no answer. Does it hurt she says and then she says no not really and she says was it a viper and she says how can I tell I never saw one before but is it she says and she stands up again and sits down and pulls down her stocking and says well it was not a bee not a busy bee no not, nor a mosquito nor a sting it was a bite and serpents bite yes they do perhaps it was one. Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel sits thinking and then she sees a country woman with a sickle coming. Have I she says have I been bitten, the woman comes nearer, have I says Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel have I have I been bitten. Have you been bitten answers the country woman, why yes it can happen, then I have been bitten says Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel why not if you have been is the answer.

They stand repeating have I and yes it does happen and then Marguerite

Ida and Helena Annabel says let me show you and the woman says oh yes but I have never seen anyone who has been bitten but let me see no I cannot tell she says but go away and do something, what shall I do said Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel do something to kill the poison, but what said Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel, a doctor can do it said the woman but what doctor said Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel, Doctor Faustus can do it said the woman, do you know him said Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel no of course I do not know him nobody does there is a dog, he says thank you said the woman and go and see him go go said the woman and Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel went.

As she went she began to sing.
 Do vipers sting do vipers bite
 If they bite with all their might
 Do they do they sting
 Or do they do they bite
 All right they bite if they bite with all their might.
 And I am I Marguerite Ida or am I Helena Annabel
 Oh well
 Am I Marguerite Ida or am I Helena Annabel
 Very well oh very well
 Am I Marguerite Ida very well am I Helena Annabel.

She stops she remembers the viper and in a whisper she says was it a sting was it a bite am I all right; was it a sting was it a bite, all right was it a sting, oh or was it a bite.

She moves away and then suddenly she stops.
 Will he tell
 Will he tell that I am Marguerite Ida that I am Helena Annabel.
 Will he tell
 And then she stops again
 And the bite might he make it a bite.
 Doctor Faustus a queer name
 Might he make it a bite
 And so she disappears.

SCENE III

Doctor Faustus the dog and the boy all sleeping, the dog dreaming says thickly

Thank you, thank you thank you thank you thank you, thank you thank you.

Doctor Faustus turns and murmurs
 Man and dog dog and man each one can tell it all like a ball with a caress no tenderness, man and dog just the same each one can take the blame each one can well as well tell it all as they can, man and dog, well well man and dog what is the difference between a man and a dog when I say none do I go away does he go away go away to stay no nobody goes away the dog the boy

they can stay I can go away go away where where there there where, dog and boy can annoy I can go say I go where do I go I go where I go, where is there there is where and all the day and all the night too it grew and grew and there is no way to say I and a dog and a boy, if a boy is to grow to be a man am I a boy am I a dog is a dog a boy is a boy a dog and what am I I cannot cry what am I oh what am I

And then he waits a moment and he says
 Oh what am I.

Just then in the distance there is a call
 Doctor Faustus Doctor Faustus are you there Doctor Faustus I am here
 Doctor Faustus I am coming there Doctor Faustus, there is where Doctor
 Faustus oh where is there Doctor Faustus say it Doctor Faustus are you there
 Doctor Faustus are you there.

The dog murmurs
 Thank you thank you
 and the boy says
 There is somebody of course there is somebody just there there is somebody
 somebody is there oh yes somebody is there.

and all together they say
 Where is there nobody says nobody is there. Somebody is there and nobody
 says that somebody is not there. Somebody somebody is there somebody
 somebody somebody somebody says there is where where is it where is it
 where is it where, here is here here is there somebody somebody says where
 is where.

Outside the voice says
 Doctor Faustus are you there Doctor Faustus any where, Doctor Faustus are
 you there.

And then there is a knock at the door.
 The electric lights glow softly and Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel
 comes in.

Well and yes well, and this is yes this is Doctor Faustus Doctor Doctor
 Faustus and he can and he can change a bite hold it tight make it not kill not
 kill Marguerite Ida not kill Helena Annabel and hell oh hell not a hell not
 well yes well Doctor Faustus can he can make it all well.

And then she says in a quiet voice.
 Doctor Faustus have you ever been to hell.
 Of course not she says of course you have not how could you sell your soul if
 you had ever been to hell of course not, no of course not.

Doctor Faustus tell me what did they give you when you sold your soul, not
 hell no of course not not hell.

And then she goes on.
 I am Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and a viper bit or stung it is very
 well begun and if it is so then oh oh I will die and as my soul has not been
 sold I Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel perhaps I will go to hell.

The dog sighs and says

Thank you

and the little boy coming nearer says
 what is a viper, tell me Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel I like you being
 Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel what is a viper do I know it very well or
 do I not know it very well please tell you are Marguerite Ida and Helena
 Annabel what is a viper.

Doctor Faustus says

Little boy and dog can be killed by a viper but Marguerite Ida and Helena
 Annabel not very well no not very well

(He bursts out)

Leave me alone

Let me be alone

Little boy and dog let me be alone, Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel let
 me be alone, I have no soul I had no soul I sold it sold it here there and
 everywhere.

What did I do I knew

I knew that there could be light not moonlight starlight daylight and can-
 dlelight, I knew I knew I saw the lightening light, I saw it light, I said I I must
 have that light, and what did I do oh what did I too I said I would sell my soul
 all through but I knew I knew that electric light was all true, and true oh yes
 it is true they took it that it was true that I sold my soul to them as well and so
 never never could I go to hell never never as well. Go away dog and boy go
 away Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel go away all who can die and go to
 heaven or hell go away oh go away go away leave me alone oh leave me
 alone. I said it I said it was the light I said I gave the light I said the lights are
 right and the day is bright little boy and dog leave me alone let me be alone.

The country woman with the sickle looks in at the window and sings
 Well well this is the Doctor Faustus and he has not gone to hell he has pretty
 lights and they light so very well and there is a dog and he says thank you and
 there is a little boy oh yes little boy there you are you just are there yes little
 boy you are and there is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and a viper did
 bite her, oh cure her Doctor Faustus cure her what is the use of your having
 been to hell if Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel is not to be all well.

And the chorus sings

What is the use Doctor Faustus what is the use what is the use of having been
 to hell if you cannot cure this only only this Marguerite Ida and Helena
 Annabel.

Doctor Faustus says

I think I have thought thought is not bought oh no thought is not bought I
 think I have thought and what have I bought I have bought thought, to think
 is not bought but I I have bought thought and so you come here you come
 you come here and here and here where can I say that not today not any day
 can I look and see, no no I cannot look no no I cannot see and you you say
 you are Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and I I cannot see I cannot see

Marguerite Ida and I cannot see Helena Annabel and you you are the two
 and I cannot cannot see you.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel

Do not see me Doctor Faustus do not see me it would terrify me if you did
 see do not see me no no do not see me I am Marguerite Ida and Helena
 Annabel but do not see me cure me Doctor Faustus do the viper bit the viper
 stung his sting was a bite and you you have the light cure me Doctor Faustus
 cure me do but do not see me, I see you but do not see me cure me do but do
 not see me I implore you.

Doctor Faustus

A dog says thank you but you you say do not see me cure me do but do not
 see me what shall I do.

