VOLUME II

1915–1917

C168–C315

EZRA POUND'S Poetry and Prose

Contributions to Periodicals

Preface by
the Editors

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For Donald Gallup

"A man of parts, skilled in the subtlest sciences;
A patron of the arts, of poetry; and of a fine discernment."

Canto III (1917)

PREFACE

Ezra Pound was the quintessential poet-critic. His poems, his translations, his literary criticism, his social and economic writings, his letters, and his conversation—all were parts of a single enterprise, each illuminating the others. His enormous productivity over a long lifetime (there are approximately 2,100 contributions to periodicals collected in the present volumes) means that no single gathering of his writings, or even a large number of collections, can provide a comprehensive record of his achievement. Many of the uncollected essays are of crucial importance to an understanding of his art. For example, the elliptical essay "On Criticism in General" (*Criterion*, January 1923) has never been reprinted, although Pound considered this summary of his early work as a critic his personal "De Vulgari Eloquio."

When Pound's periodical contributions are read in chronological order, rather than in highly selective collections, the impact is overwhelming. The poetry and prose of any one period can be seen as parts of a single, developing argument. Taken in sequence, the poems and essays and letters form a rich autobiography, a vivid record of the most extraordinary poetic life this century has witnessed. They range from Pound's early experiences in Spain and Italy, through the tumult and excitement of the London years, to the half-century of expatriation on the Continent. We can trace Pound's progress through the Parisian literary world of the early 1920s, and then follow the arc of his Italian life as it led to the political and economic obsessions of the 1930s, to his wartime broadcasts on Rome Radio, and to his eventual arrest and imprisonment at Pisa. Finally, the periodical publications after 1945 give us a clear sense of Pound's life and thought while an inmate at St. Elizabeths, and of the interests that gripped him during his last years in Italy.

The present volumes bring together in one convenient format materials scattered throughout the world's libraries, some of them extremely rare and difficult to obtain. The combined libraries of Yale University, surely the single richest source of Pound's writings, could provide no more than 50 percent of the entries.

Our arrangement of items follows the chronological order of Section C, "Contributions to Periodicals," in Donald Gallup's *Ezra Pound: A Bibliography* (Revised Edition: University Press of Virginia, 1983). Some additional entries were chosen from Donald Gallup and Archie Henderson, "Additions and Corrections to the Revised Edition of the Pound Bibliography" (*Paideuma*, 12 [Spring 1983]: 119-25).

Following Gallup's practice, we have not included reprintings of items, except on those occasions (e.g., the *Future* Cantos of 1918) when the revisions seemed of great importance. Many of the early items in the Pound collection at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library were marked up and revised by Pound for inclusion in an edition of Collected Prose that never materialized (see Gallup E6h). In most cases we have reproduced clean copies from other sources, but we have also included a few marked-up copies (e.g., C26, C343, C419) to give the flavor of Pound's revisions.

The running head on each right-hand page gives the Gallup number for each item on that page spread and the year(s) of publication. The full Gallup description is reproduced at the bottom of the first page of each entry. In the very few instances when an item was incomplete or could not be located, we have printed the full Gallup entry and given the reason for omission. Several new entries were discovered during the course of our research, and these have been given numbers in the Gallup sequence.

The quality of the reproductions inevitably varies according to the state of the originals. In the case of newspapers and journals where the originals have disappeared, forcing us to work from microfilm, the quality is less than ideal. However, the Garland staff has done a remarkable job in producing the best possible photocopies.

It would have been impossible, given space limitations, to have situated each item in context. Wherever possible. We have included some of the material surrounding Pound's shorter contributions.

The index is based on Donald Gallup's indexing of "C" items. It includes the titles of periodicals and cross-referencing of proper names.

* * *

These volumes could not have been completed in their present form without generous help from many collectors and scholars. Donald Gallup graciously allowed us to use his files, now on deposit at the Beinecke Library, and answered many questions that only he could have answered. These volumes are dedicated to him, a dedication that reflects the deep debt felt by all of us who have found his *Bibliography* truly indispensable.

James Laughlin and Mary de Rachewiltz opened their files to us, and helped us in many ways with information they alone possess. Tim Redman and Lawrence Rainey were of immense help in the final stages of preparation. Without their expert advice many items, especially from the Italian years, would have remained unlocated.

We also wish to acknowledge substantial help from a number of Pound scholars, especially Massimo Bacigalupo, Ronald Bush, Michael Coyle, Archie Henderson, Vince Sherry, and Richard Taylor. The staff of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library was unfailingly helpful, and we owe a special debt to Patricia Willis for advice and assistance.

Gavin Borden, the president of Garland Publishing, was from the start our strongest supporter, and the project could not have been completed without his efforts. Leo Balk and William Ludwig were of great help during the entire planning and execution of the project. Finally, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Trish Charles, of the Garland office in Hamden, Conn., who managed the production of these volumes; to the staff in Hamden, especially Debbie Handy and Sue Spight; and to Jennifer Z. Bryda for the beautiful design.

CONTENTS

1915

C168 Webster Ford [a pseudonym of Edgar Lee Masters] 1
C169 Affirmations, I. Arnold Dolmetsch 2
C170 Affirmations, II. Vorticism 4
C171 A Blast from London 5
C172 Affirmations, III. Jacob Epstein 6
C173 Affirmations, IV. As for Imagisme 8
C174 Vorticism 9
C175 The Renaissance, I.—The Palette 10
C176 Affirmations, V. Gaudier-Brzeska 13
C177 Synchromatism 15
C178 Vorticism 16
C179 Affirmations, VI. Analysis of This Decade 16
C180 Imagisme 18
C181 Imagisme and England. A Vindication and an Anthology 19
C182 Affirmations, VII. The Non-existence of Ireland 20
C183 Affirmations 21
C184 Poems 22
C185 Exile's Letter, From the Chinese of Rihaku (Li Po) 26
C186 The Renaissance, II 28
C186a ✉ *Triad* 30
C187 [A review, signed: E.P., of] *Ernest Dowson*, by Victor Plarr 31
C188 The Classical Stage of Japan: Ernest Fenollosa's Work on the Japanese "Noh," Edited by Ezra Pound 33
C189 The Renaissance, III 82
C190 Affirmations: Edgar Lee Masters 86
C191 Hark to Sturge Moore 89
C192 A Rejoinder 92
C193 Song of The Bowmen of Shu 93
C193a Mr. Pound's Disgust 93
C194 Poems 94
C195 Chronicles 98
C196 The River-Merchant's Wife 99
C197 Love-Song to Eunoe 100
C198 "The Pleasing Art of Poetry" 101
C199 ✉ *Boston Evening Transcript* 103
C199a The Vorticists 104
C200 [A review, signed: E.P., of] *Poems*, by E. Scotton Huelin; *Sounds from Another Valley*, by H.F. Sampson; *The Song of the Five*, by Cecil Garth 105
C201 Albâtre 106
C202 "Blast" and a Critic 106
C203 Mr. Pound, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Joyce 107
C204 American Chaos [I] 108
C205 American Chaos [II] 109
C206 Foreword to the Choric School 110
C207 Robert Bridges' New Book 111
C208 Her Little Black Slippers 113
C208a Inconsiderable Imbecilities 113
C209 This Super-Neutrality 115
C210 [Poems] 116
C211 Two Poems 117
C212 On "Near Perigord" 123
C213 Remy de Gourmont [Part I] 125

1916

C214 Remy de Gourmont [Part II] 133
C215 Reflection 135
C216 Mr. James Joyce and the Modern Stage. A Play and Some Considerations 136
C217 Literary Prizes 147
C218 [extract from a letter to] Poetry 148
C219 Meditatio 149
C220 A Letter from London 150

C221 ✉ *Little Review* 150
C222 Status Rerum—the Second 151
C223 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. I, Alexander and Phriné 153
C224 This Constant Preaching to the Mob 154
C225 Awoi No Uye: a play by Ujinobu 155
C226 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. II, Dido and Stratonice 157
C227 From the Chinese 158
C228 To-em-mei's "The Unmoving Cloud" 159
C229 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. III, Anacreon and Aristotle 160
C230 Kakitsuhata [i.e. Kakitsubata] by Motokiyo. From the notes of Ernest Fenollosa, finished by Ezra Pound 161
C231 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. IV, Homer and Aesop 166
C232 Ezra Pound Files Exceptions 166
C233 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. V, Socrates and Montaigne 168
C234 Poems Old and New 169
C235 Thomas MacDonagh as Critic 173
C236 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. VI, Charles V and Erasmus 175
C237 Dreiser Protest 176
C238 The War and Diverse Impressions. Mr. [C.R.W.] Nevinson Thinks That the Public Is More Interested in the War than It Is in Art 177
C239 An American on America 179
C240 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. VII, Agnes Sorel—Roxelane 180
C241 Das Schone [sic] Papier Vergeudet 181
C242 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. VIII. Brutus and Faustina 182
C243 Sword-Dance and Spear-Dance: Texts of the Poems used with Michio Itow's Dances. By Ezra Pound, from notes of Masirni Utchiyama 182
C243a In the World of Letters 183
C244 Mr. Yeats' New Book 185

1917

C245 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. IX, Helen and Fulvia 185
C246 James Joyce: at Last the Novel Appears 186
C247 Dreiser Protest 187
C248 The Rev. G. Crabbe, LL.B. 188
C249 Émile Verhaeren, May 21st, 1855–Nov. 29th, 1916 189
C250 Things to Be Done 190
C251 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. X, Seneca and Scarron 192
C252 A Flock from Oxford 193
C253 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. XI, Strato, [and] Raphael of Urbino 194
C254 Editorial 195
C255 Pierrots: Scène courte mais typique (after the "Pierrots" of Jules Laforgue) .. 198
C256 Jodindranath Mawhwor's Occupation 199
C257 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. XII, Bombastes Paracelsus and Molière 205
C258 Drunken Helots and Mr. Eliot 206
C258a James Joyce and His Critics: Some Classified Comments 207
C259 An Anachronism at Chinon 208
C260 Three Cantos 216
C261 Wax Tablets 221
C261a An Imagist 221
C262 Vers libre and Arnold Dolmetsch 222
C263 Aux étuves de Weisbaden [sic], A.D. 1415 223
C264 Three Cantos. II 227
C265 Impressions of François-Marie Arouet (De Voltaire) 230
C266 Provincialism the Enemy. I 231
C267 Provincialism the Enemy. II 233
C268 Provincialism the Enemy. III 234
C269 Arnold Dolmetsch 235
C270 List of Books: Comment by Ezra Pound 237
C271 Stark Realism; This Little Pig Went to Market (A Search for the National Type) 242

C272 Three Cantos. III 243
C273 T.S. Eliot 247
C274 Provincialism the Enemy. IV 251
C275 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, I. —"The Hibbert" 252
C276 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, II.-"Blackwood's" 254
C277 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, III.—On Quarterly Publications 255
C278 Elizabethan Classicists, I 256
C279 Beddoes (and Chronology) 258
C280 [Editor's Note," signed: E.P., to] Inferior Religions [by] Wyndham Lewis 261
C281 L'Homme Moyen Sensuel 262
C282 Imaginary Letters. IV. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn) 268
C283 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, IV.—The "Spectator" 269
C284 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, V.—"The Strand," or How the Thing May Be Done 270
C285 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, VI. —"The Sphere," and Reflections on Letter-Press 272
C286 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, VII.—Far from the Expensive Veal Cutlet 274
C287 Elizabethan Classicists, II 276
C288 Imaginary Letters V (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn) 277
C289 Editorial on Solicitous Doubt 280
C290 Letters from Ezra Pound 281
C290a This Approaches Literature! 283
C291 [Extract from letter to] *Poetry* 284
C292 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, VIII.—The Beating Heart of the Magazine 284
C293 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, IX.—Further Heart Throbs 286
C294 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, X.—The Backbone of The Empire 288
C295 Elizabethan Classicists, III 290
C296 Landor (1775–1864). A Note 291
C297 Imaginary Letters. VI. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn) 293
C298 Irony, Laforgue, and Some Satire 295
C299 William H. Davies, Poet 298
C300 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XI.—The Bright and Snappy 300
C301 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XI [contd.].—Hash and Rehash 301
C302 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XII.—The Emblematic 303
C303 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XIII. —The Celestial 304
C304 Art Notes. By B.H. Dias. At Heal's [and "Leicester Gallery" (on Jacob Epstein)] 306
C305 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XIV.—Progress, Social and Christian 307
C306 Elizabethan Classicists, IV 309
C307 A Letter from Remy de Gourmont 310
C308 That Boston Paper Again 312
C309 The Reader Critic 319
C310 Advice to a Young Poet 314
C311 Music. By William Atheling. Le mariage de Figaro 315
C312 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XV.—A Nice Paper 316
C313 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XVI.—Aphrodite popularis 317
C314 Art Notes. by B.H. Dias. The Loan Exhibition at the Grafton [and "Serbo-Croatians" (including Mestrovic)] 318
C315 Studies in Contemporary Mentality, XVII.—The Slightly Shop-Worn 320

WEBSTER FORD.

By Ezra Pound.

AT LAST! At last America has discovered a poet. Do not mistake me, America that great land of hypothetical futures has had various poets born within her borders, but since Whitman they have invariably had to come abroad for their recognition. "Walt" seems to have set the fashion. Of course America has literary traditions. Crawfordsville, Indiana, has a literary tradition: Lew Wallace died there. American magazines go on "discovering" society curates, castrated hobby-horses, writers of epos in comparison with whom the later maunderings of Tennyson and of Alfred Austin sound like the surge and thunder of the Odyssey, etc. And a castrated government of school teachers goes on making 'em into Ambassadors, whenever the stock of ex-publishers' clerks and secretaries of the local Y.M.C.A.'s run out:—

O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi
E le colonne . . . et cetera.

America has also proclaimed to the "world" a race of red bloods, *i.e.*, young men hiding their incapacity or their psychopathia sexualis with the grand bravura, with a hurricane of adjectives and with talk of "the male." Also America has printed optimists who express all, or nearly all the ideas contained in McClure's magazine for the month before last. And they have also another breed, diluted fabians. O patria mia, etc.

Still, it comes to me as no surprise that a poet can be born in America; several rather good American poets have drifted into my room from time to time, going East, going to "jaded Europe" in search of publishers and good company. And what they have said about their fatherland makes my occasional constructive criticism seem like watered optimism. They consider me a purblind enthusiast. O patria degna di trionfal fama.

At last the American West has produced a poet strong enough to weather the climate, capable of dealing with life directly, without circumlocution, without resonant meaningless phrases. Ready to say what he has to say, and to shut up when he has said it. Able to treat Spoon River as Villon treated Paris of 1460. The essence of this treatment consists in looking at things unaffectedly. Villon did not pretend that fifteenth-century Paris was Rome of the first century B.C. Webster Ford does not pretend that Spoon River of 1914 is Paris of 1460.

The quality of this treatment is that it can treat actual details without being interested in them, without in the least depending upon them. The bore, the demnition bore of pseudo-modernity, is that the avowed modernist thinks he can make a poem out of a steam shovel more easily and more effectively than out of the traditional sow's ear. The accidents and detail are made to stand for the core.

Good poetry is always the same; the changes are superficial. We have the real poem in nature. The real poet thinking the real poem absorbs the *decor* almost unconsciously. In the fourth century B.C. he writes:—

"quivers ornamented with fish-skin";

in the twentieth of our era, he writes:—

"khaki, with a leather strap for his map-case."

But the real poem is the same. Of course there are very few poems. You have to go back to Rihoku to find a man telling the truth about warfare:—

"Lice swarm like ants over our accoutrements,
Our mind is on getting forward the feather-silk banners.
Hard fighting gets no reward.
Loyalty is hard to explain.
Who will be sorry for General Rishogu, the swift-moving,
Whose white head is lost for this province!"

That's the eighth century A.D. and China. I have before me an early book by Webster Ford, printed in 1912, and much more old fashioned than Rihoku. Nineteen-twelve was a bad year, we all ran about like puppies with ten tin cans tied to our tails. The tin cans of Swinburnian rhyming, of Browningisms, even, in Mr. Ford's case, of Kiplingisms, a resonant pendant, magniloquent, Miltonic, sonorous.

The fine thing about Mr. Ford's "Songs and sonnets, second series," is that in spite of the trappings one gets the conviction of a real author, determined to speak the truth despite the sectionised state of his medium. And despite cliches of phrase and of rhythm one receives emotions, of various strength, some tragic and violent. There is moral reflection, etc., but what is the use discussing faults which a man has already discarded.

In the Spoon River Anthology we find the straight writing, language unaffected. No longer the murmurous derivative, but:—

"My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs."

That is to say the speech of a man in process of getting something said, not merely in quest of polysyllabic decoration.

It is a great and significant thing that America should contain an editor (of the St. Louis Mirror) with sense enough to print such straight writing, and a critic sane enough to find such work in a "common newspaper" and quote it in an American review (*i.e.* "Poetry").

The silly will tell you that: "It isn't poetry." The decrepit will tell you it isn't poetry. There are even loathsome atavisms, creatures of my own generation who are so steeped in the abysmal ignorance of generations, now, thank heaven, fading from the world, who will tell you: "It isn't poetry." By which they mean: "It isn't ornament. It is an integral part of an emotion. It is a statement, a bare statement of something which is part of the mood, something which contributes to the mood, not merely a bit of chiffon attached."

I give here two poems in Mr. Ford's later manner, though they do not, perhaps, convey as much of the personality as some of his earlier work.

DOC HILL.

I went up and down the streets
Here and there by day and night,
Through all hours of the night caring for the poor who were sick.
Do you know why?
My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs.
And I turned to the people and poured out my love to them.
Sweet it was to see the crowds about the lawns on the day of my funeral,
And hear them murmur their love and sorrow.
But oh, dear God, my soul trembled, scarcely able
To hold to the railing of the new life,
When I saw Em Stanton behind the oak tree
At the grave,
Hiding herself, and her grief!

THE HILL.

Where are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley,
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozer, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love,
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,

C168 Webster Ford [a pseudonym of Edgar Lee Masters]. *Egoist*, II. 1 (1 Jan. 1915) 11–12.

One, after life in far away London and Paris,
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and Mag—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying.
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

I have read a reasonable amount of bad American magazine verse, pseudo-Masefieldian false pastoral and so on. Not one of the writers had had the sense, which Mr. Ford shows here, in calling up the reality of the Middle West by the very simple device of names, in this case the names Sevigne and Kincaid, which remind one of the mixed origins of the old Louisiana country and the early French settlement.

Affirmations.

By Ezra Pound.

I.

Arnold Dolmetsch.

"I HAVE seen the God Pan." "Nonsense." I have seen the God Pan and it was in this manner: I heard a bewildering and pervasive music moving from precision to precision within itself. Then I heard a different music, hollow and laughing. Then I looked up and saw two eyes like the eyes of a wood-creature peering at me over a brown tube of wood. Then someone said: Yes, once I was playing a fiddle in the forest and I walked into a wasp's nest.

Comparing these things with what I can read of the earliest and best authenticated appearances of Pan, I can but conclude that they relate to similar occurrences. It is true that I found myself later in a room covered with pictures of what we now call ancient instruments, and that when I picked up the brown tube of wood I found that it had ivory rings upon it. And no proper reed has ivory rings on it, by nature. Also, they told me it was a "recorder," whatever that is.

However, our only measure of truth is our own perception of truth. The undeniable tradition of metamorphoses teaches us that things do not remain always the same. They become other things by swift and unanalysable process. It was only when men began to mistrust the myths and to tell nasty lies about the Gods for a moral purpose that these matters became hopelessly confused. When some nasty Semite or Parsee or Syrian began to use myths for social propaganda, when the myth was degraded into an allegory or a fable, that was the beginning of the end. And the Gods no longer walked in men's gardens. The first myths arose when a man walked sheer into "nonsense," that is to say, when some very vivid and undeniable adventure befell him, and he told someone else who called him a liar. Thereupon, after bitter experience, perceiving that no one could understand what he meant when he said that he "turned into a tree," he made a myth—a work of art that is—an impersonal or objective story woven out of his own emotion, as the nearest equation that he was capable of putting into words. That story, perhaps, then gave rise to a weaker copy of his emotion in others, until there arose a cult, a company of people who could understand each other's nonsense about the gods.

As I say, these things were afterwards incorporated for the condemnable "good of the State," and what was once a species of truth became only lies and propaganda. And they told horrid tales to little boys in order to make them be good; or to the ignorant populace in order to preserve the empire; and religion came to an end and civic science began to be studied. Plato said that artists ought to be kept out of the ideal republic, and the artists swore by their gods that nothing would drag them into it. That is the history of "civilisation," or philology or Kultur.

When any man is able, by a pattern of notes or by an arrangement of planes or colours, to throw us back into the age of truth, a certain few of us—no, I am wrong, everyone who has ever been cast back into the age of truth for one instant—gives honour to the spell which has worked, to the witch-work or the art-work, or to whatever you like to call it. Therefore I say, and stick to it, I saw and heard the God Pan; shortly afterwards I saw and heard Mr. Dolmetsch. Mr. Dolmetsch was talking volubly, and he said something very like what I have said and very different; of music, music when music commanded some 240 (or some such number of) players, and could only be performed in one or two capitals! Pepys writes, that in the Fire of London, when the people were escaping by boat on the Thames, there was scarcely a boat in which you would not see them taking a pair of virginals as among their dearest possessions.

The older journalists tell me it is "cold mutton," that Mr. Dolmetsch was heard of fifteen years ago. That is a tendency that I have before remarked in a civilisation which rests upon journalism, and which has only a sporadic care for the arts. Everyone in London over forty "has heard of" Mr. Dolmetsch, his instruments, etc. The generation under thirty may have heard of him, but you cannot be sure of it. His topical interest is over. I have heard of Mr. Dolmetsch for fifteen years, because I am a crank and am interested in such matters. Mr. Dolmetsch has always been in France or America, or somewhere I wasn't when he was. Also, I have seen broken-down spinets in swank drawing-rooms. I have heard harpsichords played in Parisian concerts, and they sounded like the scratching of multitudinous hens, and I did not wonder that pianos had superseded them. Also, I have known good musicians and have favoured divers sorts of music. And I have supposed that clavichords were things you might own if you were a millionaire; and that virginals went with citherns and citoles in the poems of the late D. G. Rossetti.

So I had two sets of adventure. First, I perceived a sound which is undoubtedly derived from the Gods, and then I found myself in a reconstructed century—in a century of music, back before Mozart or Purcell, listening to clear music, to tones clear as brown amber. And this music came indifferently out of the harpsichord or the clavichord or out of virginals or out of odd-shaped viols, or whatever they may be. There were two small girls playing upon them with an exquisite precision; with a precision quite unlike anything I have ever heard from a London orchestra. Then someone said in a tone of authority: "It is nonsense to teach people scales. It is rubbish to make them play *this* (tum, tum, tum, tum tum). They must begin to play music. Three years playing scales, that is what they tell you. How can they ever be musicians?"

It reduces itself to about this. Once people played music. It was gracious, exquisite music, and it was played on instruments which gave out the players' exact mood *and* personality. "It is beautiful even if you play it wrong." The clavichord has the beauty of three or four lutes played together. It has more than that, but no matter. You have your fingers always en

C169

C168 Continued

C169 Affirmations . . . I. Arnold Dolmetsch. *New Age*, XVI. 10 (7 Jan. 1915) 246–7.
The first of seven instalments.

rapport with the strings; it is not one dab and then either another dab or else nothing, as with the piano; the music is always lying on your own finger-tips. This music was not theatrical. You played it yourself as you read a book of precision. A few people played it together. It was not an interruption but a concentration.

Now, on the other hand, I remember a healthy concert pianist complaining that you couldn't "really give" a big piano concert unless you had the endurance of an ox; and that "women couldn't, of course"; and that gradually the person with long hands was being eliminated from the pianistic world, and that only people with little, short fat fingers could come up to the technical requirements. Whether this is so or not we have come to the pianola, which is very like professional playing. And one or two people are going in for sheer pianola. They have the right spirit. They cut their rolls for the pianola itself, and make it play as if with two dozen fingers when necessary. That is better art than making a pianola imitate the music of two hands of five fingers each. But still something is lacking.

Oriental music is under debate. We say we "can't hear it." Impressionism has reduced us to such a dough-like state of receptivity that we have ceased to like concentration. No, it has not; but it has set a fashion of passivity that has held since the romantic movement. The old music went with the old instruments. That was natural. It is proper to play piano music on pianos. But in the end you find that it is no use, and that nothing less than a full orchestra is of any use.

That is the whole flaw of impressionist or "emotional" music as opposed to pattern music. It is like a drug; you must have more drug, and more noise each time, or this effect, this impression which works from the outside, in from the nerves and sensorium upon the self—is no use, its effect is constantly weaker and weaker. I do not mean that Bach is not emotional, but the early music starts with the mystery of pattern; if you like, with the vortex of pattern; with something which is, first of all, music, and which is capable of being, after that, many things. What I call emotional, or impressionist music, starts with being emotion or impression and then becomes only approximately music. It is, that is to say, something in the terms of something else. If it produces an effect, if from sounding as music it moves at all, it can only recede into the original emotion or impression. Programme music is merely a weaker, more flabby and descriptive sort of impressionist music, needing, perhaps, a guide and explanation.

Mr. Dolmetsch was, let us say, enamoured of ancient music. He found it misunderstood. He saw a beauty so great and so various that he stopped composing. He found that the beauty was untranslatable with modern instruments; he has repaired and has entirely remade "ancient instruments." The comfort is that he has done this not for a few rich faddists, as one had been led to suppose. He makes his virginals and clavichords for the price of a bad, of a very bad piano. You can have a virginal for £25 if you order it when he is making a dozen; and you can have a clavichord for a few pounds more, even if he isn't making more than one.

Because my interest in these things is not topical, I do not look upon this article as advertisement writing. Mr. Dolmetsch was a topic some years ago, but you are not *au courant*, and you do not much care for music unless you know that a certain sort of very beautiful music is no longer impossible. It is not necessary to wait for a great legacy, or to inhabit a capital city in order to hear magical voices, in order to hear perfect music which does not depend upon your ability to approximate to the pianola or upon great physical strength. Of the clavichord, one can only say, very inexactly, that it is to the piano what the violin is to the bass viol.

As I believe that a certain movement in painting is capable of revitalising the instinct of design and creating a real interest in the art of painting as opposed to a tolerance of inoffensively pretty similarities of quite pretty ladies and "The Tate," the abysmal "Tate" generally, so I believe that a return, an awakening to the possibilities, not necessarily of "Old" music, but of pattern music played upon ancient instruments, is, perhaps, able to make music again a part of life, not merely a part of theatricals. The musician, the performing musician as opposed to the composer, might again be an interesting person, an artist, not merely a sort of manual saltimbanque or a stage hypnotist. It is, perhaps, a question of whether you want music, or whether you want to see an obsessed personality trying to "dominate" an audience.

I have said little that can be called technical criticism. I have perhaps implied it. There is precision in the making of ancient instruments. Men still make passable violins; I do not see why the art of beautiful-keyed instruments need be regarded as utterly lost. There has been precision in Mr. Dolmetsch's study of ancient texts and notation; he has routed out many errors. He has even, with certain help, unravelled the precision of ancient dancing. He has found a complete notation which might not interest us were it not that this very dancing forces one to a greater precision with the old music. One finds, for instance, that certain tunes called dance tunes must be played double the time at which they are modernly taken.

One art interprets the other. It would almost touch upon theatricals, which I am trying to avoid, if I should say that one steps into a past era when one sees all the other Dolmetsches dancing quaint, ancient steps of Sixteenth Century dancing. One feels that the dance would go on even if there were no audience. That is where real drama begins, and where we leave what I have called, with odium, "theatricals." It is a dance, danced for the dance's sake, to a display. It is music that exists for the sake of being music, not for the sake of, as they say, producing an impression.

Of course there are other musicians working with this same ideal. I take Mr. Dolmetsch as perhaps a unique figure, as perhaps the one man who knows most definitely whither he is going, and why, and who has given most time to old music.

They tell me "everyone knows Dolmetsch who knows of old music, but not many people know of it." Is that sheer nonsense, or what is the fragment of truth or rumour upon which it is based? Why is it that the fine things always seem to go on in a corner? Is it a judgment on democracy? Is it that what has once been the pleasure of the many, of the pre-Cromwellian many, has been permanently swept out of life? Musical England? A wild man comes into my room and talks of piles of turquoises in a boat, a sort of shop-house-boat east of Cashmere. His talk is full of the colour of the Orient. Then I find he is living over an old-clothes shop in Bow. "And there they seem to play all sorts of instruments."

Is there a popular instinct for anything different from what my ex-landlord calls "the four-hour-touch?" Is it that the aristocracy, which ought to set the fashion, is too weakened and too unreal to perform the due functions of "the aristocracy"? Is it that nature can, in fact, only produce a certain number of vortices? That the quattrocento shines out because the vortices of power coincided with the vortices of creative intelligence? And that when these vortices do not coincide we have an age of "art in strange corners" and great dullness among the quite rich? Is it that real democracy can only exist under feudal conditions, when no man fears to recognise creative skill in his neighbour; or, are we, as one likes to suppose, on the brink of another really great awakening, when the creative or art vortices shall be strong enough, when the people who care will be well enough organised to set the fine fashion, to impose it, to make the great age?

Affirmations.

By Ezra Pound.

II.

Vorticism.

THE NEW AGE permits one to express beliefs which are in direct opposition to those held by the editing staff. In this, THE NEW AGE sets a most commendable example to certain other periodicals which not only demand that all writers in their columns shall turn themselves into a weak and puling copy of the editorial board, but even try to damage one's income if one ventures to express contrary beliefs in the columns of other papers.

There is perhaps no more authentic sign of the senility of a certain generation of publicists (now, thank heaven, gradually fading from the world) than their abject terror in the face of motive ideas. An age may be said to be decadent, or a generation may be said to be in a state of prone senility, when its creative minds are dead and when its survivors maintain a mental dignity—to wit, the dignity or stationariness of a corpse in its cerements. Excess or even absinthe is not the sure sign of decadence. If a man is capable of creative, or even of mobile, thought he will not go in terror of other men so endowed. He will not call for an inquisition or even a persecution of other men who happen to think something which he has not yet thought, or of which he may not yet have happened to hear.

The public divides itself into sections according to temper and alertness; it may think with living London, or with moribund London, or with Chicago, or Boston, or even with New Zealand; and behind all these there are possibly people who think on a level with Dublin, antiquarians, of course, and students of the previous age. For example, Sir Hugh Lane tried to give Dublin a collection of pictures, Degas, Corot and Manet, and they called him a charlatan and cried out for real pictures "like the lovely paintings which we see reproduced in our city art shops." I have even seen a paper from Belfast which brands J. M. Synge as a "decadent." Is such a country fit for Home Rule? I ask as the merest outsider having not the slightest interest in the question. I have met here in London two men still believing in Watts, and I suppose anything is possible—any form of atavism that you may be willing to name.

I suppose any new development or even any change in any art has to be pushed down the public throat with a ramrod. The public has always squealed. A public which has gushed over the sentimentalities of Rodin adorns Epstein's work with black butterflies, à cause de pudeur. The wickedest and most dashing publisher of "the nineties," of the "vicious, disreputable nineties," demands that our antiseptic works be submitted to ladylike censorship. And the papers in Trieste rejoice that futurism is a thing of the past, that a new god is come to deliver them. Such is the state of the world at the beginning of A.D. 1915.