He turns to the dog

The dog says

Thank you

and the boy says

What difference does it make to you if you do what difference oh what
 difference does it make to you if you do, whatever you do do whatever you do
 do what difference does it make to you if you do.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel

What difference does it make to you if you do what difference does it make to
 you but I a viper has had his bite and I I will die but you you cannot die you
 have sold your soul but I I have mine and a viper has come and he has bitten
 me and see see how the poison works see see how I must die, see how little by
 little it is coming to be high, higher and higher I must die oh Doctor Faustus
 what difference does it make to you what difference oh what difference
 but to me to me to me to me a viper has bitten me a bitter viper a viper has
 bitten me.

The dog

Oh Thank you thank you all all of you thank you thank you oh thank you
 everybody thank you he and we thank you, a viper has bitten you thank you
 thank you.

The boy

A viper has bitten her she knows it too a viper has bitten her believe it or not it
 is true, a viper has bitten her and if Doctor Faustus does not cure her it will
 be all through her a viper has bitten her a viper a viper.

Dog

Thank you

Woman at the window

A viper has bitten her and if Doctor Faustus does not cure her it will be all
 through her.

Chorus in the distance

Who is she

She has not gone to hell

Very well
 Very well
 She has not gone to hell
 Who is she
 Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel
 And what has happened to her
 A viper has bitten her
 And if Doctor Faustus does not cure her
 It will go all through her
 And he what does he say
 He says he cannot see her
 Why cannot he see her
 Because he cannot look at her
 He cannot look at Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel
 But he cannot cure her without seeing her
 They say yes yes
 And he says there is no witness
 And he says
 He can but he will not
 And she says he must and he will
 And the dog says thank you
 And the boy says very well
 And the woman says well cure her and she says she is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel.

There is silence the lights flicker and flicker, and Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel gets weaker and weaker and the poison stronger and stronger and suddenly the dog says startlingly

Thank you

Doctor Faustus says

I cannot see you
 The viper has forgotten you.
 The dog has said thank you
 The boy has said will you
 The woman has said
 Can you
 And you, you have said you are you
 Enough said.
 You are not dead.
 Enough said
 Enough said.
 You are not dead.
 No you are not dead
 Enough said
 Enough said
 You are not dead.

All join in enough said you are not dead you are not dead enough said yes enough said no you are not dead yes enough said, thank you yes enough said no you are not dead.

And at the last

In a low whisper

She says

I am Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and enough said I am not dead.

Curtain

ACT II

Some one comes and sings

Very

Very

Butter better very well

Butcher whether it will tell

Well is well and silver sell

Sell a salted almond to Nell

Which she will accept

And then

What does a fatty do

She does not pay for it.

No she does not

Does not pay for it.

By this time they know how to spell very

Very likely the whole thing is really extraordinary

Which is a great relief

All the time her name is Marguerite Ida Marguerite Ida

They drift in and they sing

Very likely the whole thing is extraordinary

Which is a great relief

All the time her name is Marguerite Ida

Marguerite Ida.

Then they converse about it.

Marguerite Ida is her name Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel who can tell if her name is Marguerite Ida or Helena Annabel

Sillies all that is what makes you tall.

To be tall means to say that everything else is layed away.

Of course her names is Marguerite Ida too and Helena Annabel as well.

A full chorus

Of course her names is Marguerite Ida too and Helena Annabel as well.

A deep voice asks

Would a viper have stung her if she had only had one name would he would he.

How do you know how do you know that a viper did sting her.

How could Doctor Faustus have cured her if there had not been something the matter with her.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel it is true her name is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel as well and a viper has stung her and Doctor Faustus has cured her, cured her cured her, he has sold his soul to hell cured her cured her cured he he has sold his soul to hell and her name is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and a viper had to bite her and Doctor Faustus had to cure her cure her cure her cure her.

The curtain at the corner rises and there she is Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and she has an artificial viper there beside her and a halo is around her not of electric light but of candlelight, and she sits there and waits.

The chorus sings

There she is
Is she there
Look and see
Is she there
Is she there
Anywhere
Look and see
Is she there
Yes she is there
There is there
She is there
Look and see
She is there.
There she is
There there
Where
Why there
Look and see there
There she is
And what is there
A viper is there
The viper that bit her
No silly no
How could he be there
This is not a viper
This is what is like a viper
She is there
And a viper did bite her
And Doctor Faustus did cure her
And now
And now

And now she is there
Where
Why there
Oh yes there.
Yes oh yes yes there.
There she is
Look and see
And the viper is there
And the light is there
Who gave her the light
Nobody did
Doctor Faustus sold his soul
And so the light came there
And did she sell her soul.
No silly he sold his soul
She had a viper bite her
She is there
Oh yes she is there
Look there
Yes there
She is there.

Marguerite Ida begins to sing

I sit and sit with my back to the sun I sat and sat with my back to the sun.
Marguerite Ida sat and sat with her back to the sun.
The sun oh the sun the lights are bright like the sunset and she sat with her back to the sun sat and sat

She sits

A very grand ballet of lights.
Nobody can know that it is so
They come from everywhere
By land by sea by air
They come from everywhere
To look at her there.
See how she sits
See how she eats
See how she lights,
The candle lights.
See how the viper there,
Cannot hurt her.
No indeed he cannot.
Nothing can touch her,
She has everything
And her soul,
Nothing can lose her,

See how they come
 See how they come
 To see her.
 See how they come.
 Watch
 They come by sea
 They come by land
 They come by air
 And she sits
 With her back to the sun
 One sun
 And she is one
 Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel as well.

They commence to come and more and more come and they come from
 the sea from the land and from the air.

And she sits.

A man comes from over the seas and a great many are around him

He sees her as she sits.

And he says

Pretty pretty dear

She is all my love and always here

And I am hers and she is mine

And I love her all the time

Pretty pretty pretty dear.

No says the chorus no.

She is she and the viper bit her

And Doctor Faustus cured her.

The man from over seas repeats

Pretty pretty pretty dear

She is all my love and always here

And I am hers and she is mine

And I love her all the time.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel suddenly hears something and says
 What is it.

He comes forward and says again

Pretty pretty pretty dear she is all my love and she is always here.

She sings slowly

You do or you do not.

He

Pretty pretty dear she is all my love and she is always here.

Well well he says well well and her name is Marguerite Ida and Helena
 Annabel and they all say it was a viper, what is a viper, a viper is a serpent and
 anybody has been bitten and not everybody dies and cries, and so why why
 say it all the time, I have been bitten I I I have been bitten by her bitten by

her there she sits with her back to the sun and I have won I have won her I
 have won her.

She sings a song

You do or you do not

You are or you are not

I am there is no not

But you you you

You are as you are not

He says

Do you do what you do because you knew all the way through that I I was
 coming to you answer me that.

She turns her back on him.

And he says

I am your sun oh very very well begun, you turn your back on your sun, I am
 your sun, I have won I have won I am your sun.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel rises. She holds the viper she says
 Is it you Doctor Faustus is it you, tell me man from over the sea are you he.

He laughs.

Are you afraid now afraid of me.

She says

Are you he.

He says

I am the only he and you are the only she and we are the only we.

Come come do you hear me come come, you must come to me, throw away
 the viper throw away the sun throw away the lights until there are none. I am
 not any one I am the only one, you have to have me because I am that one.

She looks very troubled and drops the viper but she instantly stoops and
 picks it up and some of the lights go out and she fusses about it.

And then suddenly she starts,

No one is one when there are two, look behind you look behind you you are
 not one you are two.

She faints.

And indeed behind the man of the seas is Mephistopheles and

with him is a boy and a

girl.

Together they sing the song the boy and the girl.