The political world is confronted with a great war, a species of insanity. The art world is confronted with a species of quiet and sober sanity called Vorticism, which I am for the third or fourth time called upon to define, quietly, lucidly, with precision.

Vorticism is the use of, or the belief in the use of, THE PRIMARY PIGMENT, straight through all of the arts.

If you are a cubist, or an expressionist, or an imagist, you may believe in one thing for painting and a very different thing for poetry. You may talk about volumes, or about colour that "moves in," or about a certain form of verse, without having a correlated æsthetic which carries you through all of the arts. Vorticism means that one is interested in the creative faculty as opposed to the mimetic. We believe that it is harder to make than to copy. We believe in maximum efficiency, and we go to a work of art not for tallow candles or cheese, but for something which we cannot get anywhere else. We go to a particular art for something which we cannot get in any other art. If we want form and colour we go to a painting, or we make a painting. If we want form without colour and in two dimensions, we want drawing or etching. If we want form in three dimensions, we want sculpture. If we want an image or a procession of images, we want poetry. If we want pure sound, we want music.

These different desires are not one and the same. They are divers desires and they demand divers sorts of satisfaction. The more intense the individual life, the more vivid are the divers desires of that life. The more alive and vital the mind, the less will it be content with dilutations; with diluted forms of satisfaction.

I might put it differently. I might say, "I like a man who goes the whole hog." If he wants one sort of, say, "philosophy," he goes to Spinoza. If he wants another sort of "philosophy," he goes to Swedenborg. But nothing under heaven will induce him to have recourse to the messy sort of author who tries to mix up these two incompatible sorts of thought, and who produces only a muddle. Art deals with certitude. There is no "certitude" about a thing which is pretending to be something else.

A painting is an arrangement of colour patches on a canvas, or on some other substance. It is a good or bad painting according as these colour-patches are well or ill arranged. After that it can be whatever it likes. It can represent the Blessed Virgin, or Jack Johnson, or it need not represent at all, it can be. These things are a matter of taste. A man may follow his whim in these matters without the least harm to his art sense, so long as he remembers that it is merely his whim and that it is not a matter of "art criticism" or of "æsthetics." When a man prefers a Blessed Virgin by Watts to a portrait of a nasty pawnbroker by Rembrandt, one ceases to consider him as a person seriously interested in painting. There is nothing very new about that. When a man begins to be more interested in the "arrangement" than in the dead matter arranged, then he begins "to have an eye for" the difference between the good, the bad and the mediocre in Chinese painting. His remarks on Byzantine, and Japanese, and on ultra-modern painting begin to be interesting and intelligible. You do not demand of a mountain or a tree that it shall be like something; you do not demand that "natural beauty" be limited to mean only a few freaks of nature, cliffs looking like faces, etc. The worst symbolist of my acquaintance—that is to say, the most fervent admirer of Watts' pictures—has said to me more than once, quoting Nietzsche most inadvertently, "The artist is part of nature, therefore he never imitates nature." That text serves very well for my side of the case. Is a man capable of admiring a picture on the same terms as he admires a mountain? The picture will never become the mountain. It will never have the mountain's perpetual variety. The photograph will reproduce the mountain's contour with greater exactitude. Let us say that a few people choose to admire the picture on more or less the same terms as those on which they admire the mountain. Then what do I mean by "forms well organised"?

An organisation of forms expresses a confluence of forces. These forces may be the "love of God," the "life-force," emotions, passions, what you will. For example: if you clap a strong magnet beneath a plateful of iron filings, the energies of the magnet will proceed to organise form. It is only by applying a particular and suitable force that you can bring order and vitality and thence beauty into a plate of iron filings, which are otherwise as "ugly" as anything under heaven. The design in the magnetised iron filings expresses a confluence of energy. It is not "meaningless" or "inexpressive."

There are, of course, various sorts or various subdivisions of energy. They are all capable of expressing themselves in "an organisation of form." I saw, some months since, the "automatic" paintings of Miss Florence Seth. They were quite charming. They were the best automatic paintings I have seen. "Automatic painting" means paintings done by people who begin to paint without preconception, who believe, or at least assert, that the painting is done without volition on their part, that their hands are guided by "spirits," or by some mysterious agency over which they have little or no control. "Will and consciousness are our vortex." The friend who sent me to see Miss Seth's paint-

C170 Affirmations . . . II. Vorticism. *New Age*, XVI. 11 (14 Jan. 1915) 277–8.

ing did me a favour, but he was very much in the wrong if he thought my interest was aroused because Miss Seth's painting was vorticist.

Miss Seth's painting was quite beautiful. It was indeed much finer than her earlier mimetic work. It had richness of colour, it had the surety of articulation which one finds in leaves and in viscera. There was in it also an unconscious use of certain well-known symbols, often very beautifully disguised with elaborate detail. Often a symbol appeared only in a fragment, wholly unrecognisable in some pictures, but capable of making itself understood by comparison with other fragments of itself appearing in other pictures. Miss Seth had begun with painting obviously Christian symbols, doves, etc. She had gone on to paint less obvious symbols, of which she had no explanation. She had no theories about the work, save that it was in some way mediumistic. In her work, as in other "automatic" paintings which I have seen, the structure was similar to the structure of leaves and viscera. It was, that is to say, exclusively *organic*. It is not surprising that the human mind in a state of lassitude or passivity should take on again the faculties of the unconscious or sub-human energies or minds of nature; that the momentarily dominant atom of personality should, that is to say, retake the pattern-making faculty which lies in the flower-seed or in the grain or in the animal cell.

This is not vorticism. They say that an infant six weeks old is both aquatic and arboreal, that it can both swim and hang from a small branch by its fist, and that by the age of six months it has lost these faculties. I do not know whether or no this is true. It is a scientist's report, I have never tried it on a six-weeks-old infant. If it is so, we will say that instinct "revives" or that "memory throws back," or something of that sort. The same phrase would apply to the pattern-making instinct revived in somnolents or in mediumistic persons.

Note especially that their paintings have only organic structures, that their forms are the forms already familiar to us in sub-human nature. Their work is interesting as a psychological problem, not as creation. I give it, however, along with my paragraph on iron filings, as an example of energy expressing itself in pattern.

We do not enjoy an arrangement of "forms and colours" because it is a thing isolated in nature. Nothing is isolated in nature. This organisation of form and colour is "expression"; just as a musical arrangement of notes by Mozart is expression. The vorticist is expressing his complex consciousness. He is not like the iron filings, expressing electrical magnetism; not like the automatist, expressing a state of cell-memory, a vegetable or visceral energy. Not, however, that one despises vegetable energy or wishes to adorn the rose or the cyclamen, which are vegetable energies expressed in form. One, as a human being, cannot pretend fully to express oneself unless one express instinct and intellect together. The softness and the ultimate failure of interest in automatic painting are caused by a complete lack of conscious intellect. Where does this bring us? It brings us to this: Vorticism is a legitimate expression of life.

My personal conviction is as follows: Time was when I began to be interested in "the beauties of nature." According to impressionism I began to see the colour of shadows, etc. It was very interesting. I noted refinements in colour. It was very interesting. Time was when I began to make something of light and shade. I began to see that if you were representing a man's face you would represent the side on which light shone by very different paint from that whereby you would express the side which rested in shadow. All these things were, and are, interesting. One is more alive for having these swift-passing, departmentalised interests in the flow of life about one. It is by swift apperceptions of this sort that one differentiates oneself from the brute world. To be civilised is to have swift apperception of the complicated life of today; it is to have a subtle and instantaneous perception of it, such as savages and wild animals have of the necessities and dangers of the forest. It is to be no less alive or vital than the savage. It is a different kind of aliveness.

And vorticism, especially that part of vorticism having to do with form—to wit, vorticist painting and sculpture—has brought me a new series of apperceptions. It has not brought them solely to me. I have my new and swift perceptions of forms, of possible form-motifs; I have a double or treble or tenfold set of stimulæ in going from my home to Piccadilly. What was a dull row of houses is become a magazine of forms. There are new ways of seeing them. There are ways of seeing the shape of the sky as it juts down between the houses. The tangle of telegraph wires is conceivable not merely as a repetition of lines; one sees the shapes defined by the different branches of wire. The lumber yards, the sidings of railways cease to be dreary.

The musical conception of form, that is to say the understanding that you can use form as a musician uses sound, that you can select motives of form from the forms before you, that you can recombine and recolour them and "organise" them into new form—this conception, this state of mental activity, brings with it a great joy and refreshment. I do not wish to convert anyone. I simply say that a certain sort of pleasure is available to anyone who wants it. It is one of the simple pleasures of those who have no money to spend on joy-rides and on suppers at the Ritz.

This "musical conception of form" is more than post-impressionism. Manet took impressions of colour. They say Cezanne began taking "impressions of form." That is not the same thing as conceiving the forms about one as a source of "form-motifs," which motifs one can use later at one's pleasure in more highly developed compositions.

It is possible that this search for form-motif will lead us to some synthesis of western life comparable to the synthesis of oriental life which we find in Chinese and Japanese painting. This lies with the future. Perhaps there is some adumbration of it in Mr. Wadsworth's "Harbour of Flushing."

At any rate I have put down some of my reasons for believing in the vorticist painters and sculptors. I have at least in part explained why I believe in Mr. Wyndham Lewis; why I think him a more significant artist than Kandinsky (admitting that I have not yet seen enough of Kandinsky's work to use a verb stronger than "think"); why I think that Mr. Lewis' work will contain certain elements not to be found in Picasso, whom I regard as a great artist, but who has not yet expressed all that we mean by vorticism.

Note that I am not trying to destroy anyone's enjoyment of the Quattrocento, nor of the Victory of Samothrace, nor of any work of art which is approximately the best of its kind. I state that there is a new gamut of artistic enjoyments and satisfactions; that vorticist painting is not meaningless; and that anyone who cares to may enjoy it.

COMMUNICATIONS.

A BLAST FROM LONDON.

(To the Editor of THE DIAL.)

It is interesting, as it is perhaps flattering, to see myself bracketed with the late Lord Tennyson (in your leader of November 1 on "The Younger Generation" as a sort of alternate cock-shy for warring poets, but I cannot admit that you have accurately defined the issue. This issue as I see it is not whether young poets "believe" in me or in Tennyson, but whether or no they believe that poetry had traditions, even traditional freedoms before, say, 1876; whether poetry is good or bad according to

C171

C170 Continued

C171 ✉ A Blast from London. *Dial*, Chicago, Ill., LVIII. 686 (16 Jan. 1915) 40–41.
On the younger generation in America. Reprinted in part as "...

some standard derivable from the full mass of poetry of Greece and China and France and the world generally, or whether poetry is good or bad according to the taste of American magazine editors of 1876.

I still preserve the illusion that there once were American magazine editors who cared for literature, as they conceived it. It may be that I am wrong, and that they have uniformly held the commercial viewpoint, which some of them now openly hold. It may be sheer idiotic idealism to contend that the editors of papers like "Harper's Magazine" and "The Century Magazine" are in positions of some power, and that their position entails some responsibility both to the public and to creative genius. In actual working I find that there can be, apparently, no truce between any of the honest men of my generation and these magazines. One finds editorial ignorance, and callousness to any standards save the fashion of 1876. One finds a rooted prejudice, a sheer cliff of refusal, against "matter too unfamiliar to our readers." That phrase is used over and over again. A public that took as much interest in good literature as it takes in the tariff on wool, would drive out any editor who thus should set himself against all invention, all innovation, and all discovery.

There is no culture that is not at least bilingual. We find an American editor (whom it would, of course, be a breach of confidence to name) who in 1912 or 1913 writes of Henri de Regnier and M. Remy de Gourmont as "these young men." The rest of his sentence is to say that their work is unknown to him. Note that this lacuna in his mental decorations does not in the least chagrin him. He has no desire to add to his presumably superabundant knowledge. To say that the letters of a certain editor now admitted incompetent (even in America) and after long years dismissed, used to be handed about London as examples of the incredibly ridiculous, is putting it mildly.

No, *cher monsieur,* you put it wrongly when you say the young poets seem to care whether one believe in me or in Tennyson. You should write, they care whether or no one has considered the standards of excellence to be found in Villon and the Greek anthology; they care whether the editors who criticize them have ever heard of Stendhal; whether one believe that verse should be as well written as prose; whether an author should be himself or a mimicry.

Anent which, take two sentences from the editorials of "The Century Magazine." Note that the "new editor" of this magazine has been recommended to me as a "progressive." Here are his words:

"We wish to make the fiction in this magazine come as near to truth *as circumstances permit* . . ."

Shades of Flaubert, and Stendhal, and of every honest creator in letters!!

Second example:

"The contributors make the magazine and the *magazine makes* the contributors."

There's another nice chance for literature to come through the magazines. Has any first-class work of any sort ever been done to the specifications of a machine? And a machine for pleasing the populace at that!

No, *cher monsieur,* leave my name and my personal reputation out of it. Ask whether the younger generation wants America to produce real literature or whether they want America to continue, as she is at the present moment, a *joke,* a byword for the ridiculous in literature, and the younger generation will answer you.

Investigate the standards and the vitality of the standards of the "best editorial offices," and see what spirit you find there. See whether they believe that art is, in any measure, discovery. See whether there is any care for good letters, *even* if they care enough for good letters to be in any way concerned in trying to find out what makes, and what makes for, good letters.

Beyond this it seems to me that you make a mistake in dubbing Mr. Henry James, for instance, an European. A deal of his work is about American subjects. Is a man less a citizen because he cares enough for letters to leave a country where the practice of them is, or at least seems, well-nigh impossible, in order that he may bequeath a heritage of good letters, even to the nation which has borne him?

It is not that the younger generation has not tried to exist "at home." It is that after years of struggle, one by one, they come abroad, or send their manuscripts abroad for recognition; that they find themselves in the pages even of the "stolid and pre-Victorian 'Quarterly'" before "hustling and modern America" has arrived at tolerance for their modernity.

EZRA POUND.

London, December 26, 1914.

Affirmations.

By Ezra Pound.

III.

Jacob Epstein.

A FEW weeks ago the "nation," or, rather, the art critics and editorial writers of the orthodox press, were prostrating themselves before M. Rodin and offering their pæans of praise. M. Rodin has made a very generous gift to England. To be sure, some of his sculpture seems made rather to please bankers with pink satin minds than to stir the lover of fine art; but even so, it is not for any loyal Englishman to mention the fact at this moment. And, moreover, M. Rodin has been the most striking figure in his generation of sculptors, and it is not proper to pluck at the beards of old men, especially when they are doing fine things.

The beard which one wishes to pluck is the collective beard of the English curators who did not realise Rodin in his best period, and who have left this island without examples of his best work. It is, of course, too late to mend the matter with Rodin; we must, as the "Times" says, look into the future. It would be at least sensible to take some count of the present. Whatever may be the ultimate opinion concerning their respective genius, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the work now being done by Jacob Epstein is better than anything which is likely to be accomplished by Rodin at the age of one hundred and three.

Yet I learn from fairly reliable sources that that sink of abomination, the "Tate Gallery," has not only committed malversation with funds committed to its charge, that is to say, it has not bought any work of Epstein's (and its funds are, I believe, supposed to be used in acquiring representative modern art), but it has rushed further into the sloughs of stupidity by refusing, in a more or less indirect manner, perhaps, yet still, refusing one of the finest of Epstein's works, when it was offered as a gift. This is, to put it mildly, robbing the public.

It may be answered that the public don't care. And the counter reply is that: the public don't know. Moreover, there is no surety that the public of fifty years hence will be plunged in a stupidity exactly identical with the present public stupidity. And besides all this, it is ridiculous even for the defenders of stupidity to pretend that there is not already a considerable part of the public who are "ready for Epstein."

C172

C171 Continued

C172 Affirmations . . . III. Jacob Epstein. *New Age*, XVI. 12 (21 Jan. 1915) 311–12. Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916)—A10—pp. 111–20.

The sculptors of England, with the exception of Epstein, are, we suppose, engaged wholly in making gas-fittings and ornaments of electric light globes, etc. At least, we have little to prove the contrary. Of course, there's a living in it. And if people still want what Dublin calls "those beautiful productions displayed in the windows of our city art shops," one can only commend the soundness of certain commercial instincts. God forbid that we should interfere with any man's honest attempt to earn his sustenance. At the same time, there is a slender but, nevertheless, determined cult of the "creative element." A few, we say regretfully, a few of us believe in the mobility of thought. We believe that human dignity consists very largely in humanity's ability to invent. One is, to put it mildly, weary with sculpture which consists of large, identical, allegorical ladies in night-gowns holding up symbols of Empire or Commerce or Righteousness, and bearing each one a different name, like "Manchester" or "Pittsburg," or "Justitia." One can no longer feel that they are a full expression of what Kandinsky calls the "inner need." They are perhaps "classic ornament," and if one did not disapprove of having decorative columns made by the gross, one might irreverently suggest that such statues be made by the gross, with detachable labels. Unfortunately, one does not believe in having even columns made by the gross; one has the tradition that columns should be hand-cut and signed. It is only so that one can have really fine buildings. One's loftiest wish is that the mimetic sculptors should be set to making columns, and that the making of fine columns should be held in greater honour than the making of silly academy sculpture. The limits of the convention of columns and capital might perhaps so press upon the mimetic sculptors as to result in something approaching intensity.

Of course, you will never awaken a general or popular art-sense so long as you rely solely on the pretty, that is, the "caressable." We all of us like the caressable, but we most of us in the long run prefer the woman to the statue. That is the romance of Galatea. We prefer—if it is a contest in caressabilities—we prefer the figure in silk on the stairs to the "Victory" aloft on her pedestal-prow. We know that the "Victory" will be there whenever we want her, and that the young lady in silk will pass on to the Salon Carré, and thence on toward the unknown and unfindable. That is the trouble with the caressable in art. The caressable is always a substitute.

Ideals of the caressable vary. In Persia, the Persia of its romances, the crown of beauty, male or female, goes to him or her with the largest dimensions. And we all remember the Hindoo who justified his desire for fatness with the phrase "same money, more wife."

Ideals change, even the ideals of the caressable are known to have altered. Note, for example, the change in the ballet and in the "indecent" illustrations. Twenty years ago, the ideal was one with large hips and bosom. To-day the ideal is more "svelté." The heavier types appear only in "very low" papers. In fact, the modern ideal approaches more nearly to the "Greek type," which is, as Pater says, disappointing "to all save the highest culture." The development of Greek sculpture is simple; it moves steadily toward the caressable. One may even say that people very often set up Greek art as an ideal because they are incapable of understanding any other.

The weakness of the caressable work of art, of the work of art which depends upon the caressability of the subject, is, incidentally, that its stimulativeness diminishes as it becomes more familiar. The work which depends upon an arrangement of forms becomes more interesting with familiarity in proportion as its forms are well organised. That is to say, the ideal vorticist is not the man of delicate incapabilities, who, being unable to get anything from life, finds himself reduced to taking a substitute in art.

Our respect is not for the subject matter, but for the creative power of the artist, for that which he is capable of adding to his subject from himself; or, in fact, his capability to dispense with external subjects altogether, to create from himself or from elements. We hold that life has its own satisfactions, and that after a man has lived life up to the hilt, he should still have sufficient energy to go to the satisfactions of art, which are different from the satisfactions of life. I will not say loftily they are beyond it. The satisfactions of art differ from the satisfactions of life as the satisfactions of seeing differ from the satisfactions of hearing. There is no need to dispense with either. The artist who has no "ideas about art," like the man who has no ideas about life, is a dull dog.

The result of the attempt to mix the satisfactions of art and life is, naturally, muddle. There is downright *bad* art where the satisfactions offered or suggested are solely the satisfactions of life; for example, the drawings in salacious "comics" or the domesticities of "Pears' Annual"—that Mecca of British academicians. There is art, often very fine art, of mixed appeal: for example, Rodin's "La Vieille Heaulmière." Here the "beauty" of the work depends in no appreciable degree on the subject, which is "hideous." The "beauty" is from Rodin. It is in composition, as I remember it, in silhouettes. The "interest" is, largely, a life interest or a sentimental interest. It is a pathos for lost youth, etc., intensified by a title reminiscent of Villon.

If you measure art by its emotional effect scarcely anyone will deny that Villon's poem is more efficient than the statue. It calls up an image no less vivid. And it is easier to carry about in one's pocket, or in one's memory, for that matter. The words are, in fact, nearly unforgettable, while it is very hard to conserve more than a blurr or general impression of the bronze figure. Of course there is no denying that certain figures, more or less caressable, may have an artistic appeal based on "pure form," on their composition and symmetry and balance, etc. Those who appreciate them on these grounds are nearer art than those who do not.

So far as I am concerned Jacob Epstein was the first person who came talking about "form, not the *form of anything*." I am not sure that it was not Mr. T. E. Hulme, quoting Epstein, but no matter. I don't know that it matters much who said it first; he may have been a theorist and have only a sort of scientific gift for discovery. He may have been a great sculptor capable of acting out his belief. However that may be, the acceptable doctrine of my generation is that:

> Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation.
> Sculptural ability is the defining of these masses by planes. —(Gaudier-Brzeska, in BLAST.)

It is in accordance with this belief that one honours Epstein, apart entirely from one's sympathy or unsympathy with any particular work.

"Cynthia prima fuit"? what does it matter? Epstein is a "slow worker," perhaps. His mind works with the deliberation of the chisel driving through stone, perhaps. The work is conceived from the beginning, slow stroke by slow stroke, like some prehistoric age-long upheaval in natural things, driven by natural forces . . . full of certitude and implacable and unswerving . . . perhaps. And perhaps these are only phrases and approximations and rhetoric. They are the sort of phrases that arise in the literary mind in the presence of Epstein's sculpture. At any rate we do not say "Here is a man who ought to have been writing a comedy of manners." We feel convinced of a man fit for his job.

Let me be quite definite about what I mean by the work of Jacob Epstein—the work as I know it. There are—

"The Strand Statues" (which are very early).
The Wilde Memorial (which is over-ornate, and which one, on the whole, rather dislikes).
A scrawny bronze head, more or less early renaissance, quite fine, and which Mr. Epstein will reprove me for praising. He always reproves you for liking the "work before last."
Head of a boy, in bright copper, or some such substance. That is to say, the top and back are burnished.
Head of an infant (quite representational).
The Sun-God.
Two sets of pigeons. The heavier and closer is the better.
The two flenites, the finest work of the lot.
A bird preening itself (graceful).
The rock-drill.

And in this dozen works there are three or four separate donations. One wonders how many great artists have been as temperate; how many have waited for such a degree of certitude before they ventured to encumber the earth with "yet another work of art." Surely there are two types of mind which the mediocre world hates most. There is this mind of the slow gestation, whose absoluteness terrifies "the man in the street." Roughly

C172 Continued

speaking, it is the neglected type of Buonarroti. There is the type "Leonardo," that follows the lightning for model, that strikes now here, now there with bewildering rapidity, and with a certitude of its own. The first type is escapable, or at least, temporarily evadable. You cannot contradict the man's affirmations, but you can at least leave him alone in his corner. You can kill time and avoid looking things in the face. This type is, let us say, the less alarming. The second type is, I suppose, the most hated; that is to say, the most feared. You never know where the man will turn up. You never know what he will do next, and, for that matter, when he won't do something or other better than you can, or pierce your belovédest delusion. The first type is crowned in due course. The second type, never till death. After Leonardo is dead professors can codify his results. They can produce a static dogma and return in peace to their slumbers.

I beg you may pardon digressions, but is it or is it not ludicrous that "The Sun-God" (and two other pieces which I have not seen) should be pawned, the whole lot, for some £60? And that six of the other works are still on the sculptor's hands? And this is not due to the war. It was so before this war was heard of.

One looks out upon American collectors buying autograph MSS. of William Morris, faked Rembrandts and faked Vandykes. One looks out on a plutocracy and upon the remains of an aristocracy who ought to know by this time that keeping up the arts means keeping up living artists; that no age can be a great age which does not find its own genius. One sees buildings of a consummate silliness; buildings which are beautiful before they are finished, enchanting when they consist only of foundations and of a few great scaffoldings and cranes towering into the day or into the half-darkness. When they are finished they are a mass of curley-cues and "futile adornments." Because?

Because neither America nor England cares enough to elevate great men to control; because there is no office for the propagation of form; because there is no power to set Epstein, for example, where he should be, to wit, in some place where his work would be so prominent that people, and even British architects, would be forced to think about form. Of course, some of them do think about form, and then, after they have constructed a fine shape, go *gaga* with ornaments.

I do not mean by this that I would make Epstein an inspector of buildings, or that I would set him to supervise architects' plans. The two arts are different, though they both deal with three dimensional form. I mean simply that a contemplation of Epstein's work would instil a sense of form in the beholder. That is, perhaps, the highest thing one can say of a sculptor.

All this is very secondary and literary and sociological. There could be no such harangue among artists. One sees the work; one knows; or even, one feels.

Trying to find some praise that shall be exact and technical, some few of us, not sculptors, but admirers, would turn to Brzeska's "Vortex," which will be undoubtedly the first text-book of sculpture in many academies before our generation has passed from this earth. Accepting his terminology we would say: Epstein has worked with the sphere, and with the cylinder. He has had "form-understanding"; he has not fallen into the abyss, into the decadence of all sculpture which is "the admiration of self."

Why should we try to pin labels on "what he has expressed"? Is there any profit in saying that his form-organisations express facts which were perhaps more violently true for the south-sea islander of three thousand years ago than for us, who are moderns? That sort of talk is mostly nonsense. It is the artist's job to express what is "true for himself." In such measure as he does this he is a good artist, and, in such measure as he himself exists, a great one.

As for "expressing the age," surely there are five thousand sculptors all busy expressing the inanities, the prettinesses, the sillinesses—the Gosses and Tademas, the Mayfairs and Hampsteads of the age. Of course the age is "not so bad as all that." But the man who tries to express his age, instead of expressing himself, is doomed to destruction.

But this, also, is a side track. I should not spend my lines in answering carpings. I should pile my adjectives upon Epstein, or, better still, I should ask my opponents to argue, not with me, but to imagine themselves trying to argue with one of the Flenites, or with the energies of his "Sun-God." They'd "teach you to" talk about "expressing your age," and being the communal trumpet.

The test of a man is not the phrases of his critics; the test lies in the work, in its "certitude." What answer is to be made to the "Flenites"? With what sophistry will you be able to escape their assertion?

Affirmations,

By Ezra Pound.

IV.

As for Imagisme.

THE term "Imagisme" has given rise to a certain amount of discussion. It has been taken by some to mean Hellenism; by others the word is used most carelessly, to designate any sort of poem in vers libre. Having omitted to copyright the word at its birth I cannot prevent its misuse. I can only say what I meant by the word when I made it. Moreover, I cannot guarantee that my thoughts about it will remain absolutely stationary. I spend the greater part of my time meditating the arts, and I should find this very dull if it were not possible for me occasionally to solve some corner of the mystery, or, at least to formulate more clearly my own thoughts as to the nature of some mystery or equation.

In the second article of this series I pointed out that energy creates pattern. I gave examples. I would say further that emotional force gives the image. By this I do not mean that it gives an "explanatory metaphor"; though it might be hard to draw an exact border line between the two. We have left false metaphor, ornamental metaphor to the rhetorician. That lies outside this discussion.

Intense emotion causes pattern to arise in the mind—if the mind is strong enough. Perhaps I should say, not pattern, but pattern-units, or units of design. (I do not say that intense emotion is the sole possible cause of such units. I say simply that they can result from it. They may also result from other sorts of energy.) I am using this term "pattern-unit," because I want to get away from the confusion between "pattern" and "applied decoration." By applied decoration I mean something like the "wall of Troy pattern." The invention was merely the first curley-cue, or the first pair of them. The rest is repetition, is copying.

By pattern-unit or vorticist picture I mean the single jet. The difference between the pattern-unit and the picture is one of complexity. The pattern-unit is so simple that one can bear having it repeated several or many times. When it becomes so complex that repetition would be useless, then it is a picture, an "arrangement of forms."

Not only does emotion create the "pattern-unit" and the "arrangement of forms," it creates also the Image. The Image can be of two sorts. It can arise within the mind. It is then "subjective." External causes play upon the mind, perhaps; if so, they are drawn into the mind, fused, transmitted, and emerge in an Image unlike themselves. Secondly, the Image can be objective. Emotion seizing up some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original.

In either case the Image is more than an idea. It is a vortex or cluster of fused ideas and is endowed with energy. If it does not fulfil these specifications, it is not what I mean by an Image. It may be a sketch, a vignette, a criticism, an epigram or anything else you like. It may be impressionism, it may even be very good prose. By "direct treatment," one means simply that having got the Image one refrains from hanging it with festoons.

C173

C172 Continued

C173 Affirmations . . . IV. As for Imagisme. *New Age*, XVI. 13 (28 Jan. 1915) 349–50.

From the Image to Imagisme : Our second contention was that poetry to be good poetry should be at least as well written as good prose. This statement would seem almost too self-evident to need any defence whatsoever. Obviously, if a man has anything to say, the interest will depend on what he has to say, and not on a faculty for saying "exiguous" when he means "narrow," or for putting his words hindside before. Even if his thought be very slight it will not gain by being swathed in sham lace.

Thirdly, one believes that emotion is an organiser of form, not merely of visible forms and colours, but also of audible forms. This basis of music is so familiar that it would seem to need no support. Poetry is a composition or an "organisation" of words set to "music." By "music" here we can scarcely mean much more than rhythm and timbre. The rhythm form is false unless it belong to the particular creative emotion or energy which it purports to represent. Obviously one does not discard "regular metres" because they are a "difficulty." Any ass can say :

"John Jones stood on the floor. He saw the ceiling" or decasyllabicly,

"John Jones who rang the bell at number eight."

There is no form of platitude which cannot be turned into iambic pentameter without labour. It is not difficult, if one have learned to count up to ten, to begin a new line on each eleventh syllable or to whack each alternate syllable with an ictus.

Emotion also creates patterns of timbre. But one "discards rhyme," not because one is incapable of rhyming neat, fleet, sweet, meet, treat, eat, feet, but because there are certain emotions or energies which are not to be represented by the over-familiar devices or patterns; just as there are certain "arrangements of form" that cannot be worked into dados.

Granted, of course, that there is great freedom in pentameter and that there are a great number of regular and beautifully regular metres fit for a number of things, and quite capable of expressing a wide range of energies or emotions.

The discovery that bad vers libre can be quite as bad as any other sort of bad verse is by no means modern. Over eleven centuries ago Rihaku (Li, Po) complained that imitators of Kutsugen (Ch'u Yuan) couldn't get any underlying rhythm into their vers libre, that they got "bubbles not waves."

Yo ba geki tai ha Kai riu to mu giu.

"Yoyu and Shojo stirred up decayed (enervated) waves. Open current flows about in bubbles, does not move in wave lengths." If a man has no emotional energy, no impulse, it is of course much easier to make something which looks like "verse" by reason of having a given number of syllables, or even of accents, per line, than for him to invent a music or rhythm-structure. Hence the prevalence of "regular" metric. Hence also bad vers libre. The only advantage of bad vers libre is that it is, possibly, more easy to see how bad it is . . . but even this advantage is doubtful.