Mr. Viper think of me. He says you do she says you do and if you do dear Mr.

Viper if you do then it is all true he is a boy I am a girl it is all true dear dear

Mr. Viper think of me.

The chorus says in the back,

Dear dear Mr. Viper think of them one is a boy one is a girl dear dear viper
 dear dear viper think of them.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel still staring at the man
 from over the seas and Mephisto behind them.

She whispers,
They two I two they two that makes six it should be seven they two I two they
two five is heaven.

Mephisto says

And what if I ask what answer me what, I have a will of iron yes a will to do
what I do. I do what I do what I do, I do I do.

And he strides forward,

Where where where are you, what a to do, when a light is bright there is
moonlight, when a light is not so bright then it is daylight, and when a light is
no light then it is electric light, but you you have candlelight, who are you.

The ballet rushes in and out.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel lifts the viper and says

Lights are all right but the viper is my might.

Pooh says Mephisto, I despise a viper, the viper tries but the viper lies. Me they
cannot touch no not any such, a viper, ha ha a viper, a viper, ha ha, no the lights
the lights the candle lights, I know a light when I see a light, I work I work all
day and all night, I am the devil and day and night, I never sleep by any light by
any dark by any night, I never sleep not by day not by night, you cannot fool
me by candlelight, where is the real electric light woman answer me.

The little boy and girl creep closer, they sing.

Mr. Viper dear Mr. Viper, he is a boy I am a girl she is a girl I am a boy we do
not want to annoy but we do oh we do oh Mr. Viper yes we do we want you to
know that she is a girl that I am boy, oh yes Mr. Viper please Mr. Viper here
we are Mr. Viper listen to us Mr. Viper, oh please Mr. Viper it is not true
Mr. Viper what the devil says Mr. Viper that there is no Mr. Viper, please
Mr. Viper please Mr. Viper, she is a girl he is a boy please Mr. Viper you
are Mr. Viper please Mr. Viper please tell us so.

The man from over the seas smiles at them all, and says
It is lovely to be at ease.

Mephisto says

What do you know I am the devil and you do not listen to me I work and I
work by day and by night and you do not listen to me he and she she and he
do not listen to me you will see you will see, if I work day and night and I do I
do I work day and night, then you will see what you will see, look out look out
for me.

He rushes away

And Helena Annabel and Marguerite Ida shrinks back, and says to
them all

What does he say

And the man from over the seas says

Pretty pretty dear she is all my love and she is always here.

and then more slowly

I am the only he you are the only she and we are the only we,
and the chorus sings softly

And the viper did bite her and Doctor Faustus did cure her.

And the boy and girl sing softly.

Yes Mr. Viper he is a boy she is a girl yes Mr. Viper.

And the ballet of lights fades away.

Curtain

ACT III

SCENE I

Doctor Faustus' house

Faustus in his chair, the dog and the boy, the electric lights
are right but the room is dark.

Faustus

Yes they shine

They shine all the time.

I know they shine

I see them shine

And I am here

I have no fear

But what shall I do

I am all through

I cannot bear

To have no care

I like it bright

I do like it bright

Alright I like it bright,

But is it white

Or is it bright.

Dear dear

I do care

That nobody can share.

What if they do

It is all to me

Ah I do not like that word me,

Why not even if it does rhyme with she. I know all the words that rhyme with
bright with light with might with alright, I know them so that I cannot tell I
can spell but I cannot tell how much I need to not have that, not light not
sight, not light not night not alright, not night not sight not bright, no no not
night not sight not bright no no not bright.

There is a moment's silence and then the dog says

Thank you.

He turns around and then he says

Yes thank you.

And then he says

Not bright not night dear Doctor Faustus you are right, I am a dog yes I am just that I am I am a dog and I bay at the moon, I did yes I did I used to do it I used to bay at the moon I always used to do it and now now not any more, I cannot, of course I cannot, the electric lights they make it be that there is no night and if there is no night then there is no moon and if there is no moon I do not see it and if I do not see it I cannot bay at it.

The dog sighs and settles down to rest
and as he settles down he says

Thank you.

The little boy cuddles up close to him and says

Yes there is no moon and if there is a moon then we do not bay at the moon and if there is no moon then no one is crazy any more because it is the moon of course it is the moon that always made them be like that, say thank you doggie and I too I too with you will say thank you.

They softly murmur

Thank you thank you thank you too.

They all sleep in the dark with the electric light all bright,
and then at the window comes something.

Is it the moon says the dog is it the moon says the boy is it the moon do not wake me is it the moon says Faustus.

No says a woman no it is not it is not the moon, I am not the moon I am at the window Doctor Faustus do not you know what it is that is happening.

No answer.

Doctor Faustus do not you know what is happening.

Back of her a chorus

Doctor Faustus do not you know what is happening.

Still no answer

All together louder

Doctor Faustus do not you know do not you know what it is that is happening.

Doctor Faustus.

Go away woman and men, children and dogs moon and stars go away let me alone let me be alone no light is bright, I have no sight, go away woman and let me boy and dog let me be alone I need no light to tell me it is bright, go away go away, go away go away.

No says the woman no I am at the window and here I remain till you hear it all. Here we know because Doctor Faustus tells us so, that he only he can turn night into day but now they say, they say, (her voice rises to a screech) they say a woman can turn night into day, they say a woman and a viper bit her and did not hurt her and he showed her how and now she can turn night into day; Doctor Faustus oh Doctor Faustus say you are the only one who can turn night into day, oh Doctor Faustus yes do say that you are the only one who can turn night into day.

The chorus behind says

Oh Doctor Faustus oh Doctor Faustus do say that you are the only one who can turn night into day.

Faustus starts up confused he faces the woman, he says,

What is it you say.

And she says imploringly,

Oh Doctor Faustus do say you are the only one who can turn night into day.

Faustus slowly draws himself erect and says

Yes I do say I am the only one who can turn night into day.

And the woman and the chorus say,

He is the only one who can turn night into day.

And the dog says

He is the only one who can turn night into day, there is no moon any night or any day he is the only one to turn night into day,

and the little boy says

Yes he is the only one to turn night into day.

And the woman then says

But come Doctor Faustus come away come and see whether they say that they can turn night into day.

Who says

says Doctor Faustus

She says

says the woman

Who is she

says Doctor Faustus

The answer

Marguerite Ida or Helena Annabel

She

says Doctor Faustus

Who said I could not go to hell.

She she

says the woman

She she

says the chorus

Thank you

said the dog

Well

said Doctor Faustus

Well then I can go to hell, if she can turn night into day then I can go to hell, come on then come on we will go and see her and I will show her that I can go to hell, if she can turn night into day as they say then I am not the only one very well I am not the only one so Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel listen well you cannot but I can go to hell. Come on every one never again will I be alone come on come on every one.

They all leave.

SCENE II

The scene as before, Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel sitting with the man from over the seas their backs to the sun, the music to express a noonday hush.

Everybody dreamily saying

Mr. Viper please Mr. Viper,
some saying

Is he is he Doctor Faustus no he isn't no he isn't, is he is he is he all he loves her is he is he all she loves him, no one can remember anything but him, which is she and which is he sweetly after all there is no bee there is a viper such a nice sweet quiet one, nobody any body knows how to run, come any one come, see any one, some, come viper sun, we know no other any one, any one can forget a light, even an electric one but no one no one can forget a viper even a stuffed one no one and no one can forget the sun and no one can forget Doctor Faustus no no one and and no one can forget Thank you and the dog and no one can forget a little boy and no one can forget any one no no one.

(These words to be distributed among the chorus)
and the man from over seas murmurs dreamily

Pretty pretty dear here I am and you are here and yet and yet it would be better yet if you had more names and not only four in one let it be begun, forget it oh forget it pretty one, and if not I will forget that you are one yes I will yes I will pretty pretty one yes I will.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel stiffens a little

Well will you yes I will, no one can know when I do not tell them so that they cannot know anything they know, yes I know, I do know just what I can know, it is not there well anywhere, I cannot come not for any one I cannot say what is night and day but I am the only one who can know anything about any one, am I one dear dear am I one, who hears me knows me I am here and here I am, yes here I am.

The chorus gets more lively and says

Yes there she is

Dear me

says the man from over the seas.

Just then out of the gloom appear at the other end of the stage Faust and the boy and the dog, nobody sees them, just then in front of every one appears Mephisto, very excited and

sings

Which of you can dare to deceive me which of you he or she can dare to deceive me, I who have a will of iron I who make what will be happen I who can win men or women I who can be wherever I am which of you has been deceiving which of you she or he which of you has been deceiving me.

He shouts louder

If there is a light who has the right, I say I gave it to him, she says he gave it to

her or she does not say anything, I say I am Mephisto and what I have I do not give no not to any one, who has been in her who has been in him, I will win.

The boy and girl shrilly sing

She is she and he is he and we are we Mr. Viper do not forget to be. Please Mr. Viper do not forget to be, do not forget that she is she and that he is he please Mr. Viper do not forget me.

Faustus murmurs in a low voice

I sold my soul to make it bright with electric light and now no one not I not she not they not he are interested in that thing and I and I I cannot go to hell I have sold my soul to make a light and the light is bright but not interesting in my sight and I would oh yes I would I would rather go to hell be I with all my might and then go to hell oh yes alright.

Mephisto strides up to him and says

You deceived me.

I did not

says Faustus

Mephisto.

You deceived me and I am never deceived

Faust, you deceived me and I am always deceived,

Mephisto, you deceived me and I am never deceived.

Faustus

Well well let us forget it is not ready yet let us forget and now oh how how I want to be me myself all now, I do not care for light let it be however light, I do not care anything but to be well and to go to hell. Tell me oh devil tell me will she will Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel will she will she really will she go to hell.

Mephisto

I suppose so.

Faustus

Well then how dear devil how how can I who have no soul I sold it for a light how can I be I again alright and go to hell.

Mephisto

Commit a sin

Faustus

What sin, how can I without a soul commit a sin.

Mephisto

Kill anything

Faustus

Kill

Mephisto

Yes kill something oh yes kill anything.

Yes it is I who have been deceived I the devil whom no one can deceive yes it is I I who have been deceived.

Faustus

But if I kill what then will.

Mephisto

It is I who have an iron will.

Faustus

But if I kill what will happen then.

Mephisto

Oh go to hell.

Faustus

I will

He turns he sees the boy and dog he says

I will kill I will I will.

He whispers

I will kill I will I will.

He turns to the boy and dog and he says

Boy and dog I will kill you two I will kill I will I will boy and dog I will kill you kill you, the viper will kill you but it will be I who did it, you will die.

The dog says

Thank you, the light is so bright there is no moon tonight I cannot bay at the moon the viper will kill me. Thank you,

and the boy says

And I too, there is no day and night there is no dog tonight to say thank you the viper will kill me too, good-bye to you.

In the distance the voices of the boy and girl are heard saying Mr. Viper please listen to me he is a boy she is a girl.

There is a rustle the viper appears and the dog and the boy die.

Faustus

They are dead yes they are dead, dear dog dear boy yes you are dead you are forever ever ever dead and I I can because you die nobody can deny later I will go to hell very well very well I will go to hell Marguerite Ida Helena Annabel I come to tell to tell you that I can go to hell.

Mephisto

And I, while you cry I who do not deny that now you can go to hell have I nothing to do with you.

Faustus

No I am through with you I do not need the devil I can go to hell all alone. Leave me alone let me be alone I can go to hell all alone.

Mephisto

No listen to me now take her with you do I will make you young take her with you do Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel take her with you do.

Faustus

Is it true that I can be young.

Mephisto

Yes.

Faustus

All right.

He is young he approaches Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel who wakes up and looks at him. He says

Look well I am Doctor Faustus and I can go to hell.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel

You Doctor Faustus never never Doctor Faustus is old I was told and I saw it with my eyes he was old and could not go to hell and you are young and can go to hell, very well you are not Doctor Faustus never never.

Faustus

I am I am I killed the boy and dog when I was an old man and now I am a young man and you Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and you know it well and you know I can go to hell and I can take some one too and that some one will be you.

Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel

Never never, never never, you think you are so clever you think you can deceive, you think you can be old and you are young and old like any one but never never, I am Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and I know no man or devil no viper and no light I can be anything and everything and it is always always alright. No one can deceive me not a young man not an old man not a devil not a viper I am Marguerite Ida and Helena Annabel and never never will a young man be an old man and an old man be a young man, you are not Doctor Faustus no not ever never never

and she falls back fainting into the arms of the man from over the seas who sings

Pretty pretty pretty dear I am he and she is she and we are we, pretty pretty dear I am here yes I am here pretty pretty pretty dear.

Mephisto strides up

Always deceived always deceived I have a will of iron and I am always deceived always deceived come Doctor Faustus I have a will of iron and you will go to hell.

Faustus sings

Leave me alone let me be alone, dog and boy and dog leave me alone let me be alone

and he sinks into the darkness and it is all dark and the little boy and the

little girl sing

Please Mr. Viper listen to me he is he and she is she and we are we please

Mr. Viper listen to me.

Curtain

Plays

Gertrude Stein

In a book I wrote called *How to Write* I made a discovery which I considered fundamental, that sentences are not emotional and that paragraphs are. I found out about language that paragraphs are emotional and sentences are not and I found out something else about it. I found out that this difference was not a contradiction but a combination and that this combination causes one to think endlessly about sentences and paragraphs because the emotional paragraphs are made up of unemotional sentences.

I found out a fundamental thing about plays. The thing I found out about plays was too a combination and not a contradiction and it was something that makes one think endlessly about plays.

That something is this.

The thing that is fundamental about plays is that the scene as depicted on the stage is more often than not one might say it is almost always in syncoated time in relation to the emotion of anybody in the audience.

What this says is this.

Your sensation as one in the audience in relation to the play played before you your sensation I say your emotion concerning that play is always either behind or ahead of the play at which you are looking and to which you are listening. So your emotion as a member of the audience is never going on at the same time as the action of the play.

This thing the fact that your emotional time as an audience is not the same as the emotional time of the play is what makes one endlessly troubled

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about a play, because not only is there a thing to know as to why this is so but also there is a thing to know why perhaps it does not need to be so.

This is a thing to know and knowledge as anybody can know is a thing to get by getting.

And so I will try to tell you what I had to get and what perhaps I have gotten in plays and to do so I will tell you all that I have ever felt about plays or about any play.

Plays are either read or heard or seen.

And there then comes the question which comes first and which is first, reading or hearing or seeing a play.

I ask you.

What is knowledge. Of course knowledge is what you know and what you know is what you do know.