By bad verse, whether "regular" or "free," I mean verse which pretends to some emotion which did not assist at its parturition. I mean also verse made by those who have not sufficient skill to make the words move in rhythm of the creative emotion. Where the voltage is so high that it fuses the machinery, one has merely the "emotional man" not the artist. The best artist is the man whose machinery can stand the highest voltage. The better the machinery, the more precise, the stronger; the more exact will be the record of the voltage and of the various currents which have passed through it.

These are bad expressions if they lead you to think of the artist as wholly passive, as a mere receiver of impressions. The good artist is perhaps a good seismograph, but the difference between man and a machine is that man can in some degree "start his machinery going." He can, within limits, not only record but create. At least he can move as a force; he can produce "order-giving vibrations"; by which one may mean merely, he can departmentalise such part of the life-force as flows through him.

To recapitulate, then, the vorticist position; or at least my position at the moment is this :

Energy, or emotion, expresses itself in form. Energy, whose primary manifestation is in pure form, i.e., form as distinct from likeness or association can only be expressed in painting or sculpture. Its expression can vary from a "wall of Troy pattern" to Wyndham Lewis' "Timon of Athens," or a Wadsworth woodblock. Energy expressing itself in pure sound, i.e., sound as distinct from articulate speech, can only be expressed in music. When an energy or emotion "presents an image," this may find adequate expression in words. It is very probably a waste of energy to express it in any more tangible medium. The verbal expression of the image may be reinforced by a suitable or cognate rhythm-form and by timbre-form. By rhythm-form and timbre-form I do not mean something which must of necessity have a "repeat" in it. It is certain that a too obvious "repeat" may be detrimental.

The test of invention lies in the primary figment, that is to say, in that part of any art which is peculiarly of that art as distinct from "the other arts." The vorticist maintains that the "organising" or creative-inventive faculty is the thing that matters; and that the artist having this faculty is a being infinitely separate from the other type of artist who merely goes on weaving arabesques out of other men's "units of form."

Superficial capability needs no invention whatsoever, but a great energy has, of necessity, its many attendant inventions.

C173 Continued

C174 ✉ Vorticism. *New Age*, XVI. 13 (28 Jan. 1915) 359.

VORTICISM.

Sir,—The executive and the creative or inventive faculties are not the same. Miss Morning's quibble over my use of the terms "power" and "creative energy" is unworthy of her voracious intellect. Had she read my article with that care which even my lightest utterance deserves, she would have been able most clearly to understand me. When Miss Morning confines herself to translating Max Jacob's poems and to bringing unfamiliar matter before us, we are most grateful for her Parisian explorations.

Mr. Aldington's priapic parody of his own most successful poem (In Via Sestina) is of considerably less value. Miss Morning at least advances the discussion by forcing me to define one of my terms more exactly.

EZRA POUND.

C174

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

THE RENAISSANCE

"All criticism is an attempt to define the classic."

I—THE PALETTE

No one wants the native American poet to be *au courant* with the literary affairs of Paris and London in order that he may make imitations of Paris and London models, but precisely in order that he shall not waste his lifetime making unconscious, or semi-conscious, imitations of French and English models thirty or forty or an hundred years old.

Chaucer is better than Crestien de Troyes, and the Elizabethan playwrights are more interesting than the Pléïade, because they went beyond their models.

The value of a capital or metropolis is that if a man in a capital cribs, quotes or imitates, someone else immediately lets the cat out of the bag and says what he is cribbing, quoting or imitating.

America has as yet no capital. The study of "comparative literature" received that label about eighty years ago. It has existed for at least two thousand years. The best Latin poets knew Greek. The troubadours knew several jargons. Dante wrote in Italian, Latin and Provençal, and knew presumably other tongues, including a possible smattering of Hebrew.

I once met a very ancient Oxford "head," and in the middle of dinner he turned to me, saying: "Ah—um, ah—poet. Ah, some one showed me a new poem the other day, the—ah—the *Hownd of Heaven*."

I said, "Well, what did you think of it?" and he answered, "Couldn't be bothered to stop for every adjective!"

That enlightened opinion was based on a form of comparative literature called "the classic education."

The first step of a renaissance, or awakening, is the importation of models for painting, sculpture or writing. We have had many "movements," movements stimulated by "comparison." Flaminius and Amaltheus and the latinists of the quattrocentro and cinquecento began a movement for enrichment which culminated in the Elizabethan stage, and which produced the French Pléïade. There was wastage and servile imitation. The first effect of the Greek learning was possibly bad. There was a deal of verbalism. We find the decadence of this movement in Tasso and Ariosto and Milton.

The romantic awakening dates from the production of *Ossian*. The last century rediscovered the middle ages. It is possible that this century may find a new Greece in China. In the meantime we have come upon a new table of values. I can only compare this endeavor of criticism to the contemporary search for pure color in painting. We have come to some recognition of the fact that poets like Villon, Sappho and Catullus differ from poets like Milton, Tasso and Camoens, and that size is no more a criterion of writing than it is of painting.

I suppose no two men will agree absolutely respecting "pure color" or "good color," but the modern painter recognizes the importance of the palette. One can but make out one's own spectrum or table. Let us choose: Homer, Sappho,

C175 The Renaissance . . . I.—The Palette. *Poetry*, V. 5 (Feb. 1915) 227–33.
The first of three instalments.

Ibycus, Theocritus' idyl of the woman spinning with charmed wheel; Catullus, especially the *Collis O Heliconii.* Not Virgil, especially not the Æneid, where he has no story worth telling, no sense of personality. His hero is a stick who would have contributed to *The New Statesman.* He has a nice verbalism. Dante was right to respect him, for Dante had no Greek, and the Æneid would have stood out nobly against such literature as was available in the year 1300.

I should wish, for myself at least, a few *sirventes* of Bertran de Born, and a few strophes of Arnaut Daniel, though one might learn from Dante himself all that one could learn from Arnaut: precision of statement, particularization. Still there is no tongue like the Provençal wherein to study the subsidiary arts of rhyme and rhyme-blending.

I should want also some further mediaeval song-book, containing a few more troubadour poems, especially one or two by Vidal and Marueil, six poems of Guido's, German songs out of Will Vesper's song book, and especially some by Walter von der Vogelweide.

I should want Dante of course, and the *Poema del Cid,* and the *Sea-farer* and one passage out of *The Wanderer.* In fact, some knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon fragments—not particularly the Beowulf—would prevent a man's sinking into contentment with a lot of wish-wash that passes for classic or "standard" poetry.

So far as the palette of sheer color is concerned, one could, at a pinch, do without nearly all the French poets save Villon. If a man knew Villon and the *Sea-farer* and Dante, and that one scrap of Ibycus, he would, I think, never be able to be content with a sort of pretentious and decorated verse which receives praise from those who have been instructed to like it, or with a certain sort of formal verbalism which is supposed to be good writing by those who have never read any French prose.

What one learns from other French poets, one might as readily learn from Voltaire and Stendhal and Flaubert. One is a fool, of course, if one forego the pleasure of Gautier, and Corbière and the Pléïade, but whether reading them will more discontent you with bad writing than would the reading of Mérimée, I do not know.

A sound poetic training is nothing more than the science of being discontented.

After Villon, the next poet for an absolutely clear palette, is Heine. It takes only a small amount of reading to disgust one, not with English poets, but with English standards. I can not make it too clear that this is not a destructive article. Let anyone drink any sort of liqueur that suits him. Let him enjoy the aroma as a unity, let him forget all that he has heard of technic, but let him not confuse enjoyment with criticism, constructive criticism, or preparation for writing. There is nothing like futurist abolition of past glories in this brief article. It does not preclude an enjoyment of Charles d'Orleans or Mark Alexander Boyd. "Fra bank to bank, fra wood to wood I rin."

Since Lamb and his contemporary critics everything has been based, and absurdly based, on the Elizabethans, who are

a pastiche. They are "neither very intense nor very accomplished." (I leave Shakespeare out of this discussion and also the Greek dramatists.) Or let us say that Keats very probably made the last profitable rehash of Elizabethanism. Or let us query the use of a twentieth century poet's trying to dig up what Sidney himself called "Petrarch's long deceasèd woes."

Chaucer should be on every man's shelf. Milton is the worst sort of poison. He is a thorough-going decadent in the worst sense of the term. If he had stopped after writing the short poems one might respect him. The definite contribution in his later work consists in his developing the sonority of the English blank-verse paragraph. If poetry consisted in derivation from the Greek anthology one could not much improve on Drummond of Hawthornden's *Phoebus, Arise.* Milton is certainly no better than Drummond. He makes his pastiche out of more people. He is bombast, of perhaps a very high order, but he is the worst possible food for a growing poet, save possibly Francis Thompson and Tasso.

Goethe is perhaps the only one of the poets who tried to be colossi unsuccessfully, who does not breed noxious contentments. His lyrics are so fine, so unapproachable—I mean they are as good as Heine's and Von der Vogelweide's—but outside his lyrics he never comes off his perch. We are tired of men upon perches.

Virgil is a man on a perch. All these writers of pseudo *épopée* are people on perches. Homer and the author of the *Poema del Cid* are keen on their stories. Milton and Virgil are concerned with decorations and trappings, and they muck about with a moral. Dante is concerned with a *senso morale,* which is a totally different matter. He breeds discontentments. Milton does not breed discontentments, he only sets the neophyte trying to pile up noise and adjectives, as in these lines:

> Thus th' ichthyosaurus was dubbed combative . . .
>
> Captive he led with him Geography . . .
>
> Whom to encompass in th' exiguous bonds . . .

There is no end to this leonine ramping.

It is possible that only Cavalcanti and Leopardi can lift rhetoric into the realm of poetry. With them one never knows the border line. In Leopardi there is such sincerity, such fire of sombre pessimism, that one can not carp or much question his manner. I do not mean that one should copy the great poets whom I have named above—one does not copy colors on a palette. There is a difference between what one enjoys and what one takes as proof color.

I dare say it is, in this century, inexplicable how or why a man should try to hold up a standard of excellence to which he himself can not constantly attain. An acquaintance of mine deliberately says that mediocre poetry is worth writing. If mediocrities want immortality they must of course keep up some sort of cult of mediocrity; they must develop the habit of preserving Lewis Morris and Co.

The same crime is perpetrated in American schools by courses in "American literature." You might as well give courses in "American chemistry," neglecting all foreign discoveries. This is not patriotism.

No American poetry is of any use for the palette. Whitman is the best of it, but he never pretended to have reached the goal. He knew himself, and proclaimed himself "a start in the right direction." He never said, "American poetry is to stay where I left it"; he said it was to go on from where he started it.

The cult of Poe is an exotic introduced via Mallarmé and Arthur Symons. Poe's glory as an inventor of macabre subjects has been shifted into a reputation for verse. The absurdity of the cult is well gauged by Mallarmé's French translation—*Et le corbeau dit jamais plus.*

A care for American letters does not consist in breeding a contentment with what has been produced, but in setting a standard for ambition. A decent artist weeps over a failure; a rotten artist tries to palm it off as a masterpiece.

[*To be continued.*]

NOTE.—I have not in this paper set out to give a whole history of poetry. I have tried in a way to set forth a color-sense. I have said, as it were, "Such poets are pure red . . . pure green." Knowledge of them is of as much use to a poet as the finding of good color is to a painter.

Undoubtedly pure color is to be found in Chinese poetry, when we begin to know enough about it; indeed, a shadow of this perfection is already at hand in translations. Liu Ch'e, Chu Yuan, Chia I, and the great *vers libre* writers before the Petrarchan age of Li Po, are a treasury to which the next century may look for as great a stimulus as the renaissance had from the Greeks.

Ezra Pound

Affirmations.

By Ezra Pound.

V.

Gaudier-Brzeska.

IT may suit some of my friends to go about with their young noses pointing skyward, decrying the age and comparing us unfavourably to the dead men of Hellas or of Hesperian Italy. And the elders of my acquaintance may wander in the half-lights complaining that—

Queens have died young and fair.

But I, for one, have no intention of decreasing my enjoyment of this vale of tears by under-estimating my own generation. The uncertainty regarding the number of lives allowed one is too great. Neither am I so jealous of other men's reputations that I must wait until they are dead before I will praise them.

Having written this, I turn to "Il Cortegiano," "that great book of courtesies" which I have never yet been able to read from cover to cover. I find the Italian contemporaries of your King Henry VII already wrangling over feminism and supermen, over democracies and optimates and groups and herds : abstract topics which lead in the end to Polonius. They speak of the "white man's burden" and of the rational explanation of myths, and they talk about "the light of Christian truth" (in that phrase precisely).

The discourse is perhaps more readable when Cardinal Bibiena questions whether or no a perfect gentleman should carry a joke to the point of stealing a countryman's capons. The prose is musical and drowsy, so that if you read the Italian side of the page you feel no need of Paul Fort. (I am turning aside from the very reverent bilingual version of 1727.) The periods are perhaps more musical than the strophes of the modern prose poems. One reads on aloud until one's voice is tired, and finds one has taken in nothing. Or perhaps you awake at a paragraph which says :—

Alexander the Great . . built Alexandria in Egypt. . . Bucephalia, etc. And he had Thoughts also of reducing Mount Athos into the Shape of a Man. To raise on his left Hand a most ample City, and in his right to dig a large Bason, in which he designed to make a Conflux of all the Rivers which flow'd from the Mountain, and from thence tumble them into the Sea; a Project truly noble, and worthy of the Great Alexander.

Perhaps even you persevere to the final discourse of Bembo on the nature of love and beauty, with its slightly stagey reminiscence of the Socratic trance. It is here that he calls beauty the sign manifest and insignia of the past victories of the soul. But for all their eloquence, for all the cradling cadences of the Italian speech, I find nothing to prove that the conversation at Urbino was any better than that which I have heard in dingy studios or in restaurants about Soho. I feel that Urbino was charming, that the scene is worthy of Veronese; and especially I feel that no modern ambassador or court functionary could write half so fine a book as "Il Cortegiano." This proves nothing more nor less than that good talk and wide interest have abandoned court circles and taken up their abode in the studios, in quadriviis et angiportis.

Et in quadriviis et angiportis we have new topics, new ardours. We have lost the idolatry for the Greek which was one of the main forces of the Renaissance. We have kept, I believe, a respect for what was strong in the Greek, for what was sane in the Roman. We have other standards, we have gone on with the intentions of Pico, to China and Egypt.

The man among my friends who is loudest in his sighs for Urbino, and for lost beauty in general, has the habit of abusing modern art for its "want of culture." As a matter of fact, it is chiefly the impressionists he is intent on abusing, but like most folk of his generation, he "lumps the whole lot together." He

C176

C175 Continued

C176 Affirmations . . . V. Gaudier-Brzeska. *New Age*, XVI. 14 (4 Feb. 1915) 380–2.
Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916)—A10—pp. 121–30

says: They had no traditions and no education, and therefore they created an art that needed no introductory knowledge. This means that he separates the "impressionist" painters from the impressionist writers, but let that pass. Let us say that Manet and Monet and Renoir had no education; that the tradition of Crivelli's symbols meant less to them than the rendering of light and shadow. I shall not stop admiring their paintings. I shall not, for any argument whatsoever, cease to admire the work of minds creative and inventive in whatsoever form it may come or may have come. Nor, on the other hand, will I ever be brought to consider futurism as anything but gross cowardice. It may be that Italy was so sick that no other medicine could avail, but for any man, not a modern Italian, to shirk comparison with the best work of the past is gross cowardice. The Italian may shirk if he likes, but he will remain a parochial celebrity even so.

Urbino was charming for the contemporaries of Count Baldassar Castiglione. Most of Urbino's topics, not all, thank heaven, have been relegated to the "New Statesman." The Lord Michael Montaigne no longer keeps a conceited, wise note-book in private. "We" keep our journals in public print, and when we go wrong or make a side-slip we know it, we "hear of it," we receive intimations. I don't know that it matters. I am not even sure that we have lost the dignity of letters thereby, though we have lost the quiet security.

To return to my symboliste friend, I am not going to bother arguing the case for deceased impressionists; his phrase was that all "modern art" was the art of the ignorant; of the people who despised tradition not because they knew enough to know how far tradition might or might not be despicable, but who despised it without knowing what it was. I shall let other modern movements shift for themselves. But to bring such a charge against a movement having for one of its integral members Gaudier-Brzeska, is arrant nonsense.

Here is a man as well furnished with catalogued facts as a German professor, of the old type before the war-school; a man who knows the cities of Europe and who knows not merely the sculpture out of Reinach's Apollo but who can talk and think in the terms of world-sculpture and who is forever letting out odd packets of knowledge about primitive African tribes or of about Babylonia and Assyria, substantiated by quotations from the bulkiest authors, and who, moreover, carries this pack without pedantry and unbeknown to all save a few intimates.

Take, if you like, four typical vorticists: there is Brzeska, and another man digging about in recondite early woodcuts or in studies of Chinese painting, and another man mad about Korin, and another man whom even "The Spectator" has referred to as "learned." If these men set out to "produce horrors," obviously it is not from ignorance or from lack of respect for tradition. No. The sum of their so-called revolt is that they refuse to recognise parochial borders to the artistic tradition. That they think it not enough to be the best painter in Chelsea, S.W., or to excel all the past artists of Fulham. "Speak of perfection, my songs, and you will find yourselves exceedingly disliked." Vorticism refuses to discard any part of the tradition merely because it is a difficult bogey; because it is difficult perhaps to be as good a designer as Dürer, and is consequently more convenient to pretend that "the element of design is not so important."

There is another shibboleth of the artistic-slop crowd. It is the old cry about intellect being inartistic, or about art being "above," saving the word, "above" intellect. Art comes from intellect stirred by will, impulse, emotion, but art is emphatically not any of these others deprived of intellect, and out drunk on its 'lone, saying it is the "that which is beyond the intelligence."

There are, as has often been said, two sorts of artists: the artist who moves through his art, to whom it is truly a "medium" or a means of expression; and, secondly, there is the mediumistic artist, the one who can only exist in his art, who is passive to impulse, who approaches more or less nearly to the "sensitive," or to the somnambulistic "medium." The faculty of this second type is most useful as a part of the complete artist's equipment. And I do not hesitate to call Brzeska "complete artist." In him there is sculptural ability, that goes without saying, and there is "equipment" in the sense of wide knowledge of his art and of things outside it, and there is intellect. There is the correlating faculty, an ability to "arrange in order" not only the planes and volumes which are peculiarly of his art, but an ability for historical synthesis, an ability for bringing order into things apparently remote from the technique of his art.

In my paper on Epstein I referred to Brzeska's "Vortex" in Blast. It is not merely a remarkable document from a man whom people remember a twelve-month before as speaking English with difficulty, it is a remarkable arrangement of thought. I confess that I read it two or three times with nothing but a gaiety and exhilaration arising from the author's vigour of speech.

"They elevated the sphere in a splendid squatness and created the Horizontal.

"From Sargon to Amir-nasir-pal men built man-headed bulls in horizontal flight-walk. Men flayed their captives alive and erected howling lions: The Elongated Horizontal Sphere Buttressed on Four Columns, and their kingdoms disappeared."

I read that passage many times for the sake of its oratorical properties without bothering much for the meaning. Then a friend who detests vorticism but who "has to admire Gaudier-Brzeska," said rather reluctantly: "He has put the whole history of sculpture in three pages." It is quite true. He has summarised the whole history of sculpture. I said he had the knowledge of a German professor, but this faculty for synthesis is most untedescan.

The Paleolithic vortex, man intent upon animals. The Hamite vortex, Egypt, man in fear of the gods. The derivative Greek. The Semitic Vortex, lust of war. Roman and later decadence, Western sculpture, each impulse with corresponding effects on form. In like manner he analyses the Chinese and Mexican and Oceanic forms. The sphere, the vertical, the horizontal, the cylinder and the pointed cone; and then the modern movement.

Naturally this means nothing to anyone who has not thought about sculpture; to anyone who has not tried to think why the official sculpture is so deadly uninteresting.

"Sculptural energy is the mountain.

"Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation.

"Sculptural ability is the defining of these masses by planes."

I repeat what I said before; this Vortex Gaudier-Brzeska, which is the last three pages of "Blast," (the first number), will become the textbook in all academies of sculpture before our generation has passed from the earth. If "Blast" itself were no more than an eccentrically printed volume issued by a half dozen aimless young men, then you could afford to neglect it. "Blast" has not been neglected. "Blast" has been greatly reviled; that is natural. Michael Agnolo fled from Pisa to escape the daggers of the artists who feared his competition. "Blast" has behind it some of the best brains in England, a set of artists who know quite well what they want. It is therefore significant. The large type and the flaring cover are merely bright plumage. They are the gay petals which lure.

We have again arrived at an age when men can consider a statue as a statue. The hard stone is not the live coney. Its beauty cannot be the same beauty.

Art is a matter of capitals. I dare say there are still people, even in London, who have not arisen to the charm of the Egyptian and Assyrian galleries of the British Museum. If our detractors are going to talk about art in terms of "Pears Soap's Annual," and of the Royal Academy, one dismisses the matter. If they are men of good will, considering art in the terms of the world's masterwork, then we say simply: What is the charm in Assurbanipal's hunting? What is the charm in Isis with the young Horus between her knees and the green stone wings drawn tight about them? What is the æsthetic-dynamic basis for our enjoyment of these various periods? What are the means at the artist's disposal? What quality have the bronzes of Shang? And when they have answered these questions there is no longer any quarrel between us. There are questions of taste and of preference, but no dispute about art. So that we find the "men of traditions" in agreement or

in sympathy. We find the men of no traditions, or of provincial traditions, against us. We find the unthinking against us. We find the men whose minds have petrified at forty, or at fifty, or at twenty, most resolutely against us. And this petrifaction of the mind is one of the most curious phenomena that I have found in England. I am far from believing it to be peculiarly or exclusively English, but I have lived mostly in England since I began to take note of it. Before that I remember an American lawyer, a man of thirty, who had had typhoid and a long nervous illness. He was complaining that his mind "no longer took in things." It had lost its ability to open and grasp. He was fighting against this debility. In his case it was a matter of strength. With the second type it is, perhaps, a matter of will. This second type I have noticed mostly in England, but I think it would be the same from Portugal to Siberia.

This type of mind shuts, at eighteen, or at five and twenty, or at thirty or forty. The age of the closure varies but the effect is the same. You find a man young one week, interested, active, following your thought with his thought, parrying and countering, so that the thought you have between you is more alive than the thought you may have apart. And the next week (it is almost as sudden as that) he is senile. He is anchored to a dozen set phrases. He will deny a new thought about art. He will deny the potentialities of a new scientific discovery, without weighing either. You look sadly back over the gulf, as Ut Napishtim looked back at the shades of the dead, the live man is no longer with you. And then, like as not, some further process sets in. It is the sadisme of the intellect, it is blight of Tertullian. The man becomes not only a detester but a persecutor of living and unfolding ideas. He not only refuses them, but he wishes to prevent you from having them. He has gone from Elysium into the basso inferno. The speed of light, the absolute power of the planes in Egyptian sculpture have no charm left for such men. And the living move on without them.

So much for opponents. As for Brzeska's work itself: what more can I say of it? That I like it; that I believe in it; that I have lived with it; that its "definition of masses" seems to me expressive of emotional and intellectual forces; that I have bought such fragments as my limited means afford; that a man with Brzeska's skill could easily have a house in Park Lane and a seat in the Academy if he chose to make the pretty-pretties which the pink-satined bourgeoisie desire. (The sequence is easy: you make for the market, you become rich; being rich you are irresistible, honours are showered upon you.)

And it happens, this sculptor, instead of making pretty-pretties, chooses to make works of art. There are always two parties in "civilisation." There is the party which believes that the stability of property is the end and the all. There are those who believe that the aim of civilisation is to keep alive the creative, the intellectually-inventive-creative spirit and ability in man—and that a reasonable stability of property may be perhaps one of the many means to this end, or that it may not be detrimental, or even that it doesn't much matter. Because of this indifference to the stability of life and property on the part of one segment, this entire party is branded anarchic, or incendiary. "New art" is thought dangerous, and the dangerous is branded as "ugly." Those who fear the new art also hate it.

I had, for a long time, a "most hideous" Brzeska statue where the morning light came on it as it woke me, and because of this shifting light plane after plane, outline after expressive outline was given me day after day, emphasised, taken apart from the rest. This was a statue which I had chosen when I had but glanced at it and not fully taken it in. I cannot impose further tests. The beauty was first there in the mass. It was secondly there in the detail, which I now know thoroughly, and not merely as one knows a thing seen in the hurry of some exhibition. A man having this ability to make beauty which endures months of study and which does not decrease as you learn it more intimately, is what we call a great artist.

You, gracious reader, may be a charming woman who only like pretty men, a statue of a primitive man holding a rabbit may not be a matter of interest to you, but that is no reason for abusing the artist. Or, on the other hand, ferocious and intolerant reader, you may be a vigorous male, who like nothing save pretty women, and who despise feminine opinions about the arts. In either case you are quite right in saying that you dislike the new sculpture, you are being no more than honest. But there is no cause for calling it unenjoyable or even ugly, if you do you are but stupid, you hate the labour of beginning to understand a new form. As for me, I have no objection to "art as an Aphrodisiac," but there are other possible motifs.

And the "new form." What is it? It is what we have said. It is an arrangement of masses in relation. It is not an empty copy of empty Roman allegories that are themselves copies of copies. It is not a mimicry of external life. It is energy cut into stone, making the stone expressive in its fit and particular manner. It has regard to the stone. It is not something suitable for plaster or bronze, transferred to stone by machines and underlings. It regards the nature of the medium, of both the tools and the matter. These are its conventions and limits.

And if the accursed Germans succeed in damaging Gaudier-Brzeska they will have done more harm to art than they have by the destruction of Rheims Cathedral, for a building once made and recorded can, with some care, be remade, but the uncreated forms of a man of genius cannot be set forth by another.

C176 Continued

SYNCHROMATISM.

Sir,—Mr. Wright is a capital fellow, and no doubt wishes to do well by the Synchromatists. I apologise for being so behindhand with this letter, but I wish to challenge his statement re Vorticism and Futurism.

I venture to suggest that Mr. Wright's knowledge of "Vorticist" work is confined to the once decorations of the "Cabaret." Not having seen any Synchromatist work (which exists, I believe, in New York), I do not venture to say who were its parents.

I do ask in the name of common sense what work of Gaudier-Brzeska's, for instance, can by any flight of fancy be traced to Futurism; or what work of my own in verse; or where there is any trace of Futurism in Lewis' "Timon of Athens." As for the principles of Vorticism and Futurism they are in direct or almost direct opposition.

I think Mr. Wright's enthusiasm for the Synchromatists has led him into some exaggeration in a matter irrelevant to his main theme.

America has, I believe, one excellent Futurist and professed "Futurist," Stella, and one poet who practices the Futurist method, Vachel Lindsey.

Thought is not helped by a confusion such as Mr. Wright himself terms "the public's habit of generalising on topics of which it is ignorant." Mr. Wright's charge is too vague. Let him, if he likes, work out some elaborate thesis to prove that organised opposition is a species of descent. Let him adduce details based on careful study and an examination of intention. But let him desist from flinging mud merely in order to be able to put his Synchromatists at the top of an imaginary pyramid.

Judging from print and not from pictures, which are for the present inaccessible, Synchromatism would seem to be a praiseworthy department of expressionism, making legitimate experiments in colour, but that is no reason why their advocates should call names and speak unsubstantiable abuse of others who are, at least for the present, inclined to regard Synchromatism with friendly eye. The question of what Mr. Wright means by "rationalising the palate" is not one that we would care to discuss until we have seen the painted results.

Are the Synchromatists working with colour as the Vorticist works with colour and form? In which case where is Mr. Wright's charge against Vorticism? Also, is his Minerva sprung from the forehead of Kandinsky?

EZRA POUND.

C177

VORTICISM.

Sir,—Your printer has put "primary figment" instead of "primary pigment" in the last paragraph of my article (January 28). The phrase as it stands will doubtless give pleasure to many of your readers, but it does not convey my original meaning.

Mr. Duncan's letter is most elaborate, but why drag in God? Let us be good Catholics; shut Palgrave's "Golden Treasury" out of the schools in certain districts that I might name, on the ground that it is an immoral work; and believe that God is the Summa Intelligentia, or believe that Helen of Troy has taken the sins of the world upon her and that "Thais is her last incarnation." Charming, but aside from the argument.

Mr. Duncan's discussion also contains another naïve statement: roughly, that Marco Polo went to China, therefore our present interest in the profundities of Chinese art is invalid.

Mr. Schiffsbauer is a "very humble" philosopher; he shines through the holes in his alias and is a cenotaph to the year 1912. EZRA POUND.

C178

Affirmations.

By Ezra Pound.

VI.

Analysis of this Decade.

THE Renaissance is a convenient stalking-horse for all young men with ideas. You can prove anything you like by the Renaissance; yet, for all that, there seems to be something in the study of the quattrocento which communicates vigour to the student of it, especially to such scholars as have considered the whole age, the composite life of the age, in contradistinction to those who have sentimentalised over its æsthetics. Burckhardt writes in German with the verve of the best French heavy prose. Villari's Italian is thoroughly Germanised; he writes always with an eye on modern national development for Italy, he has presumably an atrocious taste in pictures, he is out of sympathy with many of the Renaissance enthusiasms, and yet manages to be interesting and most shrewd in his critical estimates, even of things he dislikes (e.g., though he speaks with reverence of Raphael, he sees quite clearly the inferiority of Renaissance painting to the painting which went before, and attributes it to the right lack of energy).

Whatever one's party, the Renaissance is perhaps the only period in history that can be of much use to one—for the adducing of pious examples, and for showing "horrible results." It may be an hallucination, but one seems able to find modern civilisation in its simple elements in the Renaissance. The motive ideas were not then confused and mingled into so many fine shades and combinations one with the other.

Never was the life of arts so obviously and conspicuously intermingled with the life of power. Rightly or wrongly, it is looked back to as a sort of golden age for the arts and for the literati, and I suppose no student, however imperfect his equipment, can ever quite rest until he has made his own analysis, or written out his own book or essay. I shall not do that here; I shall only draw up a brief table of forces: first, those which seem to me to have been the effective propaganda of the Renaissance; secondly, those which seem to me the acting ideas of this decade—not that they are exclusively of this decade, but it seems that they have, in this decade, come in a curious way into focus, and have become at least in some degree operative. I shall identify the motive ideas in each case with the men who may, roughly, be considered as their incarnations or exponents.

The Renaissance, as you have all read forty times, was "caused" by the invention of printing and the consequently increased rapidity in the multiplication of books, by the fall of Constantinople (which happened after the Renaissance was somewhat well under way, granting that it—the Renaissance—had not been more or less under way since the fall of Rome). However, let us say that various causes worked together and caused, or assisted or accelerated, a complex result. The fall of Constantinople made necessary new trade routes, drove Columbus into the West Indies, sent Crisolora to Florence with a knowledge of Greek, and Filelfo to Milan with a bad temper. And these things synchronised with "the revival of classicism," and just preceded the shaping up of mediæval Europe into more or less the modern "great States."

This "revival of classicism," a very vague phrase, is analysable, at the start, into a few very different men, with each one a very definite propaganda.

You had, for instance, Ficino, seized in his youth by Cosimo dei Medici and set to work translating a Greek that was in spirit anything but "classic." That is to say, you had ultimately a "Platonic" academy messing up Christian and Pagan mysticism, allegory, occultism, demonology, Trismegistus, Psellus, Porphyry, into a most eloquent and exciting and exhilarating hotch-potch, which "did for" the mediæval fear of the *dies iræ* and for human abasement generally. Ficino himself writes of Hermes Trismegistus in a New Testament Latin, and arranges his chronology by co-dating Hermes' great-grandfather with Moses.

Somewhat later Pico writes his "De Dignitate" in endless periods, among which is one so eloquent that it is being continually quoted.

Pico della Mirandola based his own propaganda on what we should call a very simple and obvious proposition. He claimed that science and knowledge generally were not, or, at least, should not, or need not be, grounded solely and exclusively on the knowledge of the Greeks and Romans. This created horrible scandal. People had indeed heard of Arabs and Hebrews, but this scoundrelly Pico insisted that there were still other languages and unexplored traditions. It was very inconvenient to hear that one was not omniscient. It still is. It was equally bad when Erasmus wanted scholars to begin using accent-marks over Greek letters. I sympathise with the scholars who objected to being bothered with "Tittle-tattles."

The finest force of the age, I think, came early—came from Lorenzo Valla. He had a great passion for exactness, and he valued the Roman vortex. By philology, by the "harmless" study of language, he dissipated the donation of Constantine. The revival of Roman Law, while not his private act, was made possible or accelerated by him. His dictum that eloquence and dialectic were one—i.e., that good sense is the backbone of eloquence—is still worth considering. I suppose anyone will now admit it in theory. Also, he taught the world once more how to write Latin, which was perhaps valuable. Seeing that they were drawing much of their thought from Latin sources, a lively familiarity with that tongue could not but clarify their impressions.

At this time, also, observation came back into vogue, stimulated, some say, by a reading of classics. The thing that mattered was a revival of the sense of realism: the substitution of Homer for Virgil; the attitude of Odysseus for that of the snivelling Æneas, who was probably not so bad as Virgil makes out.

As Valla had come to exactness, it was possible for Machiavelli to write with clarity. I do not wish to become entoiled in the political phases save in so far as they are inextricably bound in with literature. Tyranny, democracy, etc., these things were, in the quattrocento and cinquecento, debatable ideas, transient facts. None of them could be taken for granted. In Machiavelli's prose we have a realism born perhaps from Valla's exactness and the realism of Homer, both coming to Machiavelli indirectly.

And in the midst of these awakenings Italy went to rot, destroyed by rhetoric, destroyed by the periodic sentence and by the flowing paragraph, as the Roman Empire had been destroyed before her. For when words cease to cling close to things, kingdoms fall, empires wane and diminish. Rome went because it was no longer the fashion to hit the nail on the head. They desired orators. And, curiously enough, in the mid-

C179

C178 ✉ Vorticism. *New Age*, XVI. 14 (4 Feb. 1915) 391.

C179 Affirmations . . . VI. Analysis of This Decade. *New Age*, XVI. 15 (11 Feb. 1915) 409–11.
Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916)—A10—pp. 133–41.

Renaissance, rhetoric and floridity were drawn out of the very Greek and Latin revival that had freed the world from mediævalism and Aquinas.

Quintilian "did for" the direct sentence. And the Greek language was made an excuse for more adjectives. I know no place where this can be more readily seen than in the Hymns to the Gods appended to Divus' translation of the Odyssey into Latin. The attempt to reproduce Greek by Latin produced a new dialect that was never spoken and had never before been read. The rhetoric got into painting. The habit of having no definite conviction save that it was glorious to reflect life in a given determined costume or decoration "did for" the painters.

Our thought jumps from the Renaissance to the present because it is only recently that men have begun to combat the Renaissance. I do not mean that they merely react against it; that was done in the hideous and deadening counter-reformation; but we have begun deliberately to try to free ourselves from the Renaissance shackles, as the Renaissance freed itself from the Middle Ages.

We may regard all the intervening movements as revivals of the Renaissance or as continuations of special phases: for instance, the various forms of "classicism" getting "colder and colder," or more and more florid. Rousseau was almost born out of his due time, and Napoleon is but an exaggerated condottiere to the very detail of the Roman robe in which he surmounts the column Vendôme. It would be quite possible to sustain the thesis that we are still a continuation of certain Renaissance phases, that we still follow one or two dicta of Pico or Valla. But we have in so many ways made definite a divergence (not a volte-face, because we are scarcely returning to pious Catholicism or to limited mediævalism). It is easier, it is clearer, to call this age a new focus. By focus I do not in the least mean that the forces focussed are in themselves new inventions. I mean that they begin to act. I mean, also, that the results are decidedly different from the results of Renaissance theory and æsthetics. It is not long since Springer wrote: "Durch Raffael ist das madonnenideal Fleisch geworden." We remove ourselves from the state of mind of Herr Springer.

A certain number of fairly simple and now obvious ideas moved the Renaissance; their ramifications and interactions are still a force with the people. A certain number of simple and obvious ideas, running together and interacting, are making a new, and to many a most obnoxious, art. I need scarcely say that there were many people to whom the art of the quattrocento and the paganism of the Renaissance seemed equally damnable, unimportant, obnoxious. It was "Rome or Geneva." I shall give these simple ideas of this decade as directly as I have given the ideas which seem to me to be the motifs of the Renaissance. I shall give the names of men who embody them. I shall make some few explanations and no apology whatsoever.

Ford Hueffer, a sense of the *mot juste*. The belief that poetry should be at least as well written as prose, and that "good prose is just your conversation."

This is out of Flaubert and Turgenev and Stendhal, and what you will. It is not invention, but focus. I know quite well that Wordsworth talked about "common words," and that Leigh Hunt wrote to Byron advising him against clichés. But it did not deter Byron from clichés. The common word is not the same thing as *mot juste*, not by a long way. And it is possible to write in a stilted and bookish dialect without using clichés. When I say the idea "becomes operative" here I presumably mean that Mr. Hueffer is the first man who has made enemies by insisting on these ideas in England. That matter can be discussed, and it will aid to the clarity of the discussion if we discuss it quite apart from your opinion or my opinion of Mr. Hueffer's work "as a whole" or in detail.

Myself, an active sense not merely of comparative literature, but of the need for a uniform criticism of excellence based on world-poetry, and not of the fashion of any one particular decade of English verse, or even on English verse as a whole. The qualitative analysis in literature (practised but never formulated by Gaston Paris, Reinach in his Manual of Classical Philology, etc.). The Image.

Wyndham Lewis, a great faculty of design, synthesis of modern art movements, the sense of emotion in abstract design. A sense of the import of design not bounded by Continental achievement. A sense of dynamics.

Barzun's question: Pourquoi doubler l'image?

Gaudier-Brzeska. In him the "new" sculptural principle becomes articulate. "The feeling of masses in relation." (Practised by Epstein and countless "primitives" outside the Hellenic quasi-Renaissance tradition.) General thorough knowledge of world-sculpture. Sense of a standard not limited by 1870 or 1905.

Edward Wadsworth, sense of the need of "radicals in design," an attempt toward radicals in design. A feeling for ports and machines (most certainly not peculiar to himself, but I think a very natural and personal tendency, unstimulated in his case by Continental propaganda).

I consider this one of the age-tendencies, springing up naturally in many places and coming into the arts quite naturally and spontaneously in England, in America, and in Italy. We all know the small boy's delight in machines. It is a natural delight in a beauty that had not been pointed out by professional æsthetes. I remember young men with no care for æsthetics who certainly would not know what the devil this article was about, I remember them examining machinery catalogues, to my intense bewilderment, commenting on machines that certainly they would never own and that could never by any flight of fancy be of the least use to them. This enjoyment of machinery is just as natural and just as significant a phase of this age as was the Renaissance "enjoyment of nature for its own sake," and not merely as an illustration of dogmatic ideas. The modern sense of the value of the "creative, constructive individual" (vide Allan Upward's constant propaganda, etc., etc.) is just as definite a doctrine as the Renaissance attitude De Dignitate, Humanism. As for external stimulus, new discoveries, new lands, new languages gradually opened to us; we have great advantage over the cinque- or quattro-cento.

Ernest Fenollosa's finds in China and Japan, his intimate personal knowledge, are no less potent than Crisolora's manuscripts. China is no less stimulating than Greece, even if Fenollosa had not had insight. And this force of external stimuli is certainly not limited by "what we do"; these new masses of unexplored arts and facts are pouring into the vortex of London. They cannot help but bring about changes as great as the Renaissance changes, even if we set ourselves blindly against it. As it is, there is life in the fusion. The complete man must have more interest in things which are in seed and dynamic than in things which are dead, dying, static.

The interest and perhaps a good deal of the force of the group I mention lie in the fact that they have perfectly definite intentions; that they are, if you like, "arrogant" enough to dare to intend "to wake the dead" (quite as definitely as Cyriac of Ancona), that they dare to put forward specifications for a new art, quite as distinct as that of the Renaissance, and that they do not believe it impossible to achieve these results.

Many parallels will rise in the mind of the reader; I have only attempted certain obscure ones. The external forces of the Renaissance have been so often presented that one need not expatiate upon them. Certain inner causes are much less familiar, for which reason it has seemed worth while to underline the "simple directions" of Pico and Crisolora and Valla, and the good and evil of Greek. The Renaissance sought a realism and attained it. It rose in a search for precision and declined through rhetoric and rhetorical thinking, through a habit of defining things always "in the terms of something else."

Whatever force there may be in our own decade and vortex is likewise in a search for a certain precision; in a refusal to define things in the terms of something else; in the "primary pigment." The Renaissance sought for a lost reality, a lost freedom. We seek for a lost reality and a lost intensity. We believe that the Renaissance was in part the result of a programme. We believe in the value of a programme in contradistinction to, but not in contradiction of, the individual impulse. Without such vagrant impulse there is no art, and the impulse is not subject to programme. The use and the limitation of force need not bring about mental confusion. An engine is not a confusion merely because it uses the force of steam and the physical principles of the lever and piston.

C179 Continued

IMAGISME.

Sir,—If your correspondent, re this subject, will turn back to my article on "Vorticism" (NEW AGE, January 14), she will, perhaps, be able to understand what I mean by the relation of pattern and emotion.

I do not pretend to understand the mind of Pyramus, neither can I explain why an electrical current generates pattern (demonstrable through certain instruments), nor why grass seed grows into grass (under certain conditions), nor why acorns grow into oaks, or why salt tastes salty.

Energy creates pattern. Defective pattern is a symptom of defective energy. The result in terms of pattern is a test of energy. Similarly (since it seems that your correspondent desires above all things an explicit statement), if your correspondent finds an oak she may form a fairly accurate guess that it sprang, at some more or less remote period, from an acorn.

Secondly, regarding metaphor. To call Mr. Thompson an "egg," as does your correspondent, is not to use what I mean by explanatory metaphor. The term "egg" in this case is merely a vague figurative expression, used because said correspondent couldn't take the trouble to find some more precise expression.

When a very young child goes up to an electric light switch and says, "may I *open* the light"; when Dante uses some precise terms like that of the "brand struck on the hearth" to present some visionary apparition in his Paradise; when the early Chinese ideographist, wishing, in picture language, to express the idea "to ramble or visit," first made a diagram of *a king and a dog sitting on the stern of a boat,* they are each in his way using "explanatory metaphor," or the "language of exploration."

Anyone whose mind will stand consecutive use will be able readily to distinguish between this sort of speech and the vague application of expressions culled from literature and journalism and applied indefinitely as rhetoric and as decoration. In the latter case there is a shirking of precise expression, in the former there is a groping out into a place where no expression as yet exists. It is the difference between slovenliness and exploration.

EZRA POUND.

T.P.'s Weekly, Feb. 20, 1915.

IMAGISME AND ENGLAND.

A Vindication and an Anthology. By Ezra Pound.

"THERE are two sorts of poetry which are to me the most interesting, the most *poetic*. The one is that sort of poetry where music, sheer melody, seems as if it were *just coming over into speech;* the other, where painting or sculpture seems as if it were just forcing itself to words." The first has long been called lyric. You are able to discern a *lyric* passage in a drama or in a long poem not lyric in its entirety. The second sort of poetry is as old and as distinct, but until recently no one had named it. We now call it *Imagist*, it is not a new invention, it is a critical discrimination.

Apart from this new and more articulate designation of "The Image" certain writers have dared to say openly that poetry ought to be written "at least as well as prose," and if possible with greater concentration and pertinence.

Objections from the gallery: "Oh, it's French, you'll never get it in England." "It's Chinese, you can't do it in English."

Yes, gentlemen, precisely, it is French, and Chinese, and Greek, and Latin, *and* English.

The Possibilities of English.

They say that when they wished to make William Morris forget his gout they praised Milton to him. His rage was based on his firm conviction that Milton was a d——d rhetorician and that "a good poet *makes pictures*."

The English language is composed, roughly speaking, of Anglo-Saxon, Latin and French. Imagisme exists in all three of these languages; in the Anglo-Saxon "Seafarer," in Catullus' "Collis o Heliconiei," and in "Charles D'Orleans." It is ridiculous to say that a form of poetry, a form of beauty, which is possible in each of these three main components, is *impossible* in the language which results from picking the best and the strongest elements from each of the others.

As for Chinese, it is quite true that we have sought the force of Chinese ideographs *without knowing it*. As for the unsuitability of English to that purpose, I have now by me the papers of the late Ernest Fenollosa, sometime Imperial Commissioner of Art in Tokyo. He certainly knew more about this matter than anyone else whose opinion we are likely to get at.

In his essay on the Chinese written character he expressly contends that English, being the strongest and least inflected of the European languages, is precisely the one language best suited to render the force and the concision of the uninflected Chinese.

But to English itself. Has there been Imagisme in English poetry? Is it part of the insular tradition? It most certainly has existed and been part of the tradition, unconsciously perhaps. That is to say it has been part of the poets' tradition, not part of the critics' tradition, save for that one phrase of Morris. Keats, let us say, exists by virtue of his Imagisme, despite the fact that his language often lacks the directness of prose, and that those who dislike him, dislike him because of a certain lack of hardness.

In Anglo-Saxon.

Let us, however, begin at the beginning, or before it, in some lines of the Anglo-Saxon "Seafarer," where he speaks of winter at sea. They translate as follows:—

> There I heard naught save the harsh sea
> And ice-cold wave, at whiles the swan cries.
> Did for my games the gannet's clamour,
> Sea-fowls' loudness was for me laughter,
> The mew's singing, all my mead-drink.
> Storms, on the stone-cliffs beaten, fell on the stern
> In icy feathers, full oft the eagle screamed
> With spray on his pinion.

However, I was asked to find Imagisme in "The Standard Authors," and I suppose the anonymous author of "The Seafarer" is not yet a standard author. Chaucer is, at any rate, and the figures of the "Canterbury Tales" stand before us because they speak and move to the life. They, also, are not matter for debate. The wife of Bath was "some deal deaf." She had better cloth on her back than what you'd get at Ypres or Ghent. Her hose were red scarlet, pulled up tight. The merchant had a forked beard. And the goddess Venus is not an abstraction or an allegory, we find her:—

> "Going in a quaint array,
> As she had been an hunteresse,
> With wind blowing upon her tress."

If Chaucer is the supreme lyrist (and he is the supreme lyrist in such ballades as:—

> "Hide, Absalon thy gilte tresses clere,"

in the legend of "Good Women," and whenever he wishes to be), he is also the supreme imagist. Within the limits of his art no one has ever surpassed him.

I am a little tired of the critics who prove everything by Shakespeare. Shakespeare is, perhaps, at his best when he is most like Chaucer. And, of course, "everything is in Shakespeare," even Imagisme, "that sad just brought over from Paris" (where it hardly exists at present). Turn to your "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," and read that passage like a painting by Botticelli:—

> "Behold she comes apparelled like the spring."

Turn to your Hamlet, where the author has written:—

> "The dawn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew on yon high eastward hill:

or the queen's line:—

> "And with the incorporal air do hold discourse"

where he has made unreality indisputable. (Incidentally this is one of the plays in which we find the greatest amount of *vers libre.*)

But perhaps it is not fair to prove things by Shakespeare. (They say he was a German . . . as the "owl was a baker's daughter.")

Swinburne, who is the most uneven of the Victorian poets and the most splendid, will, if you search, give over many passages of Imagisme, conforming also to the dogma that verse should have an order as lucid as prose:—

> "Mine oarsmen, labouring with brown throats,
> Sang of me many a tender thing.
> My maidens, girdled loose and braced
> With gold from bosom to white waist,
> Praised me between their wool-combing."

They attacked Swinburne because they said he was setting sound above sense. They attack the *vers libre* movement because the new writers are said to put sense above sound.

The Case of Browning.

Browning is, of course, remembered for obscurities and for clear delineation. His most wonderful poem is perhaps the abused "Sordello," and if one have read it six times, or even if one have only read it once and doesn't in the least know what it is all about, there clings ever in one's memory that image of the upper room with the Caryatides, and the lonely little boy sitting with the statues for company in the twilight. It is the passage in the first book beginning:—

> "Goito; just a castle built amid
> A few low mountains; firs and larches hid
> Their main defiles, and rings of vineyard bound
> The rest."

Out of all Wordsworth, the most poetic and the one unforgettable passage is that one about the little boy in the "Prologue," stealing a boat and rowing out on to a dark lake, and then getting very frightened and rowing back breathless. It is an image.

And then they come to me about metre. I haven't space to fight about metre. Let us take the most avowedly and patently English of the recent poets, Lionel Johnson. Here is a line of Imagisme from his work:—

> "Clear lie the fields, and fade into blue air:"

Could anything be more Chinese? Could anything be more like the thought of a Chinese painter? Does any sane man care a hang whether his printer sets this up as one line, or whether he marks the rhythm more clearly by printing it:—

> "Clear lie the fields,
> And fade into blue air."

Affirmations.

By Ezra Pound.

VII.

The Non-existence of Ireland.

"CELTS! There are no Celts," said the voice contemptuously, "they were entirely obliterated by the early Dravidian races." That was six years ago, when I came up to London, a provincial, the pilgrim in search of literary shrines, etc. The first man I asked about the Celtic Renaissance was a large man with an abnormally large red moustache. "Irish Renaissance," he said; "there is no Irish Renaissance. Mr. Yeats has carefully collected every scrap of réclame which accrued to that movement, and taken it back with him into Ireland." The second man of letters of whom I inquired, made me the above reply about Dravidians, and I thought them hard men of the world, devoid of all finer feelings. Since that date I have watched what for want of a better name we must call the "progress of letters," and during this half of a decade I am compelled to say that I have seen no adequate proofs of the continued existence of Ireland.

Colum, whose work I admire, has almost stopped writing. When I meet an elderly member of the "Irish Literary" society he runs over a catalogue of names which are precisely the same set of names I heard before I came up to London. At that time they were "going to write" or had written verses of promise. I suppose they are still in that position, as one looks in vain for further achievement. One still hears the same myths about Ireland making ironclads and having developed stage-plays in the fifth century of our era. One still hears that the Gaelic bards were very accomplished, and had ten rhymes to a line, but these things only indicate a past existence of Ireland, something like that of Atlantis. True, I meet occasional charming people who claim to be Irish and who arrive via King's Cross, but who may, for all I know to the contrary, be impostors from Arran or Skye. We know that Napoleon read Ossian, which came out of Scotland. We know that a similar wave of enthusiasm, like in kind; but considerably less in degree, spread from a more recent bevy of Irish writers, who have apparently no part in the present decade.

I accept Ireland, then, as the creation of certain writers; I can even accept the peasant as a passing but pleasant fiction. Here is a charming prose book by one Joseph Campbell. It is called "Mearing Stones," and purports to be notes on a walking journey. It interests me largely because Mr. Campbell has been content to present a series of brief pictures in prose. He has cast over the attempt at continuous narrative which has spoiled so many books of walking since Heine.

Campbell says he talked with peasants. He gives snatches of talk which have something of Synge's richness about them, but nothing of Synge's abundance. Mr. Campbell says he has seen a peasant, but he also writes that he has seen and talked with a leprechaun, so I do not know how far we can rely on his evidence.

Careful study of modern print leaves me convinced of two things, first, that there are a few dozen worthy and entertaining writers of fiction who call themselves Irish, and secondly that there is an incredible bog or slum or inferno of blackness somewhere in swamps off Liverpool which produces the "Irish Papers." For example, I take up a sheet purporting to come from a place called "Belfast" and read: "The vulgarities, obscenities, and blasphemies of the late decadent Mr. Synge—as witness 'The Playboy of the Western World.'" Gentle reader, can it possibly matter what becomes of a place that writes like that? Can a dignified empire care two straws whether or no it keeps or casts off a province where this passes for public opinion?

Synge was before our decade. He is, I suppose, the only modern dramatist who profoundly moves us. At least he is the one modern man to whom we without exception give the title "Great Dramatist." His fame is not of one country. His contemporaries did little or nothing save cheapen and "hurry the tempo" of the social drama as bequeathed them by Ibsen. Synge claimed Irish descent. He was indeed part of a past and mythical Ireland. When Ireland turned against Synge's genius it (Ireland) ceased, quite simply, to exist. Perhaps it behaved no worse than other provinces have behaved; for that I cannot answer. But when Ireland turned against Synge it ceased to be of any more importance than any other unclassified slum of Cardiff or Birmingham.

A man of genius cannot help where he is born, and Ireland has no claim upon Synge. It did not produce him. And we for our part have no need to accept Ireland on Synge's account. A nation's claim to a man depends not upon the locality of his birth, but upon their ability to receive him. Synge was the product of Paris and Arran, and the dramatic form of his expression depends upon the chance that a little and generally despised theatre, run in opposition to Ireland, happened to be there to receive him.

I would get away from the term "Irish Movement," I would put an end to the confusion between a few hated individuals whom we respect, and the so-called "nation" of Ireland. The Irish writers who are any good are apparently of two classes, both of which escape from "Ireland"—the one is driven abroad, the other is driven into the wilderness. For example, Mr. Campbell is most Celtic. Blindfold Mr. Campbell, set him down on any other cliff with due allowance of mist and the usual accoutrements, and Mr. Campbell, full of mythology, would evolve stuff quite as good as that which he now produces, but which would owe no shadow of debt to geographical Ireland. Even James Stephens, whom one would think, in all conscience, a mild enough writer, has chosen a life in Paris. Coming down to the present, I can find only one man calling himself Irish who is in any sense part of the decade. I refer to the exile James Joyce. Synge fled to Paris, driven out presumably by the local stupidity. Joyce has fled to Trieste and into the modern world. And in the calm of that foreign city he has written books about Ireland. There are many books about Ireland. But Joyce's books are in prose. I mean they are written in what we call "prose" par excellence.

If there is anything wearying in this life it is "arty" unmetrical writing; the spilling out of ornaments and sentimental melancholy that came in the wake of the neo-symbolist writers and which has had more than its day in Ireland, as it has had elsewhere. It is a joy then to find in Mr. Joyce a hardness and gauntness, "like the side of an engine"; efficient; clear statement, no shadow of comment, and behind it a sense of beauty that never relapses into ornament. So far as I know there are only two writers of prose fiction of my decade whom anyone takes in earnest. I mean Mr. Joyce and Mr. D. H. Lawrence.* Of these two the latter is undoubtedly a writer of some power. I have never envied Mr. Lawrence, though I have often enjoyed him. I do not want to write, even good stories, in a loaded ornate style, heavy with sex, fruity with a certain sort of emotion. Mr. Lawrence has written also some short narrative poems in dialects which are worthy of admiration.

Mr. Joyce writes the sort of prose I should like to write were I a prose writer. He writes, and one perhaps only heaps up repetitions and epithets in trying to describe any good writing; he writes with a clear hardness, accepting all things, defining all things in clean outline. He is never in haste. He writes as a European, not as a provincial. He is not "a follower in Mr. Wells' school" or in any school whatsoever. Life is there. Mr. Joyce looks without bewilderment. He finds no need to disguise things to himself. He writes with no trace of morbidity. The sordid is there, but he does not seek for the sordid. He has the sense of abundant beauty. Often we find a writer who can get a certain delusive sense of "power" out of "strong" situations, or by describing rough life. Mr. Joyce is not forced into this. He presents his people regardless of "bareness," regardless of their not being considered "romantic" or "realistic" material. And when he has written they stand so that the reader says to himself, "this thing happened"; "this is not a magazine story made to please some editor, or some current taste, or to 'ring a bell in the last paragraph.'" His work is not a mode, not a literary endeavour.

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*A critic, whom I respect, frequently quotes a pseudonymous romance—"The Maid's Comedy"—which I have unfortunately never read.

C182 Affirmations . . . VII. The Non-existence of Ireland. *New Age*, XVI. 17 (25 Feb. 1915) 451–3.
A brief paragraph (with reference to J. M. Synge) was reprinted in *Agenda*, XVII. 3/4/XVIII. 1 (Autumn/Winter/Spring 1979/1980) 71.

Let us presume that Ireland is ignorant of Mr. Joyce's existence, and that if any copy of his works ever reaches that country it will be reviled and put on the index. For ourselves, we can be thankful for clear, hard surfaces, for an escape from the softness and mushiness of the neo-symbolist movement, and from the fruitier school of the neo-realists, and in no less a degree from the phantasists who are the most trivial and most wearying of the lot. All of which attests the existence of Mr. Joyce, but by no means the continued existence of Ireland.

The south will, I suppose, rise against me for quoting a Belfast paper. But the south was no more open to Synge than is Belfast. Dublin is, I suppose, no better than Belfast. It is only chance or politics that brings either place to one's notice. And even the politics may, for all one hears to the contrary, be cooked up in England or in Germany or in my own country. Still Dublin did get its name into print a year or so ago in connection with certain pictures. Sir Hugh Lane offered that city a collection of Corots, Degas, Manets, etc.

I have no interest in Sir Hugh Lane. He is, for all I know, a picture dealer and connoisseur with some sort of flair for what is valuable and for what is about to increase in price, and no sort of interest in the creative faculty in art, or in changing and living artists, or in the art of the present. His mind has, we may presume, petrified. It works up to Degas, perhaps even to Cézanne and Gauguin, all of whom are certainly "valuable" painters in the sense that you run no financial risk in buying their pictures, and that any banker or broker would commend their possession. I say this not because of any desire to present an imaginary character sketch of a man whom I never have met and whom there is no likelihood of my meeting, and with whom it is unlikely that I should agree upon any contemporary subject. I have no brief, then, for Sir Hugh Lane.

I narrate simply a fact in the history of Dublin. Sir Hugh Lane offered to that city a valuable collection of pictures by painters the value of whose work is no more in dispute than is the value of Rembrandt or Titian. And the city of Dublin seized the opportunity for making a gratuitous display of the abysmal depth of its ignorance and stupidity. They clamoured in so many words for pictures like "those beautiful works which we see in our city art shops." (Pears' Annual, we presume.) They refused the Lane collection with insults. It seems needless to offer more comment.

Dublin claims, or aspires, to be the capital of a nation. There is no city even in America so small or so provincial that it would not have welcomed these pictures. I say this to get into focus. There is no State, no recently promoted territory in the Union, which has not more claim to being a nation in itself than has this "John Bull's Other Island," this stronghold of ignorance and obstruction. Ireland is judged so little from the outside and so little save by its own factions that it seems almost worth while for me to set down these statements, seeing that I am a stranger who had once a predisposition to respect the Irish nation, and who has certainly nothing but the most kindly of feelings towards every Irishman whom I have ever met. I cannot remember quarrelling with any Irishman whatsoever. I usually enjoy their conversation, until they become aged and glue their eyes resolutely upon some single date in the past. But I simply cannot accept the evidence that they have any worth *as a nation*, or that they have any function in modern civilisation, save perhaps to decline and perish if that can be called a function.

"But there still remains Mr. Shaw!" Surely Mr. Shaw is at his busiest, and engaged precisely in fulfilling this function. Mr. Shaw goes down into the limbo of those who put their trust in abstractions. As a dramatist he has trivialised Ibsen; he has done very little more. He has amused us. He has amused us immensely. He has left a few permanently charming characters for comedy, slight sketches, such as the boy and the girl and the waiter in "You Never Can Tell." He has given us one intense scene in the farce about "Androcles." He subsides, a spent bomb, a bit of cast-iron shrapnel. His sternest furies have been in the debate as to whether "Mary should live her own life," which means to Mr. Shaw's genteel mind: Should Mary go to bed at ten o'clock or eleven. Mr. Shaw is the genteel type, the type of middle-class Ireland.

But even in this voluminous writer we can find no proof of continued Irish existence.

AFFIRMATIONS.

Sir,—M. Jean Triboulet est très reconnaissant. His parable of the two prisoners is full of marrow. I write this from the heart of nature to which I have returned early and often. I suspect that Monsieur J. T. has not.

Miss Stone, on the contrary, flatters herself. It is to friend Triboulet that I am most indebted.

Were we to follow Mr. Hertslet's logical method, we would be forced to call Mr. Wyndham Lewis' painting "incomparable."

That was not my intention, and I doubt if it can have been Mr. Hertslet's.

Tout à vous. EZRA POUND.

Heart of nature after seven weeks of it.

February 20, 1915.

P.S.—Does Miss Morning really think I shall do any harm to Titian at this date?

Does my writing lead her to think that I do not enjoy Memling and Clouet?

Does she find no difference between the direction of my propaganda and that of the destructionists?

Who most respects the masterwork of the past, one who battens upon it, cheapening or deadening its effect by a multitude of bad imitations, or one who strives toward new interpretations of life? E. P.

C183

C182 Continued

C183 ✉ Affirmations. *New Age*, XVI. 17 (25 Feb. 1915) 471.

MARCH, 1915

POEMS

PROVINCIA DESERTA

T Rochecoart,
Where the hills part
in three ways,
And three valleys, full of winding roads,
Fork out to south and north,
There is a place of trees . . . gray with lichen.
I have walked there
thinking of old days.
At Chalais
is a pleached arbor;
Old pensioners and old protected women
Have the right there—
it is charity.
I have crept over old rafters,
peering down
Over the Dronne,
over a stream full of lilies.
Eastward the road lies,
Aubeterre is eastward,
With a garrulous old man at the inn.
I know the roads in that place:
Mareuil to the north-east,
La Tour,
There are three keeps near Mareuil,
And an old woman,
glad to hear Arnaut,
Glad to lend one dry clothing.

I have walked
into Perigord,
I have seen the torch-flames, high-leaping,
Painting the front of that church,
And, under the dark, whirling laughter.
I have looked back over the stream
and seen the high building,
Seen the long minarets, the white shafts.
I have gone in Ribeyrac
and in Sarlat,
I have climbed rickety stairs, heard talk of Croy,
Walked over En Bertran's old layout,
Have seen Narbonne, and Cahors and Chalus,
Have seen Excideuil, carefully fashioned.

C184 POEMS. *Poetry*, V. 6 (Mar. 1915) 251–7.
Contents: Provincia deserta—Image from D'Orleans—The Spring—The Coming of War: Actaeon—The Gipsy—Dogmatic Statement Concerning the Game of Chess: Theme for a Series of Pictures.