What do I know about plays.

In order to know one must always go back.

What was the first play I saw and was I then already bothered bothered about the different tempo there is in the play and in yourself and your emotion in having the play go on in front of you. I think I may say I may say I know that I was already troubled by this in that my first experience at a play. The thing seen and the emotion did not go on together.

This that the thing seen and the thing felt about the thing seen not going on at the same tempo is what makes the being at the theater something that makes anybody nervous.

The jazz bands made of this thing, the thing that makes you nervous at the theater, they made of this thing an end in itself. They made of this different tempo a something that was nothing but a difference in tempo between anybody and everybody including all those doing it and all those hearing and seeing it. In the theater of course this difference in tempo is less violent but still it is there and it does make anybody nervous.

In the first place at the theater there is the curtain and the curtain already makes one feel that one is not going to have the same tempo as the thing that is there behind the curtain. The emotion of you on one side of the curtain and what is on the other side of the curtain are not going to be going on together. One will always be behind or in front of the other.

Then also beside the curtain there is the audience and the fact that they are or will be or will not be in the way when the curtain goes up that too makes for nervousness and nervousness is the certain proof that the emotion of the one seeing and the emotion of the thing seen do not progress together. Nervousness consists in needing to go faster or to go slower so as to get together. It is that that makes anybody feel nervous.

And is it a mistake that that is what the theater is or is it not.

There are things that are exciting as the theater is exciting but do they make you nervous or do they not, and if they do and if they do not why do they and why do they not.

Let us think of three different kinds of things that are exciting and that make or do not make one nervous. First any scene which is a real scene something real that is happening in which one takes part as an actor in that scene. Second any book that is exciting, third the theater at which one sees an exciting action in which one does not take part.

Now in a real scene in which one takes part at which one is an actor what does one feel as to time and what is it that does or does not make one nervous.

And is your feeling at such a time ahead and behind the action the way it is when you are at the theater. It is the same and it is not. But more not.

If you are taking part in an actual violent scene, and you talk and they or he or she talks and it goes on and it gets more exciting and finally then it happens, whatever it is that does happen then when it happens then at the moment of happening is it a relief from the excitement or is it a completion of the excitement. In the real thing it is a completion of the excitement, in the theater it is a relief from the excitement, and in that difference the difference between completion and relief is the difference between emotion concerning a thing seen on the stage and the emotion concerning a real presentation that is really something happening.

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This then is the fundamental difference between excitement in real life and on the stage, in real life it culminates in a sense of completion whether an exciting act or an exciting emotion has been done or not, and on the stage the exciting climax is a relief. And the memory of the two things is different. As you go over the detail that leads to culmination of any scene in real life, you find that each time you cannot get completion, but you can get relief and so already your memory of any exciting scene in which you have taken part turns it into the thing seen or heard not the thing felt. You have as I say as the result relief rather than culmination. Relief from excitement, rather than the climax of excitement. In this respect an exciting story does the same only in the exciting story, you so to speak have control of it as you have in your memory of a really exciting scene, it is not as it is on the stage a thing over which you have no real control. You can with an exciting story find out the end and so begin over again just as you can in remembering an exciting scene, but the stage is different, it is not real and yet it is not within your control as the memory of an exciting thing is or the reading of an exciting book. No matter how well you know the end of the stage story it is nevertheless not within your control as the memory of an exciting thing is or as the written story of an exciting thing is or even in a curious way the heard story of an exciting thing is. And what is the reason for this difference and what does it do to the stage. It makes for nervousness that of course, and the cause of nervousness is the fact that the emotion of the one seeing the play is always ahead or behind the play.

Beside all this there is a thing to be realized and that is how you are being

introduced to the characters who take part in an exciting action even when you yourself are one of the actors. And this too has to be very much thought about. And thought about in relation to an exciting real thing to an exciting book, to an exciting theater. How are you introduced to the characters.

There are then the three ways of having something be exciting, and the excitement may or may not make one nervous, a book being read that is exciting, a scene in which one takes part or an action in which one takes part and the theater at which one looks on.

In each case the excitement and the nervousness and the being behind or ahead in one's feeling is different.

First anything exciting in which one takes part. There one progresses forward and back emotionally and at the supreme crisis of the scene the scene in which one takes part, in which one's hopes and loves and fears take part at the extreme crisis of this thing one is almost one with one's emotions, the action and the emotion go together, there is but just a moment of this coordination but it does exist otherwise there is no completion as one has no result, no result of a scene in which one has taken part, and so instinctively when any people are living an exciting moment one with another they go on and on and on until the thing has come together the emotion the action the excitement and that is the way it is when there is any violence either of loving or hating or quarreling or losing or succeeding. But there is, there has to be the moment of it all being abreast the emotion, the excitement and the action otherwise there would be no succeeding and no failing and so no one would go on living, why yes of course not.

That is life the way it is lived.

Why yes of course and there is a reasonable and sometimes an unreasonable and very often not a reasonable amount of excitement in everybody's life and when it happens it happens in that way.

Now when you read a book how is it. Well it is not exactly like that no not even when a book is even more exciting than any excitement one has ever had. In the first place one can always look at the end of the book and so quiet down one's excitement. The excitement having been quieted down one can enjoy the excitement just as any one can enjoy the excitement of anything having happened to them by remembering and so tasting it over and over again but each time less intensely and each time until it is all over. Those who like to read books over and over get continuously this sensation of the excitement as if it were a pleasant distant thunder that rolls and rolls and the more it rolls well the further it rolls the pleasanter until it does not roll any more. That is until at last you have read the book so often that it no longer holds any excitement not even ever so faintly and then you have to wait until you have forgotten it and you can begin it again.

Now the theater has still another way of being all this to you, the thing causing your emotion and the excitement in connection with it.

Of course lots of other things can do these things to lots of other people

that is to say excite lots of people but as I have said knowledge is what you know and I naturally tell you what I know, as I do so very essentially believe in knowledge.

So then once again what does the theater do and how does it do it.

What happens on the stage and how and how does one feel about it. That is the thing to know, to know and to tell it as so.

Is the thing seen or the thing heard the thing that makes most of its impression upon you at the theater. How much has the hearing to do with it and how little. Does the thing heard replace the thing seen. Does it help or does it interfere with it.

And when you are taking part in something really happening that is exciting, how is it. Does the thing seen or does the thing heard affect you and affect you at the same time or in the same degree or does it not. Can you wait to hear or can you wait to see and which excites you the most. And what has either one to do with the completion of the excitement when the excitement is a real excitement that is excited by something really happening. And then little by little does the hearing replace the seeing or does the seeing replace the hearing. Do they go together or do they not. And when the exciting something in which you have taken part arrives at its completion does the hearing replace the seeing or does it not. Does the seeing replace the hearing or does it not. Or do they both go on together.

All this is very important, and important for me and important, just important. It has of course a great deal to do with the theater a great great deal.

In connection with reading an exciting book the thing is again more complicated than just seeing, because of course in reading one sees but one also hears and when the story is at its most exciting does one hear more than one sees or does one not do so.

I am posing all these questions to you because of course in writing, all these things are things that are really most entirely really exciting. But of course yes.

And in asking a question one is not answering but one is as one may say deciding about knowing. Knowing is what you know and in asking these questions although there is no one who answers these questions there is in them that there is knowledge. Knowledge is what you know.