I have said:
"Here such a one walked.
"Here Coeur-de-Lion was slain.
"Here was good singing.
"Here one man hastened his step.
"Here one lay panting."
I have looked south from Hautefort,
thinking of Montaignac, southward.
I have lain in Rocafixada,
level with sunset,
Have seen the copper come down
tinging the mountains,
I have seen the fields, pale, clear as an emerald,
Sharp peaks, high spurs, distant castles.
I have said: "The old roads have lain here.
"Men have gone by such and such valleys,
"Where the great halls are closer together."
I have seen Foix on its rocks, seen Toulouse and Arles greatly altered,
I have seen the ruined "Dorata."
I have said:
"Riquier! Guido."
I have thought of the second Troy,
Some little prized place in Auvergnat:
Two men tossing a coin, one keeping a castle,
One set on the highway to sing.
He sang a woman.

Auvergne rose to the song;
The Dauphin backed him.
"The castle to Austors!"
"Pieire kept the singing—
"A fair man and a pleasant."
He won the lady,
Stole her away for himself, kept her against armed force:
So ends that story.
That age is gone;
Pieire de Maensac is gone.
I have walked over these roads;
I have thought of them living.

IMAGE FROM D'ORLEANS

Young men riding in the street
In the bright new season
Spur without reason,
Causing their steeds to leap.

And at the pace they keep
Their horses' armored feet
Strike sparks from the cobbled street
In the bright new season.

THE SPRING

Cydonian spring with her attendant train,
Maelids and water-girls,
Stepping beneath a boisterous wind from Thrace,
Throughout this sylvan place
Spreads the bright tips,
And every vine-stock is
Clad in new brilliancies.
                        And wild desire
Falls like black lightning.
O bewildered heart,
Though every branch have back what last year lost,
She, who moved here amid the cyclamen,
Moves only now a clinging tenuous ghost.

THE COMING OF WAR: ACTAEON

An image of Lethe,
                and the fields
Full of faint light
                but golden,
Gray cliffs,
        and beneath them
A sea
Harsher than granite,
        unstill, never ceasing;

High forms
        with the movement of gods,
Perilous aspect;
            And one said:
"This is Actaeon."
                Actaeon of golden greaves!

Over fair meadows,
Over the cool face of that field,
Unstill, ever moving,
Host of an ancient people,
The silent cortège.

THE GIPSY

"Est-ce que vous avez vu des autres—des camarades—avec des singes ou des ours?"
A stray gipsy—A. D. 1912

That was the top of the walk, when he said:
"Have you seen any others, any of our lot,
"With apes or bears?"
            —A brown upstanding fellow
Not like the half-castes,
            up on the wet road near Clermont.
The wind came, and the rain,
And mist clotted about the trees in the valley,
And I'd the long ways behind me,
            gray Arles and Biaucaire,

And he said, "Have you seen any of our lot?"

I'd seen a lot of his lot . . .
ever since Rhodez,
Coming down from the fair
of St. John,
With caravans, but never an ape or a bear.

DOGMATIC STATEMENT CONCERNING THE GAME OF CHESS: THEME FOR A SERIES OF PICTURES

Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens,
Striking the board, falling in strong "l"s of color,
Reaching and striking in angles,
holding lines in one color.
This board is alive with light;
these pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern:
Luminous green from the rooks,
Clashing with "x"s of queens,
looped with the knight-leaps.

"Y" pawns, cleaving, embanking!
Whirl! Centripetal! Mate! King down in the vortex,
Clash, leaping of bands, straight stripe of hard color,
Blocked light working in. Escapes. Renewing of contest.

Ezra Pound

C184 Continued

EXILE'S LETTER

From the Chinese of Rihaku (Li Po), usually considered the greatest poet of China: written by him while in exile about 760 A. D., to the Hereditary War-Councillor of Sho, "recollecting former companionship."

So-Kin of Rakuho, ancient friend, I now remember
That you built me a special tavern,
By the south side of the bridge at Ten-Shin.
With yellow gold and white jewels
we paid for the songs and laughter,
And we were drunk for month after month,
forgetting the kings and princes.
Intelligent men came drifting in, from the sea
and from the west border,
And with them, and with you especially,
there was nothing at cross-purpose;
And they made nothing of sea-crossing
or of mountain-crossing
If only they could be of that fellowship.
And we all spoke out our hearts and minds . . .
and without regret.
And then I was sent off to South Wei,
smothered in laurel groves,
And you to the north of Raku-hoku,
Till we had nothing but thoughts and memories between us.
And when separation had come to its worst
We met, and travelled together into Sen-Go

Through all the thirty-six folds of the turning and twisting
waters;
Into a valley of a thousand bright flowers . . .
that was the first valley,
And on into ten thousand valleys
full of voices and pine-winds.

With silver harness and reins of gold,
prostrating themselves on the ground,
Out came the East-of-Kan foreman and his company;
And there came also the "True-man" of Shi-yo to meet me,
Playing on a jewelled mouth-organ.
In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us
more Sennin music;

Many instruments, like the sound of young phoenix broods.
And the foreman of Kan-Chu, drunk,
Danced because his long sleeves
Wouldn't keep still, with that music playing.
And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with my head on
his lap,
And my spirit so high that it was all over the heavens.

And before the end of the day we were scattered like stars
or rain.
I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,
You back to your river-bridge.
And your father, who was brave as a leopard,
Was governor in Hei Shu and put down the barbarian rabble.

C185 EXILE'S LETTER, FROM THE CHINESE OF RIHAKU (LI PO) . . . *Poetry*, V. 6 (Mar. 1915) 258–61.
"Translated by Ezra Pound from the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa and the decipherings of the Professors Mori and

And one May he had you send for me, despite the long distance;
And what with broken wheels and so on, I won't say it wasn't hard going . . .
Over roads twisted like sheep's guts.
And I was still going, late in the year,
in the cutting wind from the north,
And thinking how little you cared for the cost . . .
and you caring enough to pay it.
Then what a reception!
Red jade cups, food well set, on a blue jewelled table;
And I was drunk, and had no thought of returning;
And you would walk out with me to the western corner of the castle,
To the dynastic temple, with the water about it clear as blue jade,
With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-organs and drums,
With ripples like dragon-scales going grass-green on the water,
Pleasure lasting, with courtezans going and coming without hindrance,
With the willow-flakes falling like snow,
And the vermilioned girls getting drunk about sunset,
And the waters a hundred feet deep reflecting green eyebrows—
Eyebrows painted green are a fine sight in young moonlight,

Gracefully painted—and the girls singing back at each other,
Dancing in transparent brocade,
And the wind lifting the song, and interrupting it,
Tossing it up under the clouds.

And all this comes to an end,
And is not again to be met with.
I went up to the court for examination,
Tried Layu's luck, offered the Choyu song,
And got no promotion,
And went back to the East Mountains white-headed.

And once again we met, later, at the South Bridge head.
And then the crowd broke up—you went north to San palace.
And if you ask how I regret that parting?
It is like the flowers falling at spring's end,
confused, whirled in a tangle.
What is the use of talking! And there is no end of talking—
There is no end of things in the heart.

I call in the boy,
Have him sit on his knees to write and seal this,
And I send it a thousand miles, thinking.

Rihaku (Li Po)

Translated by Ezra Pound from the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa, and the decipherings of the Professors Mori and Araga.

THE RENAISSANCE
II

Whether from habit, or from profound intuition, or from sheer national conceit, one is always looking to America for signs of a "renaissance." One is open-eyed to defects. I have heard passionate nonentities rave about America's literary and artistic barrenness. I have heard the greatest living American saying, with the measured tones of deliberative curiosity, "Strange how all taint of art or letters seems to shun that continent . . . ah . . . ah, God knows there's little enough here . . . ah . . ."

And yet we look to the dawn, we count up our symptoms; year in and year out we say we have this and that, we have so much, and so much. Our best asset is a thing of the spirit. I have the ring of it in a letter, now on my desk, from a good but little known poet, complaining of desperate loneliness, envying Synge his material, to-wit, the Arran Islands and people, wishing me well with my exotics, and ending with a sort of defiance: "For me nothing exists, *really exists,* outside America."

That writer is not alone in his feeling, nor is he alone in his belief in tomorrow. That emotion and belief are our motive forces, and as to their application we can perhaps best serve it by taking stock of what we have, and devising practical measures. And we must do this without pride, and without parochialism; we have no one to cheat save ourselves. It is not a question of scaring someone else, but of making ourselves efficient. We must learn what we can from the past, we must learn what other nations have done successfully under similar circumstances, we must think how they did it.

We have, to begin with, architecture, the first of the arts to arrive, the most material, the most dependent on the inner need of the poor—for the arts are noble only as they meet the inner need of the poor. Bach is given to all men, Homer is given to all men: you need only the faculty of music or of patience to read or to hear. Painting and sculpture are given to all men in a particular place, to all who have money for travel.

And architecture comes first, being the finest branch of advertisement, advertisement of some god who has been successful, or of some emperor or of some business man—a material need, plus display. At any rate we have architecture, the only architecture of our time. I do not mean our copies of old buildings, lovely and lovable as they are; I mean our own creations, our office buildings like greater *campanili,* and so on.

And we have, or we are beginning to have, collections. We have had at least one scholar in Ernest Fenollosa, and one patron in Mr. Freer. I mean that these two men at least have worked as the great Italian researchers and collectors of the quattrocento worked and collected. But mostly America, from the White House to the gutter, is still dominated by a "puritanical" hatred of what is beyond its understanding.

C186 The Renaissance. II. *Poetry,* V. 6 (Mar. 1915) 283–7.

So it is to the fighting minority that I speak, to a minority that has been until now gradually forced out of the country. We have looked to the wrong powers. We have not sufficiently looked to ourselves. We have not defined the hostility or inertia that is against us. We have not recognized with any Voltairian clearness the nature of this opposition, and we have not realized to what an extent a renaissance is a thing made—a thing made by conscious propaganda.

The scholars of the quattrocento had just as stiff a stupidity and contentment and ignorance to contend with. It is from the biographies of Erasmus and Lorenzo Valla that we must find consolation. They were willing to work at foundations. They did not give the crowd what it wanted. The middle ages had been a jumble. There may have been a charming diversity, but there was also the darkness of decentralization. There had been minute vortices at such castles as that of Savairic de Maleon, and later at the universities. But the *rinascimento* began when Valla wrote, in the preface of the *Elegantiae:*

> *Linguam Latinam distribuisse minus erit, optimam frugem, et vere divinam, nec corporis, sed animi cibum? Haec enim gentes populosque omnes, omnibus artibus, quae liberales vocantur, instituit: haec optimas leges edocuit: haec viam ad omnem sapientiam munivit, haec denique praestitit, ne barbari amplius dici possent. . . . In qua lingua disciplinae cunctae libero homine dignae continetur. . . . Linguam Romanam vivere plus, quam urbem.*
>
> *"Magnum ergo Latini sermonis sacramentum est." "Ibi namque Romanum imperium est, ubicunque Romana lingua dominatur."*

That is not "the revival of classicism." It is not a worship of corpses. It is an appreciation of the great Roman vortex, an understanding of, and an awakening to, the value of a capital, the value of centralization, in matters of knowledge and art, and of the interaction and stimulus of genius foregathered. *Ubicunque Romana lingua dominatur!*

That sense, that reawakening to the sense of the capital, resulted not in a single great vortex, such as Dante had dreamed of in his propaganda for a great central court, a peace tribunal, and in all his ghibelline speculations; but it did result in the numerous vortices of the Italian cities, striving against each other not only in commerce but in the arts as well.

America has no natural capital. Washington is a political machine, I dare say a good enough one. If we are to have an art capital it also must be made by conscious effort. No city will make such effort on behalf of any other city. The city that plays for this glory will have to plot, deliberately to plot, for the gathering in of great artists, not merely as incidental lecturers but as residents. She will have to plot for the centralization of young artists. She will have to give them living conditions as comfortable as Paris has given since the days of Abelard.

The universities can no longer remain divorced from contemporary intellectual activity. The press cannot longer remain divorced from the vitality and precision of an awakened university scholarship. Art and scholarship need not be wholly at loggerheads.

But above all there must be living conditions for artists; not merely for illustrators and magazine writers, not merely for commercial producers, catering to what they think "the public" or "their readers" desire.

Great art does not depend on the support of riches, but without such aid it will be individual, separate, and spasmodic; it will not group and become a great period. The individual artist will do fine work in corners, to be discovered after his death. Some good enough poet will be spoiled by trying to write stuff as vendible as bath-tubs; or another because, not willing or able to rely on his creative work, he had to make his mind didactic by preparing to be a professor of literature, or abstract by trying to be a professor of philosophy, or had to participate in some other fiasco. But for all that you will not be able to stop the great art, the true art, of the man of genius.

Great art does not depend upon comfort, it does not depend upon the support of riches. But a great age is brought about only with the aid of wealth, because a great age means the deliberate fostering of genius, the gathering-in and grouping and encouragement of artists.

In my final paper of this series, I shall put forth certain plans for improvement. *Ezra Pound*

Mr. Ezra Pound and Vorticism.

By Frank Morton.

Some few weeks ago, in a temperate and Christian spirit of indulgence unduly brotherly, I said a few words about *Blast*, the lunatic organ of the Vorticists. Incidentally, something was said about Mr. Ezra Pound, whom I regarded (and still regard) as one of the queerest fakes that ever came within the field of criticism. As to that, this letter has reached us. I give it word for word, comma for comma, as it was written:

The Editor of the Triad.

Dear Sir:

It is an excellent and honourable thing to be condemned in company with Cezanne and Picasso. Still, as your estimable and earnest critic has seen fit to call me a charlatan and a deceiver of women and various other terms to which contemporary criticism accustoms one, I may be permitted to reply even to the honour.

Perhaps if Mr. Morton had read my article on "Vorticism" in the Forntightly Review *for September he might have started on* Blast *with fewer misconceptions. He might at least have known better than to try to measure non-representative art by the footrule of representational art. Until he has made some study of the functions of nonrepresentational art, and incidentally of the Chinese tradition, it is of course useless to enter into discussion with him. I must, of course, decline the honour of begetting either Lewis or Epstein, they are both older than I am. Brzeska and Wadsworth are younger, but their style was fully decided before I met them. The remarks on the "meaninglessness of the painting and sculpture reproduced in the October triad, are answered in the* Fortnightly *article, which is too long to reproduce here.*

As to the more personal portion of Mr. Morton's review: If charlatanism consist in saying what one believes instead of saying what the majority of editors are paying to have said at a given

C186a

C186 Continued

C186a ✉ *Triad*, Wellington, N. Z., XXII. 12 (10 Mar. 1915) 178–9.
Dated 21 Dec. 1914, in reply to an attack on *Blast*, 1, the letter is printed complete (but with minor alterations) as part of an article, "Mr. Ezra Pound and Vorticism," by Frank Morton, one of the editors, pp. 178–80.

moment, then his charge is acceptable. As for swindling Miss Monroe, he should at least enumerate the other victims of egregious cult . . . the male and mature editor of the Fortnightly *for example, or various other male names which appear in your paper mentioned with respect.*

Your correspondent says he discovered Tagore in India twenty years ago. That is probably quite true, but his having discovered Tagore did not bring Tagore's work any nearer to a number of English and American readers who have been very glad to get it.

As he seems to respect Tagore, it may gratify him to know that it was no less a person than Rabindranath himself, who encouraged the unfortunate Poetry *to print my first set of poems, The Chicago office, foreseeing the general protest which they would create among outsiders was in some quandary, I am told. I do not say that Mr. Tagore was the sole cause of the publication of my despised "Contemporanea," but I know that the poems were printed by* Poetry *with a much lighter heart after he had read them to the office and commented favourably upon them.*

So much for my perpetration of fraud upon the defenceless.

For the rest, making due allowance for heat, I suppose Mr. Morton is to be pardoned. It is perhaps too much to expect that a man of one generation, living in one corner of the world should know or even be able to see clearly just what men of another generation are rebelling against in the opposite corner.

As for Mr. Lewis' organization of forms being child's play. Let Mr. Morton (who?) *is on his own confession, no child. Let him sit down with a pair of scissors and try to organize forms and he will perhaps learn something about it.*

Sincerely yours

EZRA POUND.

21/12/'14.

Ernest Dowson, by Victor Plarr. Elkin Mathews.

This is a most charming monograph. The first chapters are perhaps the best account of Ernest Dowson that has been written, or that will be written for that matter, since no one else will have known the younger Dowson so well, or will care so much about doing him justice. Symons wrote as an artist, Victor Plarr writes as a friend. And the book is worthy of Plarr as one finds him in the *Epitaphium Citharistriae* and in his half-forgotten book *The Dorian Mood.*

Perhaps he does not give "the whole Dowson," but at least he presents the phase of Dowson that some other writers have neglected. I have never been disappointed in a man whose work had first drawn me to him. I think, perhaps, the best praise we can give to a memoir of an author is to say that it "goes with his work"; that it leaves us with an impression of the man as we had found him already in his writings.

Certain people would rather think of Dowson in cabmen's shelters, or squabbling with drunken fishermen in Dieppe and the Breton towns. Certain people will rather remember the beautiful story of the French magistrate who had condemned Dowson for assaulting the local baker. Someone rushed into the court protesting that Dowson was a distinguished writer. "What, what, Monsieur Dowson, a distinguished English litterateur! Release M. Dowson—at once! Imprison the baker."

It may be myth, but it is also literature. It shows that in at least one country the arts are, or were, held in respect.

C187

C186a Continued

C187 [A review, signed: E. P., of] *Ernest Dowson*, by Victor Plarr. *Poetry*, VI. 1 (Apr. 1915) 43–45.

Some will resent what they will call Mr. Plarr's attempt to make Dowson more acceptable to people who live in three-story houses instead of in chambers and attics. They will say that even the gospels would lose a great deal of their force were their hero not represented with a taste for bohemian company.

Mr. Plarr has perhaps met people who regard Dowson with undue severity, and to correct their view he has written the charming first half of his book. For this he was the ideal biographer, not only because of friendship but because of a tradition which leaves him able clearly to objectify his friend while losing none of his sympathy: Dowson, a young Englishman enamoured of many things French; the young Plarr an Alsatian, half a refugee from the war of '70, a survivor of the senatorial families of Strasburg whose tradition is, *"On porte sa bourgeoisie comme un marquisat."*

The memoir of this friendship is charming. It is of the days before the shadow, and perhaps Mr. Plarr is right, perhaps some writers have borne too heavily on the supposed luridity of Dowson's career, which was in all truth pastoral enough, a delicate temperament that ran a little amuck toward the end, an irregular man with nothing a sane man would call vices. At any rate Mr. Plarr dwells with some emphasis on the rarer, more delicate man, the man as he must have been really in order to write his verses. Some also will disagree with Mr. Plarr's judgment that the earlier poems are the best. The posthumous *Decorations* contains *De Amore*, the *Wine and Women and Song* villanelle, *Dregs* and *Let us go hence*. One can not say that these poems show any decline of power, though perhaps, if one read as a friend and not as a stranger, one would find their sorrow too great.

In any case no one who loves his Dowson will go without this memoir, this book which is in part his own letters gathered by that friend of his youth to whom they were written.

E. P.

THE DRAMA

A Quarterly Review of Dramatic Literature

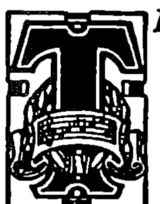
No. 18 May 1915

THE CLASSICAL STAGE OF JAPAN

ERNEST FENOLLOSA'S WORK ON THE JAPANESE "NOH"

EDITED BY EZRA POUND

PART I



HE late Ernest Fenollosa, sometime imperial commissioner of arts at Tokyo, known to all students as the author of "Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art," left at his death a great and unique mass of papers relating to Chinese and Japanese literature. The Japanese sections of his notes, of which a portion follows, are in themselves enough to form the basis for a new, or at least a revised understanding of the Japanese genius.

It has been said that Ernest Fenollosa "saved Japanese art for Japan." That is, we suppose, an exaggeration, but most certainly he did as much for her art as any one man could have done, and for this work he is, in that country, well honoured.

C188 The Classical Stage of Japan: Ernest Fenollosa's Work on the Japanese "Noh," Edited by Ezra Pound. *Drama*, Chicago, Ill., V. 18 (May 1915) 199–247.
Contents: Sotoba Komachi, by Kiyotsugu—Kayoi Komachi, by a Minoru—Suma Genji, by Manzaburo—Fenollosa's records of conversations with Umewaka Minoru, 15 May 1900, 6 May, 2 June—Kumasaka, by Ujinobu—Shojo—Tamura—Foreword to Tsunemasa—Tsunemasa. Reprinted, in expanded form, as Parts I and II of *'Noh' or Accomplishment* (1916 [*i.e.* 1917])—A13.

It is equally true that he worked as hard as any man could have worked to advance the cause of art in America, and that he believed in the American destiny and the American "renaissance" unswervingly. For that, if for no other reason, it is fitting that his work should appear in his native America rather than in England. I give here the notes relating to the history of the Japanese state drama, the NOH. *E. P.*

THE CLASSICAL STAGE OF JAPAN

The life of Ernest Fenollosa was the romance par excellence of modern scholarship. He went to Japan as a professor of economics. He ended as Imperial Commissioner of Arts. He had unearthed treasure that no Japanese had heard of. He had set the native art in its rightful position and stopped the aping of Europe. He had endeared himself to the government and laid the basis for a personal tradition. When he died suddenly in England the Japanese government sent a warship for his body and the priests buried him within the sacred enclosure at Miidera. These facts speak for themselves.

His present reputation in Europe rests upon his work on art. In America he is known also for his service to divers museums. His work on Japanese and Chinese literature has come as a surprise to the scholars. It forms, I think, the basis for a new donation, for a new understanding of "the East." For instance, as I look over that section of his papers which deals with the Japanese *Noh*, having read what others have written in English about these plays, I am in a position to say definitely that Professor Fenollosa knew more of the subject than anyone who has yet written in our tongue.

C188 Continued

There is only one book in English completely devoted to *Noh* (Prof. Marie C. Stopes' *Plays of Old Japan*), and as one can not reasonably count on the reader's having seen this book or having spent his time ferreting out the various references to *Noh* in general works or in the proceedings of divers learned societies, I may be pardoned a few words of preface.

The *Noh* is unquestionably one of the great arts of the world, and it is quite possibly one of the most recondite.

In the eighth century of our era the dilettante of the Japanese court established the tea cult and the play of "listening to incense." *

In the fourteenth century the priests and the court and the players all together produced a drama scarcely less subtle.

For "listening to incense" the company was divided into two parties and some arbiter burnt many kinds and many blended sorts of perfume, and the game was not merely to know which was which, but to give to each one of them a beautiful and allusive name, to recall by the title some strange event of history or some passage of romance or legend. It was a refinement in barbarous times, comparable to the art of polyphonic rhyme, developed in feudal Provence four centuries later and now almost wholly forgotten.

The art of allusion, or this love of allusion in art, is at the root of the *Noh*. These plays, or eclogues, were made only for the few, for the nobles, for those trained to catch the allusion. In the *Noh* we find an art built upon the god-dance, or upon some local legend of spiritual apparition, or, later, on *gestes* of war and feats of history; an art of splendid pos-

* Vide Brinkley, Oriental Series, vol. III.

ture, of dancing and chanting, and of acting that is not mimetic. It is, of course, impossible to give much idea of the whole of this art on paper. One can only trace out the words of the text and say that they are spoken, or half-sung and chanted to a fitting and traditional accompaniment of movement and colour, and that they are themselves but half-shadows. Yet, despite the difficulties of presentation, I find these words very wonderful, and they become intelligible if, as a friend says, "you read them all the time as though you were listening to music."

If one has the habit of reading plays and imagining their setting, it will not be difficult to imagine the *Noh* stage—different as it is from our own or even from western mediaeval stages—and to feel how the incomplete speech is filled out by the music or movement. It is a symbolic stage, a drama of masks—at least they have masks for spirits and gods and young women. It is a theatre of which both Mr. Yeats and Mr. Craig may approve. It is not, like our theatre, a place where every fineness and subtlety must give way; where every subtlety of word or of word-cadence is sacrificed to the "broad effect"; where the paint must be put on with a broom. It is a stage where every subsidiary art is bent precisely upon holding the faintest shade of a difference; where the poet may even be silent while the gestures consecrated by four centuries of usage show meaning.

"We work in pure spirit," says Umewaka Minoru, through whose efforts the *Noh* survived the revolution of 1868, and the fall of the Tokugawa.

Minoru was acting in the Shogun's garden when the news of Perry's arrival stopped the play. Without him the art would have perished. He restored

it through poverty and struggle, "living in a poor house, in a poor street, in a kitchen, selling his clothes to buy back masks and costumes from the sales of bankrupt companies, and using 'kaiyu' for rice."

The following prospectus from a program of one of his later performances (March, 1900) will perhaps serve to show the player's attitude toward the play.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

"Our ancestor was called Umegu Hiogu no Kami Zomotoki. He was the descendant in the ninth generation of Tachibana no Moroye Sadaijin and lived in Umedzu Yamashiro, hence his family name. After that he lived in Oshima, in the province of Zamba, and died in the fourth year of Ninwa. Moroye's descendant, the twenty-second after Zomotoki, was called Hiogu no Kami Tomosato. He was a samurai in Zamba, as his fathers before him. The twenty-eighth descendant was Hiogu no Kami Kagehisa. His mother dreamed that a *Noh* mask was given from heaven; she conceived, and Kagehisa was born. From his childhood Kagehisa liked music and dancing, and he was by nature very excellent in both of these arts. The Emperor Gotsuchi Mikado heard his name, and in January in the 13th year of Bummei he called him to his palace and made him perform the play *Ashikari*. Kagehisa was then sixteen years old. The Emperor admired him greatly and gave him largesse (Monsuki) and a curtain which was purple above and white below, and he gave him the honorific ideograph 'waka' and thus made him change his name to Umewaka. By the Emperor's order, Ushoben Fugiwara no Shummei sent the news of this and the gifts to Kagehisa. The letter of the Emperor, given at that time, is still in our house. The curtain was, unfortunately, burned in the great fire of Yedo on the 4th of March in the third year of Bunka. Kagehisa died in the second year of Kioroku and after him the family of Umewaka became professional actors of *Noh*. Hironaga, the thirtieth descendant of Umewaka Taiyu Rokuro served Ota Nobunaga.* And he was given a territory of 700 koku

* Nobunaga died in 1582.

in Zamba. And he died in Nobunaga's battle, Akechi. His son, Taiyu Rokuro Ujimori, was called to the palace of Tokugawa Iyeyasu in the fourth year of Keicho, and given a territory of 100 koku near his home in Zamba. He died in the 3rd year of Kambun. After that the family of Umewaka served the Tokugawa shoguns with *Noh* for generation after generation down to the revolution of Meiji (1868). These are the outlines of the genealogy of my house.

"This is the 450th anniversary of Tomosato, and so to celebrate him and Kagehisa and Ujimori, we have these performances for three days. We hope that all will come to see them.

"The head of the performance is the forty-fifth of his line, the Umewaka Rokoru, and is aided by Umewaka Manzaburo.

(Dated.) "In the 33rd year of Meiji, 2nd month."

You see how far this is from the conditions of the Occidental stage. Pride of descent, pride in having served dynasties now extinct, fragments of ceremony and religious ritual, all serve at first to confuse the modern person, and to draw his mind from the sheer dramatic value of *Noh.*

Some scholars seem to have added another confusion. They have not understood the function of the individual plays in the performance, and have thought them fragmentary, or have complained of imperfect structure. The *Noh* plays are often quite complete in themselves; certain plays are detachable units, comprehensible as single performances, and without annotation or comment. Yet even these can be used as part of the *Ban-gumi,* the full *Noh* program. Certain other plays are only "formed" and intelligible when considered as part of such a series of plays. Again, the texts or libretti of certain other plays, really complete in themselves, seem to us unfinished because their final scene depends more upon the dance than on the words. The fol-

lowing section of Prof. Fenollosa's notes throws a good deal of light on these questions. It is notebook J, section I, based on the authority of Mr. Taketi Owada, and runs as follows:

"In the time of Tokugawa (1602 A. D. to 1868), *Noh* became the music of the Shogun's court and it was called O-no, the program O-no-gumi, the actor O-no-yakusha, and the stage O-no-butai, with honorific additions. The first ceremony of the year, *Utai-zome,* was considered very important at the court. In the palaces of the daimyos, also, they had their proper ceremonies. This ceremony of *Utai-zome* began with the Ashikaga shoguns (in the fourteenth century). At that time on the fourth day of the first month, Kanze (the head of one of the five chartered and hereditary companies of court actors) sang a play in Omaya, and the Shogun gave him *ji-fuku* ('clothes of the season') and this became a custom. In the time of Toyotomi the second day of the first month was set apart for the ceremony. But in the time of Tokugawa, the third day of the first month was fixed 'eternally' as the day for *Utai-zome.* On that day, at the hour of 'tori no jō' (about 5 A.M.) the Shogun presented himself in a large hall in Hon-Maru (where the imperial palace now is), taking with him the San-ke, or three relative daimyos, the ministers, and all the other daimyos and officials, all dressed in the robes called 'noshime-kami-shimi.' And the 'Tayus' (or heads) of the Kanze and Komparu schools of acting come every year, and the Tayus of Hosho and Kita on alternate years, and the Waki actors, that is, the actors of second parts, and the actors of Kiogen or farces, and the hayashikata ('cats,' or musicians) and the singers of the chorus, all bow down on the verandah of the third hall dressed in robes called 'suo,' and in hats called 'yeboshi.'

"And while the cup of the Shogun is poured out three times, Kanze sings the 'Shikai-nami' passage from the play of *Takasago,* still bowing. Then the plays, *Oi-matsu, Tōboku* and *Takasago* are sung with music, and when they are over the Shogun gives certain robes, called the 'White-aya,' with crimson lining, to the three chief actors, and robes called 'orikami' to the other actors. Then the three chief actors put on the new robes over their 'suos' and

begin at once to dance the *Dance of the Match of Bows and Arrows.* And the chant that accompanies it is as follows:

"The chief actor sings—

'Shakuson, Shakuson!' (Buddha, Buddha!)

"And the chorus sings this rather unintelligible passage—

'Taking the bow of Great Love and the arrow of Wisdom, he awakened Sandoku from sleep. Aisemmyō-o displayed these two as the symbols of IN *and* YO.* *Monju* (another of the primitive deities) *appeared in the form of Yo-yu and caught the serpent, Kishu-ja, and made it into a bow. From its eyes he made him his arrows.*†

'The Empress Jingō of our country defeated the rebels with these arrows and brought the peace of Ciyo-shun to the people. O Hachiman Daibosatsu, Emperor Ojin, War-god Yumi-ya, enshrined in Iwa-shimidzu, where the clear water-spring flows out! O, O, O! This water is water flowing forever.' "

This "yumi-ya" text can not be used anywhere save in this ceremony at the Shogun's court, and in the "Takigi-No" of the Kasuga temple at Nara (where a few extra lines are interpolated).

When the above chant and dance are finished, the Shogun takes the robe "Kata-ginu" from his shoulders and throws it to the samurai in attendance. The samurai hands it to the minister, who walks with it to the verandah and presents it to the *Taiyu* of Kanze, very solemnly. Then all the daimyos present take off their "kata-ginus" and give them to the chief actors, and thus ends the ceremony of *Utaizome.* The next day the tayus, or chief actors, take the robes back to the daimyos and get money in exchange for them.

There are performances of *Noh* lasting five days at the initiations, marriages, and the like of the Shoguns; and at the Buddhist memorial services for

* [*In* and *yo* are divisions of metric, and there is a Pythagorean-like symbolism attached to them.]

† [The serpent is presumably the sky, and the stars the eyes made into arrows.]

dead Shoguns for four days. There are performances for the reception of imperial messengers from Kyoto, at which the actors have to wear various formal costumes. On one day of the five-day performances the town people of the eight hundred and eight streets of Yedo are admitted, and they are marshalled by the officers of every street. The *nanushi,* or street officers, assemble the night before by the gates of Ote and Kikyo and each officer carries aloft a paper lantern bearing the name of his street. They take *sakè* and refreshments and wait for the dawn. It looks like a place on fire, or like a camp before battle.

The Kanze method of acting was made the official style of the Tokugawa Shoguns, and the tayus, or chief actors, of Kanze were placed at the head of all *Noh* actors. To the Kanze tayu alone was given the privilege of holding one subscription performance, or Kanjin-No, during his lifetime, for the space of ten days. And for this performance he had the right to certain dues and levies on the daimyos and on the streets of the people of Yedo. The daimyos were not allowed to attend the common theatre, but they could go to the Kanjin-No. (Note that the common theatre, the place of mimicry and direct imitation of life, has always been looked down upon in Japan. The *Noh,* the symbolic and ritual stage, is a place of honour to actor and audience alike.) The daimyos and even their wives and daughters could see Kanjin-No without staying behind the blinds. Programs were sold in the streets and a drum was beaten as a signal, as is still done to get an audience for the wrestling matches.

The privilege of holding one subscription performance was later granted to the Hosho company also.

Ban-gumi

In the performance of *Utai*, or *Noh*, the arrangement of pieces for the day is called "Ban-gumi." "Gumi" means a setting in order, and "Ban" is derived from the old term "Ban-no-mai," which was formerly used when the two kinds of *mai*, or dancing, the Korean "u-ho" and the Chinese "sa-ho," were performed one after the other.

Now the *Ka-den-sho*, or secret book of *Noh*, decrees that the arrangement of plays shall be as follows:

"A 'Shugen' must come first. And Shugen, or congratulatory pieces, are limited to *Noh* of the Gods (that is, to pieces connected with some religious rite), because this country of the rising sun is the country of the gods. The gods have guarded the country from Kami-yo (the age of the gods) down to the time of the present reign. So in praise of them and in prayer we perform first this Kami-No.

"The Shura, or battle-piece, comes second, for the gods and emperors pacified this country with bows and arrows; therefore, to defeat and put out the devils, we perform the Shura. (That is to say, it is sympathetic magic.)

"Kazura, or Onna-mono, 'wig-pieces,' or pieces for females, come third. Many think that any Kazura will do, but it must be a 'female Kazura,' for after battle comes peace, or Yu-gen, mysterious calm, and in time of peace the cases of love come to pass. Moreover, the battle-pieces are limited to men; so we now have the female piece in contrast like *in* and *yo* (the different divisions of the metric, before mentioned).

"The fourth piece is Oni-No, or the *Noh* of spirits. After battle comes peace and glory, but they soon depart in their turn. The glory and pleasures of man are not reliable at all. Life is like a dream and goes with the speed of lightning. It is like a dew-drop in the morning; it soon falls and is broken. To suggest these things and to lift up the heart for Buddha (to produce 'Bodai-shin') we have this sort of play after the Onna-mono, that is, just after the middle of the program when some of the audience will be a little tired. Just to wake them out

of their sleep we have these plays of spirits ('Oni'). Here are shown the struggles and the sins of mortals, and the audience, even while they sit for pleasure, will begin to think about Buddha and the coming world. It is for this reason that *Noh* is called Mu-jin-Kyo, the immeasurable scripture.*

"Fifth, comes a piece which has some bearing upon the moral duties of man, Jin, Gi, Rei, Chi, Shin; that is, Compassion, Righteousness, Politeness, Wisdom, and Faithfulness. This fifth piece teaches the duties of man here in this world as the fourth piece represents the results of carelessness to such duties.

"Sixth comes another Shugen, or congratulatory piece, as conclusion to the whole performance, to congratulate and call down blessings on the lords present, the actors themselves, and the place. To show that though the spring may pass, still there is a time of its return, this Shugen is put in again just as at the beginning."

This is what is written in the *Ka-den-sho*. Then someone, I think Mr. Owada, comments as follows:

"Though it is quite pedantic in wording, still the order of the performance is always like this. To speak in a more popular manner, first comes the *Noh* of the Divine Age (Kami); then the battle-piece; then the play of women; fourth, the pieces which have a very quiet and deep interest, to touch the audience to their very hearts; fifth, the pieces which have stirring or lively scenes; and, sixth, pieces which praise the lords and the reign.

"This is the usual order. When we have five pieces instead of six, we sing at the end of the performance the short passage from the play *Takasago*, beginning at 'Senshurakura ni wa . . .' This is called the 'adding Shugen.' But if in the fifth piece there are phrases like 'Medeta kere' or 'Hishashi kere,'—'Oh how happy!' or 'O everlasting'—then there is no necessity to sing the extra passage. In performances in memory of the dead, *Penizen-No*, they sing short passages from *'Toru'* and *'Naniwa.'*

* These pieces are the most interesting because of their profound and subtle psychology and because of situations entirely foreign to our western drama, if not to our folklore and legend.—E. P.

"Though five or six pieces are the usual number, there can be more or even fewer pieces, in which case one must use the general principles of the above schedule in designing and arranging the program."

I think I have quoted enough to make clear one or two points.

First: There has been in Japan from the beginning a clear distinction between serious and popular drama. The merely mimetic stage has been despised.

Second: The *Noh* holds up a mirror to nature in a manner very different from the western convention of plot. I mean the *Noh* performance of the five or six plays in order presents a complete service of life. We do not find, as we find in *Hamlet,* a certain situation or problem set out and analyzed. The *Noh* service presents, or symbolizes, a complete diagram of life and recurrence.

The individual pieces treat for the most part known situations, in a manner analogous to that of the Greek plays, in which we find, for instance, a known Oedipus in a known predicament.

Third: As the tradition of *Noh* is unbroken, we find in the complete performance numerous elements which have disappeared from our western stage; that is, morality plays, religious mysteries, and even dances—like those of the mass—which have lost what we might call their dramatic significance.

Certain texts of *Noh* will, therefore, be interesting only to students of folk-lore, or of comparative religion. The battle-pieces will present little of interest because *Chansons de Geste* are pretty much the same all the world over. The moralities are on a par with western moralities, for ascetic Buddhism and ascetic Christianity have about the same set of preachments. These statements are general and ad-

mit of numerous exceptions, but the lover of the stage and the lover of drama and of poetry will find his chief interest in the psychological pieces, or the Plays of Spirits; the plays that are, I think, more Shinto than Buddhist. These plays are full of ghosts, and the ghost psychology is amazing. The parallels with western spiritist doctrines are very curious. This is, however, an irrelevant or extraneous interest and one might set it aside if it were not bound up with a dramatic and poetic interest of the very highest order.

I think I can now give a couple of texts, without much more preface than saying that the stage is visible from three sides. It is reached by a bridge which is divided into three sections by three real pine trees which are small and in pots. There is one scene painted on the background. It is a pine-tree, the symbol of the unchanging. It is painted right on the back of the stage and, as this cannot be shifted, it remains the same for all plays.

A play very often represents someone going a journey. The character walks along the bridge or about the stage, announces where he is and where he is going, and often explains the meaning of his symbolic gestures, or tells what the dance means, or why one is dancing.

Thus, in *Sotoba Komachi,* a play by Kiyotsugu, two priests are going from Koyosan to Kioto, and in Settsu they meet with Ono no Komachi; that is to say, they meet with what appears to be an old woman sitting on a road-side shrine—though she is really the wraith of Ono, long dead.

C188 Continued

SOTOBA KOMACHI

ONO. When I was young I had pride
And the flowers in my hair
Were like spring willows.
I spoke like the nightingales, and now am old,
Old by a hundred years, and wearied out.
I will sit down and rest.

THE WAKI. [*One of the priests, is shocked at her impiety and says.*] It is near evening; let us be getting along. Now will you look at that beggar! She is sitting on a sotoba [*a carved wooden devotional stick, or shrine*]. Tell her to come off it and sit on some proper thing.

ONO. Eh, for all your blather it has no letters on it, not a smudge of old painting. I thought it was only a stick.

WAKI. Is it only a stick or a stump? May be it had once fine flowers—in its time, in its time; and now it is a stick to be sure, with the blessed Buddha cut in it.

ONO. 'Oh, well then, I'm a stump, too, and well buried, with a flower at my heart. Go on and talk of the shrine.

The Tsure, in this case the second priest, tells the legend of the shrine, and while he is doing it, the Waki notices something strange about the old hag, and cries out—

Who are you?

ONO. I am the ruins of Ono,
The daughter of Ono no Yoshizane.

WAKI and TSURE. [*Together.*] How sad a ruin is this:

Komachi was in her day a bright flower;
She had the blue brows of Katsera;
She used no powder at all;
She walked in beautiful raiment in palaces.
Many attended her verse in our speech
And in the speech of the foreign court.
[*That is, China.*]
White of winter is over her head,
Over the husk of her shoulders;
Her eyes are no more like the colour on distant
mountains.
She is like a dull moon that fades in the dawn's
grip.
The wallet about her throat has in it a few dried
beans,
A bundle is wrapped on her back and on her shoulder
is a basket of Kumi roots;
She can not hide it at all.
She is begging along the road;
She wanders, a poor, daft shadow.

(I can not quite make out whether the priest is still skeptical, and thinks he has before him merely an old woman who thinks she is Komachi. At any rate, she does not want commiseration, and replies.)

Ono. "Daft! Will you hear him? In my own young days I received a hundred letters from men a sight better than he is. They came like rain-drops in May. And I had a high head, may be, that time. And I sent out no answer. You think because you see me alone now that I was in want of a handsome man in the old days, when Shosho came with the others—Shii no Shosho of Tukakusa, that came to me in the moonlight and in the dark night and in the nights flooded with rain, and in the black face of the wind and in the wild swish of the snow. He

came as often as the melting drops fall from the eaves, ninety-nine times, and he died. And his ghost is about me, driving me on with the madness."

Umewaka Minoru acted Ono in this play on March 8th, 1899. It is quite usual for an old actor to take the part of a young woman, wearing a mask. There is another play of Ono and Shosho called *Kayoi Komachi,* "Komachi Going"; it is by a Minoru, and Umewaka acted it on November 19th, 1899; and it was followed by *Suma Genji.* I shall give both of these plays complete without further comment.

KAYOI KOMACHI*

THE SCENE *is in Yamashiro.*

SHITE, *the hero, or chief character.*
SHOSHO, *the ghost of* ONO NO KOMACHI's *lover.*
WAKI, *or subsidiary character, a priest.*
TSURE, *Ono no Komachi.*

WAKI. I am a priest in the village of Tatsuse. And there's an odd little woman comes here every day with fruit and fuel. If she comes to-day I shall ask her who she is.

TSURE. [*Announcing herself to the audience.*] I am a woman who lives out about Itchiharano. There are many rich houses in Tatsuse, and I take fruit

* [NOTE.—The crux of the play is that Shosho would not accept Buddhism and thus his spirit and Ono's are kept apart. There is nothing like a ghost for holding to an *idée fixe.* In *Nishikigi,* the ghosts of the two lovers are kept apart because the woman had steadily refused the hero's offering of charm sticks. In that play the two ghosts are brought together by the piety of a wandering priest. Mr. Yeats tells me that he has found a similar legend in Arran where the ghosts come to a priest to be married.—E. P.]

and wood to them, and there's where I'm going now.

WAKI. Then you are the woman. What sort of fruit have you there?

TSURE. I've nuts and *kaki* and chestnuts and plums and peaches, and big and little oranges, and a bunch of *tachibana,* which reminds me of days that are gone.

WAKI. Then that's all right—but who are you?

TSURE. [*To herself.*] I can't tell him that now. [*To him.*] I'm just a woman who lives out by Itchihara-no-be, in all that wild grass there. [*So saying she disappears.*]

WAKI. That's queer. I asked her her name. She won't tell me. She says she's just a woman from Itchihara, and then she's gone like a mist. If you go down by Itchihara you can hear the wind in the Sujuki bushes as in the poem of Ono no Komachi's, where she says "Ono, no I will not tell the wind my name is Ono, as long as Sujuki has leaves." I dare say it is she or her spirit. I will go there the better to pray for her.

CHORUS. [*Announcing the action and change of scene.*] So he went out of his little cottage in the temple enclosure. He went to Itchihara and prayed.

TSURE. [*Her voice heard from the furze bush, speaking to the priest.*] There's a heap of good in your prayers; do you think you could bring me to Buddha?

SHITE. [*The spirit of* SHOSHO.] It's an ill time you'd do that. Go back. You move in ill hours.

TSURE. I say they were very fine prayers. I will not come back without a struggle.

SHITE. It is a sad heart I have to see you looking up to Buddha, you who left me alone, as I was diving in the black rivers of hell. Will soft prayers

be a comfort to you, you in your fine quiet heaven, you who know that I'm alone in that wild, desolate place? To put you away from me! That's all he has come for, him and his prayers. Will they do any good to my sort?

TSURE. O, dear, you can speak for yourself, but my heart is clear as new moonlight.

CHORUS. See, she comes out of the bush. [*That is, the spirit has materialized.*]

SHITE. Will nothing make you turn back?

TSURE. Faith is like a wild deer on the mountain. It will not stop when you call it.

SHITE. Then I'll be the dog of your Buddha; I will not be beaten away from you.

TSURE. How terrible, how terrible his face is!*

CHORUS. See, he has caught at her sleeve.

WAKI. [*This speech, apparently trivial, of the* WAKI's *arrests them. It is most interesting in view of the "new" doctrine of the suggestibility or hypnotizability of ghosts. The* WAKI *says merely.*] Are you Ono no Komachi? And you, Shosho? Did you court her a hundred nights? Can you show this? [*Then they begin the dance of this Noh, the image of the coming of Shosho.*]

TSURE. I did not know you had such deep thirst for me.

SHITE. You deceived me by telling me to drive out a hundred nights. I thought you meant it. I took my carriage and came.

TSURE. I said, "Change your appearance, or people will see you and talk."

SHITE. I changed my carriage. Though I had fresh horses in Kotoba, I even came bare-foot.

TSURE. You came in every sort of condition.

* Shosho is not by any means bringing an humble and contrite heart to his conversion.

SHITE. It was not such a dark way by moonlight.
TSURE. You even came in the snow.
SHITE. I can, even now, seem to be shaking it off my sleeves. [*This movement is developed into a dance.*]
TSURE. In the evening rain.
SHITE. That devil in your rain was my invisible terror.
TSURE. On the night when there was no cloud——
SHITE. I had my own rain of tears; that was the dark night, surely.
TSURE. The twilight was always my terror.
SHITE. She will wait for the moon, I said, but she will never wait for me.
CHORUS. The dawn! oh, the dawn is also a time of many thoughts.
SHITE. Yes, for me.
CHORUS. Though the fowls crow, though the bells ring, and though the night shall never come up, it is less than nothing to her.
SHITE. With many struggles——
CHORUS. ——I went for ninety-nine nights. And this is the hundredth night. This night is the longing fulfilled. He hurries. What raiment!
SHITE. His *kasa* is wretched; it is a very poor cloak, indeed.
CHORUS. His hat is in tatters.
SHITE. His under-coat is in rags.
[*All this refers both to his having come disguised and being now in but the tatters of some sort of astral body. Then presumably a light shows in his spirit, as probably he had worn some rich garment under his poor disguise.*]
CHORUS. He comes in the dress with patterns;
He comes over-sprinkled with flowers.
It is Shosho!

SHITE. In a garment with many folds.

CHORUS. The violet-coloured hakama. He thought she would wait for his coming.

SHITE. I hurried to her as now.

CHORUS. [*Speaking for* SHOSHO'S *thoughts.*] Though she only asks me to drink a cup of moonlight, I will not take it. It is a trick to catch one for Buddha.

CHORUS. [*In a final statement.*] Both their sins vanished. They both became pupils of Buddha, both Komachi and Shosho.

THE END

The final dance means that the lovers are spirits fluttering in the grass.

This eclogue seems very incomplete, and I will not say that it is not. Ono seems rather like Echo, and without the last two lines of the chorus, one could very well imagine her keeping up her *tenzone* with Shosho until the end of time.

In the performance of November 19th, as stated before, this play was followed by Manzaburo's *Suma Genji* (Genji at Suma).

SUMA GENJI

SHITE, *an old wood-cutter, who is an apparition of the hero,* GENJI, *as a sort of place-spirit, the spirit of the sea-shore at Suma.*

WAKI, FUJIWARA, *a priest with a hobby for folk-lore, who is visiting sacred places.*

SECOND SHITE, *or the* SHITE *in his second manner or apparition,* GENJI'S *spirit appearing in a sort of glory of waves and moonlight.*

WAKI. [*Announcing himself.*]
I, Fujiwara no Okinori,
Am come over the sea from Hiuga;
I am a priest from the shinto temple at Miyazakei,
And, as I lived far afield,
I could not see Ise Danginsu;
And now I am a-mind to go thither,
And am come to Suma, the sea-board.
Here Genji lived, and here I shall see the young cherry,
The tree that is so set in the tales——

SHITE. And I am a wood-cutter of Suma.
I fish in the twilight;
By day I pack wood and make salt.
Here is the mount of Suma.
There is the tree, the young cherry.*

And you may be quite right about Genji's having lived here. That blossom will flare in a moment.†

WAKI. I must find out what that old man knows. [*To* SHITE.] Sir, you seem very poor, and yet you

* It must be remembered that the properties and scene are not representational but symbolic, the hero-actor simply says in effect, "Pretend that that is the tree and that the mountain."

† There is here the double-entente. The blossom will really come out: it is a day of anniversary or something of that kind; also Genji will appear in his proper glory, as the audience knows, though the Waki does not.

C188 Continued

neglect your road; you stop on your way home, just to look at a flower. Is that the tree of the stories?

SHITE. I dare say I'm poor enough; but you don't know much if you're asking about that tree, "Is it the fine tree of Suma?"

WAKI. Well, is it the tree? I've come on purpose to see it.

SHITE. What! you really have come to see the cherry-blossom, and not to look at Mt. Suma?

WAKI. Yes; this is where Genji lived, and you are so old that you ought to know a lot of stories about him.

CHORUS. [*Telling out* GENJI's *thoughts.*]

> If I tell over the days that are gone,
> My sleeves will wither.*
> The past was at Kinsuto;
> I went to the lovely cottage, my mother's,
> But the emperor loved me.

I was made esquire at twelve, with the hat. The soothsayers unrolled my glories.† I was called Hikaru Genji. I was *chujo* in Hahakimi province. I was *chujo* in the land of the maple-feasting.‡ At twenty-five, I came to Suma, knowing all sorrow of sea-fare, having none to attend my dreams, no one to hear the old stories.

Then I was recalled to the city. I passed from office to office. I was *naidaijim* in Miyosubushi, I was *dajodaijim* in the lands of Otomo, and *dajotenno* in Fuji no Wraba; for this I was called *Hikam Kimi.*

WAKI. But tell me exactly where he lived. Tell me all that you know about him.

* That is, this present manifestation in the shape of an old man will fade.
† The "soothsayer" is literally "the physiognomist from Corea."
‡ Chujo, naidaijim, etc., are names for different grades of office.

SHITE. One can't place the exact spot; he lived all along here by the waves. If you will wait for the moonlight, you might see it all in a mist.

CHORUS. 'Tis in Suma he was in the old days——

SHITE. [*Stepping behind a screen or making some sign of departure, he completes the sentence of the chorus.*] ——but now in the aery heaven.

CHORUS. [*To* WAKI.]

> Wait and the moon will show him.
> That wood-man is gone in the clouds.

WAKI. That "wood-man" was Genji himself, who was here talking live words. I will wait for the night. I will stay here to see what happens. [*Announcing his act.**] Then Fujiwara no Okinori lay down and heard the waves filled with music.

SCENE TWO *begins with the appearance of the* SECOND SHITE, *that is to say, a bright apparition of* GENJI *in supernatural form.*

GENJI. How beautiful this sea is! When I trod the grass here, I was called "Genji the gleaming," and now from the vaulting heaven I reach down to set a magic on mortals. I sing of the moon in this shadow, here on this sea-marge of Suma. Here I will dance Sei-kei-ha, the blue dance of the sea waves. [*And then he begins to dance.*]

CHORUS. [*Accompanying and describing the dance.*]

> The flower of waves-reflected
> Is on his white garment;
> That pattern covers the sleeve.
> The air is alive with flute-sounds,

* The characters often give their own stage directions or explain the meaning of their acts, as in the last line here.

With the song of various pipes
The land is a-quiver,
And even the wild sea of Suma
Is filled with resonant quiet.

Moving in clouds and in rain,
The dream overlaps with the real;
There was a light out of heaven,
There was a young man at the dance here;
Surely it was Genji Hakari,
It was Genji Hakari in spirit.

GENJI. My name is known to the world;
Here by the white waves was my dwelling;
But I am come down out of sky
To put my glamour on mortals.
CHORUS. Gracious is the presence of Genji,
It is like the feel of things at Suma.
GENJI. [*Referring also to a change in the dance.*]
The wind is abated.
CHORUS. A young cloud——
GENJI. ——clings to the clear-blown sky.
It seems like the spring-time.
CHORUS. It was as if he came down
From the halls of Tai Thahu Zen,
He, the soul of the place.*
He, who seemed but a wood-man,
He flashed with the honoured colours,
He the true-gleaming.
Blue-grey is the garb they wear here,
Blue-grey he fluttered in Suma;
His sleeves were like the grey sea-waves;
They moved with curious rustling,
Like the noise of the restless waves,
Like the bell of a country town
'Neath the nightfall.

* More precisely "He became the place." You can compare this with Buckle, or Jules Romains' studies in unanimism.

I dare say the play, *Suma Genji,* will seem undramatic to some people the first time they read it. The suspense is the suspense of waiting for a supernatural manifestation—which comes. Some will be annoyed at a form of psychology which is, in the West, relegated to spiritistic séances. There is, however, no doubt that such psychology exists. All last winter I watched Mr. Yeats correlating folk-lore (which Lady Gregory had collected in Irish cottages) and data of the occult writers, with the habits of charlatans of Bond Street. If the Japanese authors had not combined the psychology of such matters with what is to me a very fine sort of poetry, I would not bother about it.

The reader will miss the feel of suspense if he is unable to put himself in sympathy with the priest eager to see "even in a vision" the beauty lost in the years, "the shadow of the past in bright form." I do not say that this sympathy is easily acquired. It is too unusual a frame of mind for us to fall into it without conscious effort. But if one can once get over the feeling of hostility, if one can once let oneself into the world of the *Noh,* there is undoubtedly a new beauty before one. I have found it well worth the trial, and can hope that others will do so.

This last play of *Genji* shows us the *Noh* very near to the original, or early form, of the God-dance. The first legendary dance took place when the light-goddess hid herself in a cave and the other gods danced on a tub or something of that sort to attract her attention and lure her out of her cave. The parallels with the religious origins of Greek and mediæval drama are so obvious that I will not delay the reader by pointing them out. There are various differences: in Greece the chorus danced, in Japan the hero dances, and so on.

C188 Continued

The arrangement of five or six *Noh* into one performance explains, in part, what may seem like a lack of construction in some of the pieces; the plays have, however, a very severe construction of their own, a sort of musical construction which I shall present in a future article in connection with the text of the Takasago play, when I get that latter ready for the public.

When a text seems to "go off into nothing" at the end the reader must remember (as before said) "that the vagueness or paleness of words is made good by the emotion of the final dance," for the *Noh* has its unity in emotion. It has also what we may call Unity of Image. At least, the better plays are all built into the intensification of a single Image:* the red maple leaves and the snow flurry in *Nishikigi,* the pines in *Takasago,* the blue-grey waves and wave pattern in *Suma Genji,* the mantle of feathers in the play of that name, *Hagoromo.*

When it comes to presenting Professor Fenollosa's records of his conversations with Umewaka Minoru, the restorer of *Noh,* I find myself much puzzled as to where to begin. I shall, however, plunge straight into the conversation of May 15, 1900, as that seems germane to other matters already set forth in this excerpt.

The notes begin as follows:

He (Minoru), says that Mitsuni (a certain actor) has learning and great *Nisshin,* or technique, but that, after all the technique is learned, the great difficulty is to grasp the spirit of the piece.

He always tells the newspapermen to-day not to write

* This intensification of the Image, this manner of construction, is very interesting to me personally, as an Imagiste, for we Imagistes knew nothing of these plays when we set out in our own manner. These plays are also an answer to a question that has several times been put to me: "Could one do a long Imagiste poem, or even a long poem in *vers libre?*

criticisms of *Noh*. They can criticize the popular theatre, for there even the plots may change, and amateurs can judge it. But in *Noh* everything comes down by tradition from early Tokugawa days and cannot be judged by any living man, but can only be followed faithfully.*

Although there is no general score for cats (*i. e.*, the four musicians who have sat at the back of the *Noh* stage for so many centuries that no one quite knows what they mean or how they came there) and actors, there is in the hands of the Taiyu, or actor-manager, a roll such as he (Minoru) himself has, which gives general directions, not much detail. This contains only the ordinary text, with no special notations for singing, but for the dances there are minute diagrams showing where to stand, how far to go forward, the turns in a circle, the turns to right or left, how far to go with the right or left foot, how many steps, eyes right, eyes left, what mask and what clothes are to be worn, the very lines in which the clothes must hang, and the exact position of the arms. There are drawings of figures naked for old men, women, girls, boys, ghosts, and all kinds of characters sitting and standing; they show the proper relation of limbs and body. Then there are similar drawings of the same figures clothed.

But one can not trust merely to such a set of instructions. There is a great deal that must be supplied by experience, feeling, and tradition, and which has always been so supplied. Minoru feels this so strongly that he has not yet shown the rolls to his sons, for fear it might make them mechanical.

A book of this sort has been handed down by his ancestors from early Tokugawa days, but it is only a rough draft. He has written a long supplement on the finer points but has shown it to no one. One should not trust to it, either. Such fine things as *Matsukaye*, the pose for looking at the moon, or at the dawn, or at the double reflection of the moon in two tubs, and all the detail of business can not be written down; at such places he writes merely "*kuden* tradition," to show that this is something that can be learned only from a master. (Sometimes his teacher used to beat him with a fan when he was learning.)

* This is not so stupid as it seems; we might be fairly grateful if some private or chartered company had preserved the exact Elizabethan tradition for acting Shakespeare.

Relying on record plus such tradition, we can say with fair certitude that there has been no appreciable change in *Noh* since the early days of Tokugawa (that is to say, since the beginning of the seventeenth century, or about the end of Shakespeare's lifetime).

Kuden, or this feeling for the traditional intensity, is not to be gained by mere teaching or mimicry, or by a hundred times trying; but it must be learned by a grasp of the inner spirit. In a place, for instance, where a father comes to his lost son, walks three steps forward, pats him twice on the head and balances his stick, it is very difficult to get all this into grace and harmony, and it certainly can not be written down or talked into a man by word of mouth.

Imitation must not be wholly external. There is a tradition of a young actor who wished to learn *Sekidera Komachi*, the most secret and difficult of the three plays which alone are so secret that they were told and taught only by father to eldest son. He followed a fine old woman, eighty years of age, in the street and watched her every step. After a while she was alarmed and asked him why he was following her. He said she was interesting. She replied that she was too old. Then he confessed that he was an ambitious *Noh* actor and wanted to play *Komachi*.

An ordinary woman would have praised him, but she did not. She said it was bad for *Noh*, though it might be good for the common theatre to imitate facts. For *Noh* he must feel the thing as a whole, from the inside. He would not get it copying facts point by point. All this is true.

You must lay great stress upon this in explaining the meaning and aesthetics of the *Noh*.

There is a special medium for expressing emotion. It is the voice.

Each pupil has his own voice; it can not be made to imitate the voice of an old woman or a spirit (*oni*). It must remain always the same, his own; yet with that one individual voice of his he must so express himself as to make it clear that it is the mentality of an old woman, or whatever it happens to be, who is speaking.

It is a *Noh* saying that "The heart is the form."

C188 Continued

There is a general tradition as to costumes. Coloured garments can not be interchanged for white. The general colour is a matter of record, but not the minute patterns, which may be changed from time to time. It is not necessary that one dress should be reserved for one particular character in one particular piece. Even in Tokugawa days there was not always a costume for each special character. Some were used for several parts and some were unique; so also were the masks.

The general colour and colour-effect of the dress can not be changed: say it were small circular patterns on a black ground, this must remain, but the exact flower or ornament inside the circles may vary. The length and cut of the sleeve could not be altered, but only the small details of the pattern. The size of the pattern might be changed just a little.

The *hennia*, or daemonic masks, are different. The *hennia* in *Aoi no Uye* is lofty in feeling; that of *Dojoji* is base. They are very different. The masks of *Shunkan, Semimaru, Kagikiyo,* and *Yoroboshi* can not be used for any other parts. Kontan's mask can be used for several parts, as, for example, the second shite in *Takasago.* Of course if one has only one *hennia* mask one must use it for all *hennia,* but it is better not to do so. The Adachi-ga-hara *hennia* is the lowest in feeling.

Fifty years ago they tried to copy the old masks exactly. The Shogun had Kanze's masks copied even to the old spots. Now it is difficult to get good sculptors.

Turning the head is very difficult, for the actor must be one piece with the mask.

An ordinary mask is worth 30 yen; a great one, 200. At first one can not distinguish between them. But the longer you look at a good mask the more charged with life it becomes. A common actor can not use a really good mask. He can not make himself one with it. A great actor makes it live."

In the notes for a conversation of May 6th, there are the following remarks about the singing or chanting: [The *Noh* texts are part in prose and part in verse; some parts are sung and some spoken, or one might better say, intoned.]

"The importance of the music is in its intervals [he seems to mean intervals between beats; *i. e.*, rhythm intervals, not 'intervals' of pitch]. It is just like the dropping of rain from the eaves.

"The musical bar is a sort of double bar made up of five notes and seven notes, or of seven notes and then seven more notes, the fourteen notes being sung in the same time as the twelve first ones.

"The division of seven syllables is called 'yo,' that of five is called 'in;' the big drum is called 'yo,' and the small drum 'in.' The seven syllables are the part of the big drum, the five syllables are the part of the small drum—but if they come in succession it is too regular; so sometimes they reverse and the big drum takes the 'in' part and the small drum the 'yo.'

"The head of the chorus, naturally, controls the musicians. The chorus is called 'kimi,' or lord, and the 'cats,' or musicians, are called 'subjects.' When Minoru acts as head of the chorus, he says he can manage the 'cats' by a prolonging or shortening of sounds. [This is obscure, but apparently each musician has ideas of his own about tempo.]

"The 'cats' must conform to him. The chorus is subject to the shite, or chief actor. A certain number of changes may have crept into the tradition. The art consists in not being mechanical. The 'cats,'' the chorus, and the shite 'feel out their own originality,' and render their own emotions. Even during the last fifteen years some changes may have crept in unconsciously. Even in Tokugawa days there never was any general score bringing all the parts under a single eye. There is not and never has been any such score. There are independent traditions. [Note. The privileges of acting as 'cats' and as waki were heredity privileges of particular families, just as the privilege of acting the chief parts pertained to the members of the five hereditary schools.] Minoru and other actors may know the parts [he means here the musical air] instinctively or by memory; no one has ever written them down. Some actors know only the arias of the few pieces of which they are masters.