And now is the thing seen or the thing heard the thing that makes most of its impression upon you at the theater, and does as the scene on the theater proceeds does the hearing take the place of seeing as perhaps it does when something real is being most exciting, or does seeing take the place of hearing as it perhaps does when anything real is happening or does the mixture get to be more mixed seeing and hearing as perhaps it does when anything really exciting is really happening.

If the emotion of the person looking at the theater does or does not do what it would do if it were really a real something that was happening and

they were taking part in it or they were looking at it, when the emotion of the person looking on at the theater comes then at the climax to relief rather than completion has the mixture of seeing and hearing something to do with this and does this mixture have something to do with the nervousness of the emotion at the theater which has perhaps to do with the fact that the emotion of the person at the theater is always behind and ahead of the scene at the theater but not with it.

There are then quite a number of things that any one does or does not know.

Does the thing heard replace the thing seen does it help it or does it interfere with it. Does the thing seen replace the thing heard or does it help or does it interfere with it.

I suppose one might have gotten to know a good deal about these things from the cinema and how it changed from sight to sound, and how much before there was real sound how much of the sight was sound or how much it was not. In other words the cinema undoubtedly had a new way of understanding sight and sound in relation to emotion and time.

I may say that as a matter of fact the thing which has induced a person like myself to constantly think about the theater from the standpoint of sight and sound and its relation to emotion and time, rather than in relation to story and action is the same as you may say general form of conception as the inevitable experiments made by the cinema although the method of doing so has naturally nothing to do with the other. I myself never go to the cinema or hardly ever practically never and the cinema has never read my work or hardly ever. The fact remains that there is the same impulse to solve the problem of time in relation to emotion and the relation of the scene to the emotion of the audience in the one case as in the other. There is the same impulse to solve the problem of the relation of seeing and hearing in the one case as in the other.

It is in short the inevitable problem of anybody living in the composition of the present time, that is living as we are now living as we have it and now do live in it.

The business of Art as I tried to explain in *Composition as Explanation* is to live in the actual present, that is the complete actual present, and to completely express that complete actual present.

But to come back to that other question which is at once so important a part of any scene in real life, in books or on the stage, how are the actors introduced to the sight, hearing and consciousness of the person having the emotion about them. How is it done in each case and what has that to do with the way the emotion progresses.

How are the actors in a real scene introduced to those acting with them in that scene and how are the real actors in a real scene introduced to you who are going to be in an exciting scene with them. How does it happen, that is, as it usually happens.

And how are the actors in a book scene introduced to the reader of the book, how does one come to know them, that is how is one really introduced to them.

And how are the people on the stage that is the people the actors act how they are introduced to the audience and what is the reason why, the reason they are introduced in the way that they are introduced, and what happens, and how does it matter, and how does it affect the emotions of the audience.

In a real scene, naturally in a real scene, you either have already very well known all the actors in the real scene of which you are one, or you have not. More generally you have than you have not, but and this is the element of excitement in an exciting scene, it quite of course is the element of excitement in an exciting scene that is in a real scene, all that you have known of the persons including yourself who are taking part in the exciting scene, although you have most probably known them very well, what makes it exciting is that insofar as the scene is exciting they the actors in the scene including yourself might just as well have been strangers because they all act talk and feel differently from the way you have expected them to act feel or talk. And this that they feel act and talk including yourself differently from the way you would have thought that they would act feel and talk makes the scene an exciting scene and makes the climax of this scene which is a real scene a climax of completion and not a climax of relief. That is what a real scene is. Would it make any difference in a real scene if they were all strangers, if they had never known each other. Yes it would, it would be practically impossible in the real scene to have a really exciting scene if they were all strangers because generally speaking it is the contradiction between the way you know the people you know including yourself act and the way they are acting or feeling or talking that makes of any scene that is an exciting scene an exciting scene.

Of course there are other exciting scenes in peace and in war in which the exciting scene takes place with strangers but in that case for the purpose of excitement you are all strangers but so completely strangers, including you yourself to yourself as well as the others to each other and to you that they are not really individuals and inasmuch as that is so it has the advantage and the disadvantage that you proceed by a series of completions which follow each other so closely that when it is all over you cannot remember that is you cannot really reconstruct the thing, the thing that has happened. That is something that one must think about in relation to the theater and it is a very interesting thing. Then in a case like that where you are all strangers in an exciting scene what happens as far as hearing and seeing is concerned. When in an exciting scene where you are all strangers you to yourself and you to them and they to you and they to each other and where no one of all of them including yourself have any consciousness of knowing each other do you have the disadvantage of not knowing the difference between hearing and seeing and is that a disadvantage from the standpoint of remembering. From that standpoint the standpoint of remembering it is a serious disadvantage.

But we may say that that exciting experience of exciting scenes where you have really no acquaintance with the other actors as well as none with yourself in an exciting action are comparatively rare and are not the normal material of excitement as it is exciting in the average person's experience.

As I say in the kind of excitement where you have had no normal introduction to the actors of the scene the action and the emotion is so violent that sight sound and emotion is so little realized that it cannot be remembered and therefore in a kind of a way it has really nothing to do with anything because really it is more exciting action than exciting emotion or excitement. I think I can say that these are not the same thing. Have they anything to do with the way the theater gets you to know or not to know what the people on the stage are. Perhaps yes and perhaps no.

In ordinary life one has known pretty well the people with whom one is having the exciting scene before the exciting scene takes place and one of the most exciting elements in the excitement be it love or a quarrel or a struggle is that, that having been well known that is familiarly known, they all act in acting violently act in the same way as they always did of course only the same way has become so completely different that from the standpoint of familiar acquaintance there is none there is complete familiarity but there is no proportion that has hitherto been known, and it is this which makes the scene the real scene exciting, and it is this that leads to completion, the proportion achieves in your emotion the new proportion therefore it is completion but not relief. A new proportion cannot be a relief.

Now how does one naturally get acquainted in real life which makes one have a familiarity with some one. By a prolonged familiarity of course.

And how does one achieve this familiarity with the people in a book or the people on the stage. Or does one.

In real life the familiarity is of course the result of accident, intention or natural causes but in any case there is a progressive familiarity that makes one acquainted.

Now in a book there is an attempt to do the same thing that is, to say, to do a double thing, to make the people in the book familiar with each other and to make the reader familiar with them. That is the reason in a book it is always a strange doubling, the familiarity between the characters in the book is a progressive familiarity and the familiarity between them and the reader is a familiarity that is a forcing process or an incubation. It makes of course a double time and later at another time we will go into that.

But now how about the theater.

It is not possible in the theater to produce familiarity which is of the essence of acquaintance because, in the first place when the actors are there they are there and they are there right away.

When one reads a play and very often one does read a play, anyway one did read Shakespeare's plays a great deal at least I did, it was always necessary to keep one's finger in the list of characters for at least the whole first act, and in a way it is necessary to do the same when the play is played. One has one's

program for that and beside one has to become or has become acquainted with the actors as an actor and one has one's program too for that. And so the introduction to the characters on the stage has a great many different sides to it. And this has again a great deal to do with the nervousness of the theater excitement.