"Each 'cat' of each school has his own traditions. When he begins to learn, he writes down in his note book a note for each one of the twelve syllables. Each man has his

own notation and he has a more or less complete record to learn from. These details are never told to any one. The ordinary actors and chorus singers do not know them.

"In singing, everything depends on the most minute distinction between 'in' and 'yo.' Minoru was surprised to hear that this was not so in the West. In 'yo' there must be 'in,' and in 'in,' 'yo.' This adds breadth and softness, 'haba' he calls it."*

The stage is, as I have said, a platform open on three sides and reached by a bridge from the green-room. The notes on the conversation of June 2d run as follows:

"They have *Hakama Noh* in summer. The general audience does not like it, but experts can see the movements better as the actors sometimes wear no upper dress at all, and are naked save for the semi-transparent *hakama*. New servants are surprised at it.

Mr. Umewaka Minoru has tried hard not to change any detail of the old customs. In recent times many have urged him to change the lights but he prefers the old candles. They ask him to modernize the text and to keep the shite from sitting in the middle [of the stage? or of the play?], but he won't.

"A pupil of his, a wood-dealer, says that a proper *Noh* stage could not be built now, for it is all of *hinoten*. The floor is in twenty pieces, each of which would now cost 250 yen. There must be no knots in the pillars and all the large pillars and cross pieces are of one piece. This would cost enormously now even if it were possible at all.

"Awoyama Shimotsube no Kami· Roju built this stage [the one now used by Minoru] for his villa in Aoyama more than forty years ago; it was moved to its present site in the fourth year of Meiji (1872). The daimyo sold it to a curio dealer from whom Umewaka Minoru bought it. Shimotsube was some relation to the daimyo of Bishu, in Owari, and so he got the timbers for nothing. The best

* This looks like a sort of syncopation. I don't know enough about music to consider it musically with any fullness, but it offers to the student of metric most interesting parallels, or if not parallels, suggestions for comparison with sapphics and with some of the troubadour measures (notably those of Arnaut Daniel), the chief trouble being that Professor Fenollosa's notes at this point are not absolutely lucid.

timber comes from Owari. So the stage had cost only the carpenter's wages (2,000 yen?). Now the wood alone would cost 20,000 to 40,000 yen, if you could get it at all. You couldn't contract for it.

"The form of the stage was fixed in the time of Hideyoshi and Iyeyasu. In Ashikaga (14th century) the performances were in Zadasu ga wara, and the stage was open on all sides. The bridge came to the middle of one side (apparently the back) where the pine-tree now is. The stage was square, as it now is, with four pillars. The audience surrounded it in a great circle 'like Sumo' [whatever that may mean]. They had a second story or gallery and the Shogun sat in front. The roof was as it now is.

"The roof should not be tiled but should be like the roof of the shinto temples in Ise. Shimotsube had had a tiled roof because he was afraid of fire. People had said that he (Minoru) was mad to set up a *Noh* stage [at the time when he was starting to revive the performance]; so he had made the roof small and inconspicuous to attract less notice.

"Under the stage are set five earthen jars, in the space bounded by the pillars, to make the sound reverberate—both the singing and the stamping.* There are two more jars under the musicians' place and three under the bridge. This has been so since early Tokogawa times. The ground is hollowed out under the stage to the depth of four feet.†

"The jars are not set upright, as this would obstruct the sound. They are set at 45 degrees. Sometimes they are hung by strings and sometimes set on posts. Minoru's are on posts.

"Some jars are faced right and some left; there is a middle one upright. Minoru says it is just like a drum, and that the curve of the jars has to be carefully made. The larger the jars the better.

"Hideyoshi or Iyeyasu put the back on the stage. It is made of a double set of boards in order to throw the sound forward. They didn't like having the sound wasted. This innovation was, on that score, aesthetic.

* This stamping dates from the time when, as mentioned earlier, some mythological person danced on a tub to attract the light-goddess.

† The stage is in the open. Minoru says elsewhere, "Snow is worst for it blows on the stage and gets on the feet."

"'Social and palace' reasons have in some measure determined the form of the stage.

"The floor is not quite level, but slopes slightly forward. The art of stage-building is a secret of 'daiko.' It is as difficult to build a *Noh* stage as to build a shinto temple, and there are no proper *Noh* stages built now.

"The painting of the pine-tree on the back is most important. It is a congratulatory symbol of unchanging green and strength.

"On some stages they have small plum-flowers, but this is incorrect; there should be no colour except the green. The bamboo is the complement of the pine. To paint these trees well is a great secret of Kano artists. When skilfully painted, they set off the musicians' forms.

"The three real little pine trees along the bridge are quite fixed; they symbolize heaven, earth, and man. The one for heaven is nearest the stage, and then comes the one which symbolizes man. They are merely symbols like the painted pine tree. Sometimes when a pine is mentioned the actors look toward it.

"The measurements of the stage have not changed since early Tokuwaga days. It should be three ken square, but this measurement is sometimes taken inside, sometimes outside the pillars.

"There is no special symbolism in the bridge; it is merely a way of getting across. The length was arbitrary under the Ashikaga; later it was fixed by rule. At the Shogun's court the bridge was 13 ken long, and one needed a great voice to act there. The middle palace bridge was 7 ken. Minoru's bridge is 5 ken. The bridge must be an odd number of ken, like 13, or like the 'in' and 'yo' numbers (7 and 5). The width is 9 'shaken' outside, and 8 inside the pillars."

PART II

The gentle reader, having perused thus far in patience or in impatience, will probably want to know what came of it all. Does the present *Noh*, saved from the ashes of the revolution, justify so minute an examination of its past? Believing, as I do, that the *Noh* is a very great art, I can heartily

say that it does. I give here several further specimens of the text or libretto. The reader must remember that the words are only one part of this art. The words are fused in with the music and with the ceremonial dancing. One must read or "examine" these texts "as if one were listening to music." One must build out of their indefiniteness a definite image. The plays are at their best, I think, an image; that is to say, their unity lies in the image—they are built up about it as the Greek plays are built up about a single moral conviction. The Greek plays are elaborate presentations of some incident of a story well known; so also the Japanese plays rely upon a certain knowledge of past story or legend. They present some more vivid hour or crisis. The Greek plays are troubled and solved by the gods; the Japanese are abounding in ghosts and spirits. Often the spirit appears first in some homely guise, as, in Catholic legend, we find Christ appearing as a beggar.

The spirit seems often an old man or old woman rapt in meditation. In *Kumasaka* we come upon a simple recluse. The plot is as follows:

The pilgrim priest is asked to pray for some anonymous soul. His interlocutor's hut has in it no shrine, no single picture of Buddha, nothing but a spear and an iron mace. The owner of the hut alludes to himself as "this priest." His gospel is the very simple one of protecting travellers from neighbouring bandits.

Suddenly both he and his hut disappear (*vide* the comments of the chorus). The pilgrim, however, having begun his prayer for the unknown dead man, goes on with the service.

He is rewarded. The second act opens with the reappearance of the spirit in splendid array.

He is the spirit of Kumasaka, remembering the glory of his days, meditating upon them, upon his bowmen and deeds of arms. The final passage is the Homeric presentation of combat between him and the young boy, Ushiwaka. But note here the punctilio. Kumasaka's spirit returns to do justice to the glory of Ushiwaka and to tell of his own defeat. All this is symbolized in the dance-climax of the play, and is told out by the chorus.

KUMASAKA

A play by Ujinobu, adopted son of Motokijo. The scene is in Miwo.

PRIEST. Where shall I rest, wandering, weary of the world? I am a city-bred priest; I have not seen the east counties, and I've a mind to go there. Crossing the hills, I look on the lake of Omi, on the woods of Awatsu. Going over the long bridge at Seta, I rested a night at Noje, and another at Shinohara, and at the dawn I came to the green field Awono in Miwo. I now pass Akasaka at sunset.

SHITE. [*In the form of an old man.*] I could tell that priest a thing or two.

PRIEST. Do you mean me? What is it?

SHITE. A certain man died on this day. I ask you to pray for him.

PRIEST. All right. But for whom shall I pray?

SHITE. I will not tell you his name, but his grave lies in the green field beyond that tall pine tree. He can not enter into the gates of Paradise, and so I ask you to pray.

PRIEST. But I do not think it is proper to pray unless you tell me his name.

SHITE. No, no; you can pray the prayer *Ho kai shijo biodo riaku;* that would do.

PRIEST. [*Praying.*] Unto all mortals let there be equal grace, to pass from this life of agony, by the gates of death into law; into the peaceful kingdom.

SHITE. [*Saying first a word or two.*] If you pray for him,—

CHORUS. [*Continuing the sentence.*] If you pray with the prayer of "Exeat," he will be thankful, and you need not be aware of his name. They say that prayer can be heard for even the grass and the plants, for even the sand and the soil here. And they will surely hear it if you pray for an unknown man.

SHITE. Will you enter? This is my cottage.

PRIEST. This is your house? Very well, I will hold the service in your house; but I see no picture of Buddha, nor any wooden image, in this cottage—nothing but a long spear on one wall and an iron stick in place of a priest's wand, and many arrows. What are these for?

SHITE. [*Thinking.*] Yes, this priest is still in the first grade of faith. [*Aloud.*] As you see, there are many villages here—Zorii, Awohaka, and Akasuka—but the tall grass of Awo-no-gakara grows round the roads between them, and the forest is thick at Koyasu and Awohaka, and many robbers come out under the rains. They attack the baggage, on horseback, and take the clothing of maids and servants who pass here. So this priest goes out with his spear.

PRIEST. That's very fine, isn't it?

CHORUS. You will think it very strange for a priest to do this, but even Buddha has the sharp sword of Mida, and Aijen Miowo has arrows, and Tamon, taking his long spear, throws down the evil spirits.

SHITE. The deep love——

CHORUS. ——is excellent. But liking for the sake of convenience [*that is, of keeping order*] is much more excellent than the love of Bosatsu. I think of these matters and don't know much about anything else. It is from my own heart that I am lost, wandering. But if I begin talking I shall keep on talking until dawn. Go to bed, sire priest. I will sleep too. He seemed to be going to his bedroom, but suddenly his figure disappeared, and the cottage became a field of grass! He passed the night under the pine trees.*

PRIEST. I can not sleep out the night. Perhaps if I held my service during the night under this pine tree—— [*He begins his service for the dead man.*]

II

SECOND SHITE. There are winds in the east and south; the clouds are not calm in the west; and in the north the wind of the dark evening blusters; and under the shade of the mountain——

CHORUS. ——there is a rustling of boughs and leaves.

SECOND SHITE. Perhaps there will be moon-shine tonight, but the clouds veil the sky; the moon will not break up their shadow. "Have at them!" "Ho, there!" "Dash in!" That was the way I would shout, calling and ordering my men before and behind, my bowmen and horsemen. I plundered men of their treasure—that was my work in the world—and now I must go on; it is sorry work for a spirit.

PRIEST. Are you Kumasaka Chohan? Tell me the tale of your years.

* Note the double function of the chorus: (1) to explain thoughts of actors which are left unspoken, (2) to interpret symbolic actions of the actors.

SECOND SHITE *(now known as Kumasaka)*. There were great merchants in Sanjo, Yoshitsuga, and Nobutaka; they collected much treasure each year; they sent rich goods up to Oku. It was then I assailed their trains. Would you know what men were with me?

PRIEST. Tell me the chief men—were they from many a province?

KUMASAKA. There was Kakusho of Kawachi; there were the two brothers Suriharitaro; they have no rivals in fencing.*

PRIEST. What chiefs came to you from the city?

KUMASAKA. Emoi of Sanjo, Kozari of Mibu.

PRIEST. In the art of torches and of fracas——

KUMASAKA. They had no equals.

PRIEST. In northern Hakoku?

KUMASAKA. Were Aso no Matsuwaka and Mikune no Kure.

PRIEST. In Kaga?

KUMASAKA. Kumasaka no Chohan was the head there. There were seventy comrades who were very strong and skilful.

PRIEST. While Yoshitsugu was going along in the fields and on the mountains we set many spies to take him.

KUMASAKA. Now† he is come to the village of Ubasike. This is the best place to attack him. There

* Omoteuchi, face to face attack.

† Note the change to present tense in this passage; the narrative passage, corresponding to the old ballad recitation, ends, and the pantomime representation, having its source in *den* and *saru* dance-pantomime, begins. The play shows well the mingling of the many Noh sources. The second scene is purely martial; the first act implies that Kumasaka's spirit is atoning for his violence by protecting the lowly, and is, of course, Buddhist in origin.

The naive and ceremonial nature of the Noh is well shown by the matter of course acceptance that narration ends and the pantomime begins. It is as if the Shite said, "Now we will *act* the part about his being in the village of Ubasike."

are many ways to escape if we are defeated. And he has invited many guests and has had a great feast at the inn.

PRIEST. When the night was advanced the brothers Yoshitsugu and Nobutaka fell asleep.

KUMASAKA. But there was a small boy with keen eyes, about sixteen or seventeen years old, and he was looking through a little hole in the *shoji*, alert to the slightest noise.

PRIEST. He did not sleep even a wink.

KUMASAKA. We did not know it was Ushiwaka.

PRIEST. It was fate.

KUMASAKA. The hour had come.

PRIEST. Be quick!

KUMASAKA. Have at them!

CHORUS. [*Describing the original combat, now symbolized in the dance.*] At this word they rushed in, one after another. They seized the torches; it seemed as if gods could not face them. Ushiwaka stood unafraid; he seized a small sword and fought like a lion in earnest, like a tiger rushing, like a bird swooping. He fought so cleverly that he felled the thirteen who opposed him; many were wounded besides. They fled without swords or arrows. Then Kumasaka said, "Are you the devil? Is it a god who has struck down these men with such ease? Perhaps you are not a man. However, dead men take no plunder and I'd rather leave this truck of Yoshitsugu's than my corpse. So he took his long spear and was about to make off.

SHITE. ——But Kumasaka thought——

CHORUS. [*Taking it up.*] What can he do, that young chap, if I ply my secret arts freely? Be he god or devil, I will grasp him and grind him. I will offer his body as sacrifice to those whom he has slain. So he drew back and, holding his long

spear against his side, he hid himself behind the door and stared at the young lad. Ushiwaka beheld him, and holding his sword at his side, he crouched at a little distance. Kumasaka waited likewise. They both waited, alertly; then Kumasaka stepped forth swiftly with his left foot, and struck out with the long spear. It would have run through an iron wall. Ushiwaka parried it lightly, swept it away, left volted. Kumasaka followed and again lunged out with the spear, and Ushiwaka deflected the spear-blade quite lightly. Then Kumasaka turned the edge of his spear-blade towards Ushiwaka and slashed at him and Ushiwaka leapt to the right. Kumasaka lifted his spear and the two weapons were twisted together. Ushiwaka drew back his blade. Kumasaka swung with his spear. Ushiwaka jumped up, and faded away.*

Kumasaka tried to find him and Ushiwaka slit through the back-chink of his armour. This seemed the end of his course and he was wroth to be slain by such a young boy.

KUMASAKA. Slowly the wound——

CHORUS. ——seemed to pierce; his heart failed; weakness o'ercame him.

KUMASAKA. At the foot of this pine tree——

CHORUS. ——he vanished like a dew.

And so saying, he disappeared among the shades of the pine tree at Akaska, and night fell.

THE END

This is among the most famous passages of *Noh*, both the description and the sword dance.

* This boxing slang seems the best translation of the exact sense.

SHOJO

This little dance-plan or eclogue is, evidently, one of the "opening or closing pieces in praise of the gods or the reign." It is merely a little service of praise to the wine-spirit. It is quite easy to understand, from such a performance as this, why one meets travellers who say, "Noh? I've seen Noh Dances; I know nothing about Noh Plays."

WAKI. I am a man called Kofu in the village of Yosu, which is at the foot of Kane Kinzan in China, and because of my filial deference I dreamed a strange dream. And the dream told me that if I would sell *sake* in the street of Yosu I should be rich. I obeyed. Time passed. I am rich. And this is the strange thing about it: whenever I go to the market, there's the same man comes to drink *sake.* No matter how much he drinks, his face shows no change. It is curious. When I asked his name, he said, "Shojo." A *shojo* is a monkey. I waited for him going out to the river Yinyo, clipping chrysanthemum petals into the *sake.* I waited for him before moon-rise.

CHORUS. This is chrysanthemum water. Give me the cup. I take it and look at a friend.

HERO. O *sake!*

CHORUS. *Sake* is a word well in season. *Sake* is best in autumn.

HERO. Though autumn winds blow——

CHORUS. ——I am not cold at all.

HERO. I will put cotton over——

CHORUS. ——the white chrysanthemum flowers,

To keep in the smell.
Now we'll take *sake.*

HERO. The guests will also see——

CHORUS. ——the moon and the stars hung out.

HERO. This place is by Yinyo.

CHORUS. The feast is on the river.

HERO. [*Who is in reality* SHOJO.] Shojo will dance now.

CHORUS. The thin leaves of *ashi,* the leaves of the river reeds, are like flute-notes. The waves are like little drums.

HERO. The voice sounds clear through the shore-winds.

CHORUS. It is the sound of autumn.

HERO. You are welcome. I have made this jar full of *sake.* Take it. It will never run dry.

CHORUS. No, it will never be empty—the *sake* of bamboo leaves—; although you drink from the lasting cup of the autumn, the autumn evening remains ever the same.

The moon fades out of the river, and the *sake* weighs down my blood.

And I am shaking and falling; I lie down filled with the wine, and I dream; and, awaking, I find the *sake* still flowing from the jar of Shojo, from the magical fountain.

THE END

TAMURA

This play is to be regarded as one of those dealing with the "pacification of the country and the driving out of evil spirits," although one might perhaps look upon it as a ceremonial play for the Temple founded by Tamura, or even less exactly a ghost play.

The notes are in fragments, or rather there are several long cuts, which do not, however, obscure the outline or structure of the play.

HERO, *first apparition, a boy ("doji" or temple servant).*
TAMURA MARO, *second apparition.*
WAKI, *a priest.*

(The opening may be thus summarized: *The Waki* comes on and says that he is going to Kioto to see the sights. It is spring, and he comes from Kiyomidzu. *Sakura* are blooming. He wants to ask questions about the place. *The boy* comes on, describes the flowers, and says that the light of the goddess Kuanon has made them brighter than usual. *The Waki* asks him who he is "to be standing there in the shade and sweeping up the fallen petals.")

WAKI. Are you the flower keeper?

BOY. I am a man who serves the "Jinnushi Gongen." I always sweep in blossom season—so you may call me the flower keeper, or the honorary servant; but, whatever name you use, you should think of me as someone of rank, though I am concealed in humble appearance.

WAKI. Yes, you look that. Will you tell me about this temple?

BOY. This temple is called Seisuigi; it was founded by Tamura Maro. In Kojimadera of Yamato, there was a priest named Kenshu. He was always wishing to see the true light of Kuanon. And one time he saw a golden light floating on the

Kotsu River. And he was going toward it, when he met an old man who said to him, "I am Gioyei Koji, and you must seek out a certain patron and put up a great temple."

And the old man went off to the East, and he was Kuanon. And the patron was Maro, Sakanouye no Tamura Maro.

CHORUS. In this pure water, Kuanon with a thousand hands gives blessing. She blesses this land and this people.

WAKI. Well, I have met someone interesting. Can you tell me of other places about here?

BOY. The peak to the south is Nakayama Leikanji.

WAKI. And what is that temple to the northward where they are ringing the nightfall bell?

BOY. That is the temple of Ashino-o. Look! the moon is lifting itself over Mt. Otora, and lights the cherry flowers. You must look!

WAKI. It is an hour outweighing much silver. [*The Boy and the Priest together recite the Chinese poem.*]

> The price of this spring evening's moment
> Is a full thousand *yen.*
> The flowers have a fine smell
> And the moon lies upon Kage.

[*There is a break here in the notes. There should follow a chorus about cherries under the moon.*]

CHORUS. Having seen these things with you, I know you are out of the common. I wonder what your name is.

BOY. If you want to discover my name, you must watch what road I take. You must see to what I return.

CHORUS. We cannot know the far or near of his route.

BOY. I go into the mountains.

CHORUS. He said: "Watch my path." And he went down in front of the Jinnushi Gongen temple, and to Tamura-do. He opened the door, and went in.

END OF PART ONE

II

WAKI. I have watched all night under the cherries. I do service beneath the full moon. [*He performs a service.* HERO, *in his second apparition, no longer the boy, but* TAMURA MARO.] That is a very blessed scripture. Just because you have droned it over, I am able to come here and speak with the traveller. This is the blessing of Kuanon.

WAKI. How strange! A man appears, lit up by the light of the flowers. What are you?

TAMURA. To be open, I am none other than Saka-no-Uye Tamura Maro, out of the time of Heijo Zenno. I conquered the eastern wild men, beat down their evil spirit, and was an honest servant to my Emperor by the grace of this temple's Buddha.

[*Here there follows a passage in which he describes his battles.*]

CHORUS. The Emperor bade me beat down the evil spirits in Sajuka in Ise, and to set the capital of that country in peace. I drew up my forces, and then, before I set out, I came to this Kuanon and prayed.

TAMURA. And then a strange sign appeared.

CHORUS. Having faith in the true smile of Kuanon, he went swiftly to war, out past Osaka to the forest Awadzu. He passed Ishijamadzu, and, thinking it

one of the gods of Kizonidzu, he prayed on the long bridge of Leta, as he was come nigh to Ise.

CHORUS. [*Changing from narrative of the journey to description.*] There the plum-trees were blossoming. All the scene showed the favour of Kuanon and the virtue of the Emperor.

Then there was a great noise of evil voices, a shaking of mountains.

TAMURA. [*Excitedly and as if amid the original scene.*] Hear ye the evil spirits! Once in the reign of Teyi, the evil spirit, who served the bad minister Chikata, died, and Chikata fell. But you are near to Suzukayama; you are easy to kill.

CHORUS. Look to the sea of Ise, on the pine-moor of Anono the evil spirits rain their black clouds. They pour down fires of iron; they move like ten thousand footmen; they are piled like the mountains.

TAMURA. Look forth on the carnage!

CHORUS. The battle! Senji Kuanon pours lights on our banner. Her lights fly about in the air. She holds in her thousand hands the bow of "Great Mercy." Hers are the arrows of wisdom. Fly forth her thousand arrows. They harry the spirits; they fall in a swirl of hail. The spirits are dead from her rain.

HOW GREAT IS THE MERCY OF KUANON!

THE END

FOREWORD TO TSUNEMASA

The *Noh*, especially the *Noh* of spirits, abounds in dramatic situations, perhaps too subtle and fragile for our western stage, but none the less intensely dramatic. *Kumasaka* is martial despite the touch of Buddhism in the opening scene where the spirit is atoning for his past violence.

Tsunemasa is gentle and melancholy. It is all at high tension, but it is a psychological tension, the tension of the seance. The excitement and triumph are the nervous excitement and triumph of a successful ritual. The spirit is invoked and appears.

The parallels with western spiritist doctrines are more than interesting. Note the spirit's uncertainty as to his own success in appearing. The priest wonders if he really saw anything. The spirit affirms that "The body was there if you saw it."

As to the quality of poetry in this work: there is the favoured youth, soon slain; the uneasy blood-stained and thoughtless spirit; there are the lines about the caged stork crying at sunset, and they are as clear as Dante's.

"Era già l' ora che volge il disio."

TSUNEMASA

PRIEST. I am Sodzu Giokei, keeper of the temple of Ninnagi. Tajima no Kami Tsunemasa, of the house of Kughi of Taira, was loved by the Emperor, when he was a boy, but he was killed in the old days at the battle of the West Seas. And this is the Seijan lute that the Emperor gave him before

C188 Continued

that fighting. I offer this lute to his spirit in place of libation; I do the right service before him. [*They perform a service to the spirit of Tsunemasa.*]

PRIEST. Although it is midnight I see the form of a man, a faint form, in the light there. If you are spirit, who are you?

SPIRIT. I am the ghost of Tsunemasa. Your service has brought me.

PRIEST. Is it the ghost of Tsunemasa? I perceive no form, but a voice.

SPIRIT. It is the faint sound alone that remains.

PRIEST. O! But I saw the form, really.

SPIRIT. It is there if you see it.

PRIEST. I can see.

SPIRIT. Are you sure that you see it, really?

PRIEST. O, do I, or do I not see you?

CHORUS. Changeful Tsunemasa, full of the universal unstillness, looked back upon the world. His voice was heard there, a voice without form. None might see him, but he looked out from his phantom, a dream that gazed on our world.

PRIEST. It is strange! Tsunemasa! The figure was there and is gone, only the thin sound remains. The film of a dream, perhaps! It was a reward for this service.

SPIRIT. When I was young I went into the court. I had a look at life then. I had high favour. I was given the Emperor's biwa.* That is the very lute you have there. It is the lute called "Seijan." I had it when I walked through the world.

CHORUS. It is the lute that he had in this world, but now he will play Buddha's music.

PRIEST. Bring out what stringed lutes you possess, and follow his music.

SPIRIT. And I will lead you unseen. [*He plays.*]

* Lute.

PRIEST. Midnight is come; we will play the "midnight-play," *Yabansaku*.

SPIRIT. The clear sky is become overclouded; the rain walks with heavier feet.

PRIEST. They shake the grass and the trees.

SPIRIT. It was not the rain's feet. Look yonder.

CHORUS. A moon hangs clear on the pine-bough. The wind rustles as if flurried with rain. It is an hour of magic. The bass strings are something like rain; the small strings talk like a whisper. The deep string is a wind voice of autumn; the third and the fourth strings are like the crying stork in her cage, when she thinks of her young birds toward nightfall. Let the cocks leave off their crowing. Let no one announce the dawn.

SPIRIT. A flute's voice has moved the clouds of Shushinuri. And lioos come out from the cloud; they descend with their playing. Pitiful, marvelous music! I have come down to the world. I have resumed my old playing. And I was happy here. All that is soon over.

PRIEST. Now I can see him again, the figure I saw here; can it be Tsunemasa?

SPIRIT. It's a sorry face that I make here. Put down the lights, if you see me.

CHORUS. The sorrow of the heart is a spreading around of quick fires. The flames are turned to thick rain. He slew by the sword and was slain. The red wave of blood rose in fire, and now he burns with that flame. He bade us put out the lights; he flew as a summer moth.

His brushing wings were a storm.
His spirit is gone in the darkness.

THE RENAISSANCE

III

No, I am not such a fool as to believe that a man writes better for being well fed, or that he writes better for being hungry either. Hunger—some experience of it—is doubtless good for a man; it puts an edge on his style, and so does hard common sense. In the end, I believe in hunger, because it is an experience, and no artist can have too many experiences. Prolonged hunger, intermittent hunger and anxiety, will of course break down a man's constitution, render him fussy and over-irritable, and in the end ruin his work or prevent its full development.

That nation is profoundly foolish which does not get the maximum of best work out of its artists. The artist is one of the few producers. He, the farmer and the artisan create wealth; the rest shift and consume it. The net value of good art to its place of residence has been computed in logarithms; I shall not go into the decimals. When there was talk of selling Holbein's *Duchess of Milan* to an American, England bought the picture for three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. They figured that people came to London to see the picture, that the receipts of the community were worth more per annum than the interest on the money. People go where there are good works of art. Pictures and sculpture and architecture pay. Even literature and poetry pay, for where there is enough intelligence to produce and maintain good writing, there society is pleasant and the real estate values increase. Mr. F. M. Hueffer has said that the difference between London and other places is that "No one lives in London merely for the sake of making money enough to live somewhere else."

The real estate values, even in Newark, New Jersey, would go up if Newark were capable of producing art, literature or the drama. In the quattrocento men went from one Italian city to another for reasons that were not solely commercial.

The question is not: Shall we try to keep up the arts?—but: How can we maintain the arts most efficiently? Paris can survive 1870 and 1914 because she is an intellectual and artistic vortex. She is that vortex not because she had a university in the middle ages—Cordova and Padua had also mediaeval universities. France recognizes the cash value of artists. They do not have to pay taxes save when convenient; they have a ministry of fine arts doing its semi-efficient best. Literary but inartistic England moves with a slow paw pushing occasional chunks of meat towards the favored. England does as well as can be expected, considering that the management of such affairs is entrusted to men whose interests are wholly political and who have no sort of intuition or taste. That is to say, in England, if someone of good social position says that your work is "really literary," and that you are not likely to attack the hereditary interests or criticise the Albert Memorial, you can be reasonably sure of a pension. If your sales have suddenly slumped, you can also have "royal bounty," provided that you respect the senile and decrepit and say a good word for Watts' pictures.

C189 The Renaissance. III. *Poetry*, VI. 2 (May 1915) 84–91.

The result is that France gets Rodin's work when he is fifty instead of the day he began doing good work. England gets Rodin's work after it has gone to seed, and rejects the best work of Epstein in his full vigor. England let half her last generation of poets die off, and pensioned such survivors as hadn't gone into something "practical."

But even this is enough to show that bourgeois France and stolid England recognize the cash value of art. I don't imagine that these sordid material considerations will weigh with my compatriots. America is a nation of idealists, as we all know; and they are going to support art for art's sake, because they love it, because they "want the best," even in art. They want beauty; they can't get along without it. They are already tired of spurious literature.

They recognize that all great art, all good art, goes against the grain of contemporary taste. They want men who can stand out against it. They want to back such men and women to the limit. How are they to go about it? Subsidy? Oh, no. They don't want to pauperize artists!

Of course Swinburne was subsidized by his immediate forebears, and Shelley also; and Browning, the robust, the virile, was subsidized by his wife; and even Dante and Villon did not escape the stigma of having received charities. Nevertheless it is undemocratic to believe that a man with money should give—horrible word!—*give* it, even though not all of it, to painters and poets.

They give it to sterile professors; to vacuous preachers of a sterilized form of Christianity; they support magazines whose set and avowed purpose is either to degrade letters or to prevent their natural development. Why in heaven's name shouldn't they back creators, as well as students of Quinet? Why shouldn't they endow men whose studies are independent, put them on an equal footing with men whose scholarship is merely a pasteurized, Bostonized imitation of Leipzig?

How are they to go about it? Committees are notably stupid; they vote for mediocrity, their mind is the least common denominator. Even if there are a few intelligent members, the unintelligent members will be the ones with spare time, and they will get about trying to "run the committee," trying to get in new members who will vote for their kind of inanity. ***Et cetera, ad infinitum.***

There is one obvious way, which does not compel individuals to wait for an organization:

Private people can give stipends to individual artists. That is to say, you, Mr. Rockefeller, you, Laird Andy of Skibo, and the rest of you (I am not leaving you out, reader, because you have only one million or half of one); you can endow individuals for life just as you endow chairs in pedagogy and calisthenics. More than that, you can endow them with the right to name their successors. If they don't need the money they can pass it on, before their deaths, to younger artists in whom they believe.