Anybody who was as I was, brought up and at the time that I was brought up was brought up in Oakland and in San Francisco inevitably went to the theater a lot. Actors in those days liked to go out to the coast and as it was expensive to get back and not expensive to stay there they stayed. Besides that there were a great many foreign actors who came and having come stayed and any actor who stays acts and so there was always a great deal to see on the stage and children went, they went with each other and they went alone, and they went with people who were older, and there was twenty-five cent opera to which anybody went and the theater was natural and anybody went to the theater. I did go a great deal in those days. I also read plays a great deal. I rather liked reading plays, I very much liked reading plays. In the first place there was in reading plays as I have said the necessity of going forward and back to the list of characters to find out which was which and then insensibly to know. Then there was the poetry and then gradually there were the portraits.

I can remember quite definitely in the reading of plays that there were very decidedly these three things, the way of getting acquainted that was not an imitation of what one usually did, but the having to remember which character was which. That was very different from real life or from a book. Then there was the element of poetry. Poetry connected with a play was livelier poetry than poetry unconnected with a play. In the first place there were a great many bits that were short and sometimes it was only a line.

I remember *Henry VI* which I read and reread and which of course I have never seen played but which I liked to read because there were so many characters and there were so many little bits in it that were lively words. In the poetry of plays words are more lively words than in any other kind of poetry and if one naturally liked lively words and I naturally did one likes to read plays in poetry. I always as a child read all the plays I could get hold of that were in poetry. Plays in prose do not read so well. The words in prose are livelier when they are not a play. I am not saying anything about why, it is just a fact.

So then for me there was the reading of plays which was one thing and then there was the seeing of plays and of operas a great many of them which was another thing.

Later on so very much later on there was for me the writing of plays which was one thing and there was at that time no longer any seeing of plays. I practically when I wrote my first play had completely ceased going to the theater. In fact although I have written a great many plays and I am quite sure they are plays I have since I commenced writing these plays I have

practically never been inside of any kind of a theater. Of course none of this has been intentional, one may say generally speaking that anything that is really inevitable, that is to say necessary is not intentional.

But to go back to the plays I did see, and then to go on to the plays I did write.

I was then a natural thing in the Oakland and San Francisco in which I was brought up to see a great many plays played. Beside there was a great deal of opera played and so all of it was natural enough and how did I feel about it.

Generally speaking all the early recollections all a child's feeling of the theater is two things. One which is in a way like a circus that is the general movement and light and air which any theatre has, and a great deal of glitter in the light and a great deal of height in the air, and then there are moments, a very very few moments but still moments. One must be pretty far advanced in adolescence before one realizes a whole play.

Up to the time of adolescence when one does really live in a whole play up to that time the theater consists of bright filled space and usually not more than one moment in a play.

I think this is fairly everybody's experience and it was completely mine.

Uncle Tom's Cabin may not have been my first play but it was very nearly my first play. I think my first play really was *Pinafore* in London but the theater there was so huge that I do not remember at all seeing a stage. I only remember that it felt like a theater that is the theater did. I doubt if I did see the stage.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin* I remember only the escape across the ice, I imagine because the blocks of ice moving up and down naturally would catch my eye more than the people on the stage would.

The next thing was the opera the twenty-five cent opera of San Francisco and the fight in Faust. But that I imagine was largely because my brother had told me about the fight in Faust. As a matter of fact I gradually saw more of the opera because I saw it quite frequently. Then there was Buffalo Bill and the Indian attack, well of course anybody raised where everybody collected arrow heads and played Indians would notice Indians. And then there was Lohengrin, and there all that I saw was the swan being changed into a boy, our insisting on seeing that made my father with us lose the last boat home to Oakland, but my brother and I did not mind, naturally not as it was the moment.

In spite of my having seen operas quite often the first thing that I remember as sound on the stage was the playing by some English actor of Richelieu at the Oakland theater and his repeated calling out, Nemours Nemours. That is the first thing that I remember hearing with my ears at the theater and as I say nothing is more interesting to know about the theater than the relation of sight and sound. It is always the most interesting thing about anything to know whether you hear or you see. And how one has to do with

the other. It is one of the important things in finding out how you know what you know.

Then I enormously remember Booth playing Hamlet but there again the only thing I noticed and it is rather a strange thing to have noticed is his lying at the Queen's feet during the play. One would suppose that a child would notice other things in the play than that but that is what I remember and I noticed him there more than I did the play he saw, although I knew that there was a play going on there, that is the little play. It was in this way that I first felt two things going on at one time. That is something that one has to come to feel.

Then the next thing I knew was adolescence and going to the theater all the time, a great deal alone, and all of it making an outside inside existence for me, not so real as books, which were all inside me, but so real that if the theater made me real outside of me which up to that time I never had been in my emotion. I had largely been so in an active daily life but not in any emotion.

Then gradually there came the beginning of really realizing the great difficulty of having my emotion accompany the scene and then moreover I became fairly consciously troubled by the things over which one stumbles over which one stumbled to such an extent that the time of one's emotion in relation to the scene was always interrupted. The things over which one stumbled and there it was a matter both of seeing and of hearing were clothes, voices, what they the actors said, how they were dressed and how that related itself to their moving around. Then the bother of never being able to begin over again because before it had commenced it was over, and at no time had you been ready, either to commence or to be over. Then I began to vaguely wonder whether I could see and hear at the same time and which helped or interfered with the other and which helped or interfered with the thing on the stage having been over before it really commenced. Could I see and hear and feel at the same time and did I.

I began to be a good deal troubled by all these things, the more emotion I felt while at the theater the more troubled I became by all these things.

And then I was relieved.

As I said San Francisco was a wonderful place to hear and see foreign actors as at that time they liked it when they got there and they stayed and they played.

I must have been about sixteen years old and Bernhard came to San Francisco and stayed two months. I knew a little French of course but really it did not matter, it was all so foreign and her voice being so varied and it all being so French I could rest in it untroubled. And I did.

It was better than the opera because it went on. It was better than the theater because you did not have to get acquainted. The manners and customs of the French theater created a thing in itself and it existed in and for itself as the poetical plays had that I used so much to read, there were so

many characters just as there were in those plays and you did not have to know them they were so foreign, and the foreign scenery and actuality replaced the poetry and the voices replaced the portraits. It was for me a very simple direct and moving pleasure.

This experience curiously enough and yet perhaps it was not so curious awakened in me a desire for melodrama on the stage, because there again everything happened so quietly one did not have to get acquainted and as what the people felt was of no importance one did not have to realize what was said.

This pleasure in melodrama and in those days there was always one theater in a theatrically inclined town that played melodrama, this pleasure in melodrama culminated for me in the Civil War dramas of that period and the best of them was of course *Secret Service*. Gillette had conceived a new technique, silence stillness and quick movement. Of course it had been done in the melodrama already by the villains particularly in such plays as the *Queen of Chintown* and those that had to do with telegraph operators. But Gillette had not only done it but he had conceived it and it made the whole stage the whole play this technique silence stillness and quick movement. One was no longer bothered by the theater, you had to get acquainted of course but that was quickly over and after that nothing bothered. In fact Gillette created what the cinema later repeated by mixing up the short story and the stage but there is yet the trouble with the cinema that it is after all a photograph, and a photograph continues to be a photograph and yet can it become something else. Perhaps it can but that is a whole other question. If it can then some one will have to feel that about it. But to go on.

From then on I was less and less interested in the theater.

I became more interested in opera. I went one went and the whole business almost came together and then finally, just finally, I came not to care at all for music and so having concluded that music was made for adolescents and not for adults and having just left adolescence behind me and besides I knew all the operas anyway by that time I did not care any more for opera.

Then I came to Paris to live and there for a long time I did not go to the theater at all. I forgot the theater, I never thought about the theater. I did sometimes think about the opera. I went to the opera once in Venice and I liked it and then much later Strauss's *Elektra* made me realize that in a kind of a way there could be a solution of the problem of conversation on the stage. Beside it was a new opera and it is quite exciting to hear something unknown really unknown.

But as I say I settled down to Paris life and I forgot the theater and almost forgot opera. There was of course Isadora Duncan and then the Russian ballet and in between Spain and the Argentine and bullfights and I began once more to feel something about something going on at a theater.

And then I went back, not in my reading but in my feeling to the reading

of plays in my childhood, the lots of characters, the poetry and the portraits and the scenery which was always of course and ought always to be of course woods that is forests and trees and streets and windows.

And so one day all of a sudden I began to write Plays.

I remember very well the first one I wrote. I called it "What Happened, a Play," it is in *Geography and Plays* as are all the plays I wrote at that time. I think and always have thought that if you write a play you ought to announce that it is a play and that is what I did. What Happened. A Play.

I had just come home from a pleasant dinner party and I realized then as anybody can know that something is always happening.

Something is always happening, anybody knows a quantity of stories of people's lives that are always happening, there are always plenty for the newspapers and there are always plenty in private life. Everybody knows so many stories and what is the use of telling another story. What is the use of telling a story since there are so many and everybody knows so many and tells so many. In the country it is perfectly extraordinary how many complicated dramas go on all the time. And everybody knows them, so why tell another one. There is always a story going on.

So naturally what I wanted to do in my play was what everybody did not always know nor always tell. By everybody I do of course include myself by always I do of course include myself.

And so I wrote *What Happened, A Play*.

Then I wrote *Ladies Voices* and then I wrote a *Curtain Raiser*. I did this last because I wanted still more to tell what could be told if one did not tell anything.

Perhaps I will read some of these to you later.

Then I went to Spain and there I wrote a lot of plays. I concluded that anything that was not a story could be a play and I even made plays in letters and advertisements.

I had before I began writing plays written many portraits. I had been enormously interested all my life in finding out what made each one that one and so I had written a great many portraits.

I came to think that since each one is that one and that there are a number of them each one being that one, the only way to express this thing each one being that one and there being a number of them knowing each other was in a play. And so I began to write these plays. And the idea in "What Happened, a Play" was to express this without telling what happened, in short to make a play the essence of what happened. I tried to do this with the first series of plays that I wrote.

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I have of course always been struggling with this thing, to say what you nor I nor nobody knows, but what is really what you and I and everybody knows, and as I say everybody hears stories but the thing that makes each one what he is is not that. Everybody hears stories and knows stories. How can

they not because that is what anybody does and what everybody tells. But in my portraits I had tried to tell what each one is without telling stories and now in my early plays I tried to tell what happened without telling stories so that the essence of what happened would be like the essence of the portraits, what made what happened be what it was. And then I had for the moment gone as far as I could then go in plays and I went back to poetry and portraits and description.

Then I began to spend my summers in Bilggin in the department of the An and there I lived in a landscape that made itself its own landscape. I slowly came to feel that since the landscape was the thing, I had tried to write it down in *Lucy Church, Amidly* and I did but I wanted it even more really, in short I found that since the landscape was the thing, a play was a thing and I went on writing plays a great many plays. The landscape at Bilggin so completely made a play that I wrote quantities of plays.

I felt that if a play was exactly like a landscape then there would be no difficulty about the emotion of the person looking on at the play being behind or ahead of the play because the landscape does not have to make acquaintance. You may have to make acquaintance with it, but it does not with you, it is there and so the play being written the relation between you at any time is so exactly that that it is of no importance unless you look at it. Well I did look at it and the result is in all the plays that I have printed as *Opens and Plays*.

The landscape has its formation and as after all a play has to have formation and be in relation one thing to the other thing and as the story is not the thing as anyone is always telling something then the landscape not moving but being always in relation, the trees to the hills the hills to the fields the trees to each other any piece of it to any sky and then any detail to any other detail, the story is only of importance if you like to tell or like to hear a story but the relation is there anyway. And of that relation I wanted to make a play and I did, a great number of plays.

The only one of course that has been played is *Four Saints*. In *Four Saints* I made the saints the landscape. All the saints that I made and I made a number of them because after all a great many pieces of things are in a landscape, all these saints together made my landscape. These attendant saints were the landscape and it the play really is a landscape.

A landscape, does not move nothing really moves in a landscape but things are there, and I put into the play the things that were there.

Magpies are in the landscape that is they are in the sky of a landscape, they are black and white and they are in the sky of the landscape in Bilggin and in Spain, especially in Avila. When they are in the sky they do something that have never seen any other bird do they hold themselves up and down and look that against the sky.

A very famous French inventor of things that have to do with stabilization in aviation told me that what I told him magpies did could not be done by any bird but anyway whether the magpies at Avila do do it or do not at least they look as if they do do it. They look exactly like the birds in the Annunciation pictures the bird which is the Holy Ghost and rests flat against the side sky very high.

There were magpies in my landscape and there were scarecrows.

The scarecrows on the ground are the same thing as the magpies in the sky, they are a part of the landscape.

They the magpies may tell their story if they and you like or even if I like but stories are only stories but that they stay in the air is not a story but a landscape. That scarecrows stay on the ground is the same thing it could be a story but it is a piece of the landscape.

Then as I said streets and windows are also landscape and they added to my Spanish landscape.

While I was writing the *Four Saints* I wanted one always does want the saints to be actually saints before them as well as inside them, I had to see them as well as feel them. As it happened there is on the Boulevard Raspail a place where they make photographs that have always held my attention. They take a photograph of a young girl dressed in the costume of her ordinary life and little by little in successive photographs they change it into a nun. These photographs are small and the thing takes four or five changes but at the end it is a nun and this is done for the family when the nun is dead and in memoriam. For years I had stood and looked at these when I was walking and finally when I was writing Saint Therese in looking at these photographs I saw how Saint Therese existed from the life of an ordinary young lady to that of the nun. And so everything was actual and I went on writing.

Then in another window this time on the rue de Rennes there was a rather large porcelain group and it was of a young soldier giving alms to a beggar and taking off his helmet and his armor and leaving them in the charge of another.

It was somehow just what the young Saint Ignatius did and anyway it looked like him as I had known about him and so he too became actual not as actual as Saint Therese in the photographs but still actual and so the *Four Saints* got written.

All these things might have been a story but as a landscape they were just there and a play is just there. That is at least the way I feel about it.

Anyway I did write *Four Saints an Opera to be Sung* and I think it did almost what I wanted, it made a landscape and the movement in it was like a movement in and out with which anybody looking on can keep in time. I also wanted it to have the movement of nuns very busy and in continuous movement but placid as a landscape has to be because after all the life in a convent is the life of a landscape, it may look excited a landscape does

sometimes look excited but its quality is that a landscape if it ever did go away would have to go away to stay.

Anyway the play as I see it is exciting and it moves but it also stays and that is as I said in the beginning might be what a play should do.

Anyway I am pleased. People write me that they are having a good time while the opera is going on a thing which they say does not very often happen to them at the theater.

So you do see what I have after all meant.

And so this is just at present all I know about the theater.