For instance, you may begin by endowing Mr. James Whitcomb Riley, Mr. George Santayana, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, Mr. Jack London, or anybody else you believe in. And any artist will applaud you. Any artist would rather have a benefice conferred upon him by *one* of these

men as an individual than by a committee of the "forty leading luminaries of literature." I take a hard case; I don't suppose for a moment that Mr. Riley or Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Santayana or Mr. London wants money—in all probability they would one and all refuse it if offered; but none of them would refuse the right of allotting an income, sufficient to cover the bare necessities of life, to some active artist whom they believe in.

If you endow enough men, individuals of vivid and different personality, and make the endowment perpetual, to be handed down from artist to artist, you will have put the arts in a position to defy the subversive pressure of commercial advantage, and of the mediocre spirit which is the bane and hidden terror of democracy.

Democracies have fallen, they have always fallen, because humanity craves the outstanding personality. And hitherto no democracy has provided sufficient place for such an individuality. If you so endow sculptors and writers you will begin for America an age of awakening which will overshadow the quattrocento; because our opportunity is greater than Leonardo's: we have more aliment, we have not one classic tradition to revivify, we have China and Egypt, and the unknown lands lying upon the roof of the world—Khotan, Kara-shar and Kan-su.

So much for the individual opportunity—now for the civic. Any city which cares for its future can perfectly well start its vortex. It can found something between a graduate seminar and the usual "Arts Club" made up of business men and of a few "rather more than middle-aged artists who can afford to belong".

I have set the individually endowed artist against the endowed professor or editor. I would set the endowment of such grouping of young artists parallel with the endowment, for one year or three, of scholars and fellows by our universities. Some hundreds of budding professors are so endowed, to say nothing of students of divinity.

There is no reason why students of the arts—not merely of painting but of all the arts—should not be so endowed, and so grouped: that is, as artists, not merely as followers of one segregated art. Such endowment would get them over the worst two or three years of their career, the years when their work can't possibly pay.

Scientists are so endowed. It is as futile to expect a poet to get the right words, or any sort of artist to do real work, with one eye on the public, as it would be to expect the experimenter in a chemical laboratory to advance the borders of science, if he have constantly to consider whether his atomic combinations are going to flatter popular belief, or suit the holders of monopolies in some over-expensive compound. The arts and sciences hang together. Any conception which does not see them in their interrelation belittles both. What is good for one is good for the other.

Has any one yet answered the query: why is it that in other times artists went on getting more and more powerful as they grew older, whereas now they decline after the first

outburst, or at least after the first successes? Compare this with the steady growth of scientists.

. . . .

The three main lines of attack, then, which I have proposed in this little series of articles, are as follows:

First, that we should develop a criticism of poetry based on world-poetry, on the work of maximum excellence. (It does not in the least matter whether this standard be that of my own predilections, or crochets or excesses. It matters very much that it be decided by men who have made a first-hand study of world-poetry, and who "have had the tools in their hands.")

Second, that there be definite subsidy of individual artists, writers, etc., such as will enable them to follow their highest ambitions without needing to conciliate the ignorant *en route*. (Even some of our stock-size magazine poets might produce something worth while if they could afford occasionally to keep quiet for six months or a year at a stretch.)

Third, there should be a foundation of such centres as I have described. There should be in America the "*gloire de cénacle.*" Tariff laws should favor the creative author rather than the printer, but that matter is too long to be gone into.

In conclusion, the first of these matters must be fought out among the artists themselves. The second matter concerns not only the excessively rich, but the normally and moderately rich, who contribute to all sorts of less useful affairs: redundant universities, parsons, Y. M. C. A.'s, and the general encouragement of drab mediocrity. The third matter concerns millionaires, multimillionaires and municipalities.

When a civilization is vivid it preserves and fosters all sorts of artists—painters, poets, sculptors, musicians, architects. When a civilization is dull and anemic it preserves a rabble of priests, sterile instructors, and repeaters of things second-hand. If literature is to reappear in America it must come not through, but in spite of, the present commercial system of publication. *Ezra Pound*

Affirmations

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

By Ezra Pound

I have been often reviled, as the more assiduous readers of *The Egoist* (London) know quite well, for various offences real and imaginary, but, up to the date of present writing I cannot remember that anyone has abused me for blind and opinionated optimism about American literature. I have met with remonstrance and pity. Even so, my views are not extreme. I do not foresee a time in the immediate future when America will take the lead in these matters. Neither, on the other hand, can I envelop myself in complete and consummate gloom about America's prospects. A complete destruction of all American writers, editors and publishers now over forty years of age would doubtless advance matters, though even such a salutary measure might entail some percentage of loss,—one cannot know all their excuses.

Nevertheless, as a patriot of the most disagreeable sort, I find it my "duty and privilege" to set apart a day of rejoicing whenever I find any sign of life in American writings. Such days come seldom and one's stock of white pebbles is in no danger of running out.

Likewise, the time has nearly come when I can almost assume that anyone who takes the trouble to read this article will know in a general way what I mean by good writing, or "good poetry." At least, some of my readers will know what I think the essential qualities, the irreducible minimum of virtue, without which no contemporary poetry can be held to be matter of interest. The critic is not intelligible until he defines his standards. Poetry—at least the sort of poetry in which I am interested—is written preferably in a living language. The author states his matter without curley-cues, ornaments and inversions. He tries to make his words follow some rhythm which is at concord with his matter, he does not steal a pre-empted tune which is only suitable to a different emotional content. This does not mean that I have any implacable hostility to regular *metres*. I hold quantitative verse to be of great interest. I do not think I should disparage well-written verse in *any metre*, provided that the *metre* were ably handled.

My preference is for realism, for a straight statement of life, of whatever period you will, decorative, full of pageantry if you must, provided these qualities are essential to the life you are presenting. I want nothing beyond that, no circumlocutions and side views. If the matter is splendid or tragical the reader will know it well enough without the authors adding descriptive adjectives, and interjections of "Ah, sad the day!" for the sake of the rhymes or the *metre*, or because he has not control enough to stick to plain statement.

Such statement has been used by the best of poets at all times. At no time has the world seen any great number of intense natures expressing themselves in fine verse. The Titans are not numerous by habit; we must for the most part content ourselves with the praise of good art or, failing that, of art that might conceivably become good art.

And this is perhaps a very slow way of saying that I have found some American verses which please me, or interest me—which is perhaps the more precise word.

Edgar Lee Masters, publishing in REEDY'S MIRROR, sometimes known as THE ST. LOUIS MIRROR, has, after some earlier work in book form, begun to write quite directly and simply of the life of "Spoon River." There are a great number of people who will call his work unpoetic, and who will dislike it intensely with a quite honest dislike. I also have loved the roses of Putney, I also have floated on that barge with the "Lady of Shalott." Neither am I rushing in headlong rebellion or claiming that Mr. Masters is greater than Swinburne or Tennyson, nor do I claim that the works of these latter poets should never be opened. Nevertheless, I am incrested to find Mr. Masters writing about such "unpoetic" matters as follow:

HILDRUP TUBBS.

I made two fights for the people.
First I left my party, bearing the gonfalon
Of independence, for reform, and was defeated.
Next I used my rebel strength
To capture the standard of my old party—
And I captured it, but I was defeated.
Discredited and discarded, misanthropical,
I turned to the solace of gold
And I used my remnant of power
To fasten myself like a saphrophyte
Upon the putrescent carcass
Of Thomas Rhodes' bankrupt bank,
As assignee of the fund.
Everyone now turned from me.
My hair grew white,
My purple lusts grew gray,
Tobacco and whiskey lost their savor
And for years Death ignored me
As he does a hog.

C190 Affirmations: Edgar Lee Masters. *Reedy's Mirror*, St. Louis, Mo., XXIV. 13 (21 May 1915) 10–12.

HENRY TRIPP.

The bank broke and I lost my savings.
I was sick of the tiresome game in Spoon River
And I made up my mind to run away
And leave my place in life and my family;
But just as the midnight train pulled in,
Quick off the steps jumped Cully Green,
And Martin Vise, and began to fight
To settle their ancient rivalry,
Striking each other with fists that sounded
Like the blows of knotted clubs.
Now it seemed to me that Cully was winning,
When his bloody face broke into a grin
Of sickly cowardice, leaning on Martin
And whining out, "We're good friends, Mart,
You know that I'm your friend."
But a terrible punch from Martin knocked him
Around and around and into a heap.
And then they arrested me as a witness,
And I lost my train and stayed in Spoon River
To wage my battle of life to the end.
Oh, Cully Green, you were my savior—
You, so ashamed and drooped for years,
Loitering listless about the streets,
And tying rags 'round your festering soul,
Who failed to fight it out.

This is far from perfect poetry. It is scarcely even impressive. The author has escaped from the stilted literary dialect of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He has endeavored to write the spoken language. He has not escaped a few dozen *clichés, clichés* of political journalism, *clichés* still hanging over from his "poetic diction period." The poems are weakened again and again by these faults, and still I find a "cause" for each poem. Neither poem seems to me to be a poem written merely for the sake of writing a poem. There is a sort of core of reality in each.

"Gonfalon" is nonsense. I don't think it is defensible on the grounds that "*Tubbs* would have used it." *"Standard," "solace," "purple lusts,"* are all words out of tone, words lazily chosen. In the next poem, *"ancient rivalry"* and *"battle of life,"* are equally bad. Still, I think that the author has on the whole tried to write in plain language. With reasonable care and revision these poems and a number of others might be brought well up to the mark.

The next two poems are much better, they have already been quoted in at least two papers and I should not requote them here were they not the best verses by Mr. Masters that I have yet been able to find.

LILLIAN STEWART.

I was the daughter of Lambert Hutchins,
Born in a cottage near the grist-mill,
Reared in the mansion there on the hill,
With its spires, bay-windows and roof of slate.
How proud my mother was of the mansion!
How proud of father's rise in the world!
And how my father loved and watched us,
And guarded our happiness.
But I believe the house was a curse,
For father's fortune was little beside it,
And when my husband found he had married
A girl who was really poor,
He taunted me with the spires,
And called the house a fraud on the world,
A treacherous lure to young men, raising hopes
Of a dowry not to be had;
And a man while selling his vote
Should get enough from the people's betrayal
To wall the whole of his family in.
He vexed my life till I went back home
And lived like an old maid till I died,
Keeping house for father.

HORTENSE ROBBINS.

My name used to be in the papers daily
As having dined somewhere,
Or traveled somewhere,
Or rented a house in Paris,
Where I entertained the nobility.
I was forever eating or traveling,
Or taking the cure at Baden-Baden.
Now I am here to do honor
To Spoon River, here beside the family whence I sprang.
No one cares now where I dined,
Or lived, or whom I entertained,
Or how often I took the cure at Baden-Baden!

The difficulty with the poets who have so far attempted to write out of the life of the Middle West is that they are continually trying to be facetious. They are continually cracking jokes out of season. Out of that tone of writing it is inconceivable that one should expect good poetry to develop. Mr. Masters is, I dare say, threatened with the same danger. Nevertheless, he nearly always escapes it. He is trying to make a record of the life of his imaginary or typical town. He recognizes the eternal poetic situations when they appear there. This sort of recognition can of course sterilize itself into a method, and will in that case become worthless. But still the man has a chance. He recognizes certain situations which are more or less exclusively American, or which at least appear there in certain peculiar manners. The first of the two following poems contains just the facts "for a short story" and might happen anywhere. The second is an almost common American situation.

DOC HILL.

I went up and down the streets
Here and there by day and night,
Through all hours of the night caring for the poor who were sick.
Do you know why?
My wife hated me, my son went to the dogs.
And I turned to the people and poured out my love to them.
Sweet it was to see the crowds about the lawns on the day of my funeral,
And hear them murmur their love and sorrow.
But oh, dear God, my soul trembled, scarcely able
To hold to the railing of the new life
When I saw Em Stanton behind the oak tree
At the grave,
Hiding herself, and her grief!

THE HILL.

Where are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom and Charley
The weak of will, the strong of arm, the clown, the boozer, the fighter?
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.
One passed in a fever,
One was burned in a mine,
One was killed in a brawl,
One died in a jail,
One fell from a bridge toiling for children and wife—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.
Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?
All, all are sleeping on the hill.
One died in shameful child-birth,
One of a thwarted love.
One at the hands of a brute in a brothel,
One of a broken pride, in the search for heart's desire,
One after life in far away London and Paris
Was brought to her little space by Ella and Kate and Mag—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.
Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towney Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the Revolution?
All, all are sleeping on the hill.
They brought them dead sons from the war,
And daughters whom life had crushed,
And their children fatherless, crying—
All, all are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping on the hill.

Where is Old Fiddler Jones
Who played with life all his ninety years,
Braving the sleet with bared breast,
Drinking, rioting, thinking neither of wife nor kin,
Nor gold, nor love, nor heaven?
Lo! he babbles of the fish-frys of long ago,
Of the horse-races of long ago at Clary's Grove,
Of what Abe Lincoln said
One time at Springfield.

The lasting enjoyment of a work of art is that it leaves you confronted with life, with the objective fact. Rembrandt's old Jews are there. Dürer's old father is there. It is not a matter of opinion. Your views on a protective tariff or on the immortality of the soul do not affect the matter. Odysseus' conversation at departing with Calypso, Villon's "Grosse Margot," Polonius, all real artistic creations have this confronting quality. Statements to the effect that "men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things" or that "the world is too much with us" are mere matters of opinion. The authors of those lines created nothing by writing them. The reader perhaps creates; he comes to the conclusion that "There were or are nasty old men like Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Wordsworth who go about talking and writing in this sententious manner." *Polonius* is a creation. William Shakespeare made him and he confronts you with him,—an old man speaking platitudes. That is the objective fact, and the art. Everything else is transient; the moral and scientific discoveries of one age are the flatness and fadaise of the next.

If in a man's writing I can find this "confronting" quality I am ready to pardon him any number of faults and ineptitudes. They at least can be remedied and retouched. Four or five years should be enough to teach a man how to avoid them. The lack of the confronting quality is irremediable. I should not dream of claiming that the last quoted poem is overwhelming or even, in itself, especially important, but, so far as it goes, it has the "confronting quality." Mr. Master's other work has the same quality in varying degree. And that fact is to me sufficient compensation for my hours wasted in search of interesting contemporary poets. If the author will spend certain hours in revision, a rather strenuous revision; if he will take a few months of meditation wherein to select from the rather too numerous poems he is publishing each week in his paper, he should be able to make a book that will attract a reasonable number of people who care less than I do for what I consider good verse.

If, on the other hand, he grows facetious, or lets down the tone, relaxes his seriousness, grows careless of his rhythm, does not develop it, allows his method to become a mere machinery, "systematizes his production," then one will have to register another disappointment.

The sense of personality and out-and-outness which I get from his earlier book leads me to hope for the first of these two alternatives. Those who like only poems in regular *metres* with rhymes at the end of the lines may be referred to his "Songs and Sonnets" (2nd series) published under the pseudonym, "Webster Ford."

HARK TO STURGE MOORE

Mr. Sturge Moore's last book, a triologue between three nice men in tweed suits concerning the nature of style and the beautiful, is, so far as I am concerned, a mere annoyance, and I will therefore refrain from reviewing it. (*Hark to These Three,* by T. Sturge Moore—Elkin Mathews.) Good poets are too few and the exacerbations of life are too many. Let me rather remind the reader that Sturge Moore is the author of *The Vinedresser and Other Poems,* of *The Defeat of the Amazons,* and a dozen or so classical plays that will never be popular; and that the best of his work is, I think, permanent for those who know the "Mareotic juice from Coecuban."

I am, reader, tired, as you are also, I doubt not, of the New York school of reviewers who will be forever sizing up poems by gross tonnage, discovering each week a "new Shelley" or a "new Keats" or a "new Whistler." (I even remember one lady who said her husband was known as "the American Whistler.")

Also I am dead tired of a criticism that is forever making comparisons of "magnitude" and never definitions of quality. A pox upon all editors, upon all uniforms and upon the present publishing system. A pox!—are we to have no more individuals!

I have been reasonably meticulous, in these pages, in defining my idea of the classic, in indicating my preference for a straight-running speech, and I may therefore be pardoned for expressing an idle, unharnessed and unprofessional enjoyment.

The essential thing in a poet is that he build us his world. It may be Prospero's island, it may be the tavern with Falstaff, or the stripped world of Candide, or Florence which has spread its futile reputation into the nether reaches of hell; or it may be the burlesque of Hudibras; but some such reality, or some such phantasm, the author must rear up about us. And after one has sunk one's personal differences, or even made up one's mind that one's personal differences with Mr. Sturge Moore are everlastingly unsettlable, the fact of his magic remains. In the *Chorus of Dorides,* in a dozen other places, it remains:

C191

C190 Continued

C191 Hark to Sturge Moore. *Poetry,* VI. 3 (June 1915) 139–45.

Dead, dead, hale youth is dead;
Broken, bruised, broken, bathed in spray.
See, see, the hair, the wealth of his head,
With spoilt wreath-tendrils wed!
Limp as a dress once gay,
Which on the shore is found
Where bathing a child has drowned,
So lies he white as the spray;
So white Adonis lay
Before his whimpering hound;
So white on mid-sea lone
Rocked by the billows lay
Fallen Icarus—Phaethon fallen,
Through flaming forest, prone,
Deaf to the wail at dawn,
To houseless nymph and fawn—
Deaf where the leaves were ashes,
All lifeless, white; and so
Lay Hyacinth, his pillow
Tragic with purple splashes,
Deaf to left-handed Woe,
Where breezes through the willow
On beds of blue-bells blow.
Were these not kissed?—not washed with tears?
Did any fond name at their ears
Fail to plead vainly?

. . . .

Dead, dead, poor short-lived lover,
Wasted, wrecked, wasted; day by day
Two careless tides will cover
And roll thee in their spray.
When peacemeal grow thy frail bones white,
Wilt thou through thy worn skull by night
Hear shore-wind sighing?

Sturge Moore is more master of cadence than any of his English contemporaries. If Mr. Yeats has perfect mastery in *Red Hanrahan's Song About Ireland,* and in the verse of *The Wind Among the Reeds,* even his most fervent admirers must grant that Moore has the greater variety of cadences in his quiver, and that he excels his friend in onomatopoeic aptness; in varying and fitting the cadence to its subject emotion.

Lacedaemon, hast thou seen it?
Lacedaemon, Lacedaemon!
From Taygetus the forests
Slope from snows raised far above them!
Lacedaemon rich in corn-lands,
With the grand hill shoulders round them
Blue as lapis in the twilight.

That is both a good and a bad example. It is the Spanish *redondilla* cadence that we know in *Rio verde, rio verde.* He has not escaped rhythmic monotony in these seven lines, but I have quoted the whole seven for the sake of the imagistic vividness in the last one.

He will never be popular in America because of the small-town or "smart-Alec" sense of the superficially comic which pervades that continent. Who with this ever-present "smartness" could get beyond such an opening line as:

We maidens are older than most sheep.

Yet that line opens a quite beautiful poem, and on the whole they are the words most suited for conveying their portion of the effect of the whole. Again the microscopical mind of any reviewer will not be expected to pass over cockney rhymes, whereof there are several most flagrant in this book called *The Vinedresser: ought* and *sort* in one place, *short* and *ought* in another. Such things are like the gritting of a slate-pencil and are no more to be passed over lightly than are the obvious surface faults in Poe's *Helen.* You forgive a poet his sins for the sake of his virtues, "because he hath

loved much." But it is a consummate slovenliness of general criticism to see no flaw in the idol merely because *numen inest.*

It is because of the prevalence of slovenly praising, in prefaces, in histories of literature, and by college professors, that we get no fine age of verse. Countless young poets, hearing older authors spoken of always with adulation, get drunk with their beauty, copy their faults, and the art in general suffers.

Mr. Sturge Moore's "beautiful world" is not unlike the world of "H. D."—hellenic, vivid in color; and this despite the fact that they write almost in different tongues, in utterly different metric, and that there is no influence one way or the other, seeing that Mr. Moore is of an earlier generation (*The Vinedresser* appeared in 1899), and that "H. D." has, to my almost certain knowledge, never read a single line of Sturge Moore. A least she had not when his poems first appeared. So much for future philologists.

As for an audience, I am always at war with the motto on the cover of this magazine. Let me consider Moore's audience. Six years ago Mr. Lawrence Binyon said to me, "Have you ever read Sturge Moore?", and I went back to the British Museum reading room and read the *Defeat of the Amazons,* which I have never forgotten. Though I can remember few phrases, I have the scene and some memory of the rhythm, especially that speech of the running faun beginning

Aie, aie, aie!
Laomedon!

Then there was Maurice Hewlett three years since contending that Moore was the best poet in England, and besides that there is the constant admiration of two such different artists as Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. Wyndham Lewis. And that is perhaps public enough for any man in his life-time. At least I should so suspect Mr. Sturge Moore of considering it, for I have never known a man less aware of the circumjacent vulgarity and of the general stew of the world, the "world of letters," etc.

WOODSTOCK MAZE

A crown in her lap; all proud of her bower;
A woman become a child from using power
Her beauty gave her, bounteous gave; and thence

Renewed in petulence and lucky faults;
So fresh, her whole life breathless halts
To see a star fall through immense
High arch'd twilight—
Rosamund peaceful sat and sang,
While the woods lay still and their echoes rang
To the song *Love loves the night.*

A captive to innocence, held there, to wait
Pale, where the paths all led, whence none led straight
Or could help flight, until the queen came up
And told her in a whisper she must die,
Hated, beneath the quiet sky.
Slowly she drained the deep-stained cup,
And still grew white
Slowly, there, where she sat and sang,
While still the wooded echoes rang
To the song *Love loves the night.*

It is our curse to know we are heard. The charm of first books, the reason why poetry is of youth and prose of middle-age, is that despite their faults in execution, the young are for the most part without an audience; they write for

their own ears, they are not spoiled by knowing there will be an audience. After a man has a public there is always the curse, the venom, as soon as he has written his verse; and if the gods have no pity the very middle of his thought is interrupted with the thought that too many must hear it. Only the gods' darlings escape this. And Sturge Moore has in this vein at least been greatly favored. *Odi . . . et arceo*—was ever a boast more vain, or an irritated outburst more filled with true aspiration, than this opening of urbanest Horace plagued with all the devils of metropolitan, sycophant praises and auditors! *Arceo!* The foxes and eagles had the better of him. Is there any eyrie so remote, any heart so hermetic, that it is not reached by the persistent echoes of braying!

Let us then close with a couple of platitudes: Sturge Moore's work is more like to itself than to anybody else's —and that is always an advantage. If *The Vinedresser* is at times reminiscent, it is reminiscent of Blake and of Browning, who are respectively the soundest core of their eras.

Row till the sea-nymphs rise
To ask you why
Rowing you tarry not
To hear them sigh.

Ezra Pound

A REJOINDER

Editor of POETRY: Mr. Leroy Titus Weeks (*vide Correspondence* for April) mistakes my meaning because, like many other people, he "goes off" before he has applied himself diligently to understand what he reads. It is his function, as he says in one place, to "stand bewildered," or as he says in another, "to smear," but he mistakes when he uses metre, and mistakes even more gravely when he accuses me of optimism, the vulgarest of American vices, saying that I expect the world to go right when I say "Gee!" That is an error. I am boring my little hole in the adamantine stupidity of England, America, New Zealand and a few places elsewhere. I even enjoy the job. The effects are seen even in Mr. L. T. W.'s *vers libre*, for his words are in the normal order. True, his parodies are unimportant as parodies, and I could, in general, advise him and the rest of the American parodists of my work to leave off until they have studied the very excellent parodies made by Mr. Richard Aldington. Mr. Aldington is himself a poet, he knows something about imagism, he has taken the art seriously and made a study of various poets and periods; whereas my American parodists have for the most part studied neither me nor anyone else.

Tanti ringraziamenti! *Ezra Pound*

C192

C191 Continued

C192 ✉ A Rejoinder. *Poetry*, VI. 3 (June 1915) 157–8.
Answering criticism by Leroy Titus Weeks.

SONG OF THE BOWMAN OF SHU

(Translations by EZRA POUND for the most part from the Chinese of RIHAKU, from the notes of the late ERNEST FENOLLOSA, and the decipherings of the Professors MORI and ARIGA.)

Here we are, picking the first fern-shoots
And saying: When shall we get back to our country?
Here we are because we have the Kensin for our foemen.
We have no comfort because of these Mongols.
We grub the soft fern-shoots,
When anyone says "Return" the others are full of sorrow.

Sorrowful minds, sorrow is strong, we are hungry and thirsty.
Our defence is not yet made sure, no one can let his friend return.
We grub the old fern-stalks.
We say: Will we be let go back in October?
There is no ease in royal affairs, we have no comfort.
Our sorrow is bitter, but we would not return to our country.

What flower has come into blossom?
Whose chariot? The General's.
Horses, his horses even are tired. They were strong.
We have no rest, three battles a month.
By heavens, his horses are tired.
The generals are on them, the soldiers are by them.

The horses are trained, the generals have ivory arrows and quivers ornamented with fish skin.
The enemy is swift, we must be careful.
When we set out, the willows were drooping with spring.
We come back in the snow.
We go slowly, we are hungry and thirsty,
Our mind is full of sorrow, who will know of our grief?

—By Kutsugen, 4th Century B. C.

C193

Letters from the People

Mr. Pound's Disgust

5, Holland Place Chambers,
Kensington, W.
London, England, June 3rd.

William Marion Reedy,
St. Louis Mirror:

I have before me a prime example of that sort of soft-soap and leprosy which besets the purlieus of American literature. It purports to be a review of the "Spoon River Anthology." It begins with a sneer at Mr. J. C. Powys, which is, to say the least, irrelevant to the main tenor of the book. It goes on to complain of Mr. Masters' "cynicism." "Cynicism"—that is the word.

Now, if there ever was a writer who looked on the mildly nauseating spectacle of human imbecility with a sort of universal forgiveness that writer is E. L. Masters. If you are going to call Mr. Masters a cynic, you may as well describe the sayings of the New Testament protagonist as "horrid, cynical speeches."

No, it is not the first time. I saw another one of these pink-talcum-for-the-baby's-skin reviews a week or so ago. Some other gentleman with little blue ribbons in his undershirt was shocked at Mr. Masters' "cynicism."

C—— a—— h——! Is it a man's country? Am I expected to accept my friends' invitations and come back to a "great," "wide," "whole-hearted" nation, with a "grand atmosphere," etc., etc., etc.?

No, I know "it's not the American people." Thank God, it isn't. The American people talk and think in some such plain terms as one finds in the Chicago *Day Book,* but American Literature is "something apart" from "the sphere of our" common-sense. It is preserved gum-arabic. The flare of the great writers is kept off it,

ut flosculus Hyacinthus in horto

it waxes in the cotton-wool minds of old gentlemen. And when someone like Masters does a good job, they sit around on the edge and get horrified, and burble about other nice poets being interested in their "souls." Is America ever going to clean its stables of the sugartit pest?

EZRA POUND.

June 5th.

C193a

C193 SONG OF THE BOWMEN OF SHU. *Evening Bulletin*, Philadelphia, Pa. (5 June 1915 [?]).
Reprinted from *Cathay* (1915)—A9.

C193a ✉ . . . Mr. Pound's Disgust. *Reedy's Mirror*, XXIV. 18 (25 June 1915) 26.
On a review of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*.

POEMS

BY

EZRA POUND.

"O bright
"Swallow with a white
"Belly and black back,"
etc.

DOGMATIC STATEMENT ON THE GAME AND PLAY OF CHESS.

(THEME FOR A SERIES OF PICTURES).

Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens
Striking the board, falling in strong " L's " of colour,
Reaching and striking in angles,
Holding lines of one colour :
This board is alive with light
These pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern :
Luminous green from the rooks,
Clashing with " x's " of queens,
Looped with the knight-leaps.
" Y " pawns, cleaving, embanking,
Whirl, centripetal, mate, King down in the vortex :
Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of hard colour,
Blocked lights working in, escapes, renewing of contest

THE SOCIAL ORDER.

I.

This government official,
Whose wife is several years his senior,
Has such a caressing air
When he shakes hands with young ladies.

C194 POEMS. *Blast*, 2 (July 1915) 19–22.
Contents: Dogmatic Statement on the Game and Play of Chess—The Social Order—Ancient Music—Gnomic Verses—Our Contemporaries—Our Respectful Homages to M. Laurent Tailhade—Ancient Wisdom, Rather Cosmic—Et faim sallir le loup des boys.

II.

(Pompes Funebres).

This old lady,
Who was "so old that she was an atheist,"
Is now surrounded
By six candles and a crucifix,
While the second wife of a nephew
Makes hay with the things in her house.
Her two cats
Go before her into Avernus;
A sort of chloroformed suttee,
And it is to be hoped that their spirits will walk
With their tails up,
And with a plaintive, gentle mewing,
For it is certain that she has left on this earth
No sound
Save a squabble of female connections.

ANCIENT MUSIC.*

Winter is icumen in,
Lhude sing Goddamm,
Raineth drop and staineth slop,
And how the wind doth ramm!
Sing: Goddamm.
Skiddeth bus and sloppeth us,
An ague hath my ham.
Freezeth river, turneth liver
Damm you; Sing: Goddamm.
Goddamm, Goddamm, 'tis why I am, Goddamm,
So 'gainst the winter's balm.
Sing goddamm, damm, sing goddamm,
Sing goddomm, sing goddamm, DAMM.

*Note.—This is not folk music, but Dr. Ker writes that the tune is found under the latin words of a very ancient canon.

GNOMIC VERSES.

When the roast smoked in the oven, belching out blackness,
I was bewildered and knew not what to do,
But when I was plunged in the contemplation
Of Li Po's beautiful verses,
This thought came upon me,—
When the roast smokes, pour water upon it.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

When the Taihaitian princess
Heard that he had decided,
She rushed out into the sunlight and swarmed up a cocoanut palm tree,
But he returned to this island
And wrote 90 Petrarchan sonnets.

Foot-note. pour le lecteur francais:
Il s'agit d'un jeune poète qui a suivi le culte de Gauguin jusqu' a Taihayti meme, Etant fort bel homme, quand la princesse bistre entendit qu'il voulait lui accorder ses faveurs elle a montré son allegresse a la manière dont nous venons de parler, Malheureusement ses poèmes sont remplis seulement de ses propres subjectivités, style Victorienne de la " Georgian Anthology,"

OUR RESPECTFUL HOMAGES TO M. LAURENT TAILHADE.

OM MANI PADME HUM
LET US ERECT A COLUMN, an epicene column,
To Monsieur Laurent Tailhade !
It is not fitting that we should praise him
In the modest forms of the Madrigale or the Aubade.
Let us stamp with our feet and clap hands
In praise of Monsieur Laurent Tailhade,
Whose " Poemes Aristophanesques " are
So-very-odd.
Let us erect a column and stamp with our feet
And dance a Zarabondilla and a Kordax,
Let us leap with ungainly leaps before a stage scene
By Leon Bakst.
Let us do this for the splendour of Tailhade.
Et Dominus tecum,
Tailhade.

ANCIENT WISDOM, rather cosmic.

So-Shu dreamed,
And having dreamed that he was a bird, a bee, and a butterfly,
He was uncertain why he should try to feel like anything else,
Hence his contentment.

ET FAIM SALLIR LE LOUP DES BOYS.

I cling to the spar,
Washed with the cold salt ice
I cling to the spar—
Insidious modern waves, civilization, civilized hidden snares.
Cowardly editors threaten: "If I dare"
Say this or that, or speak my open mind,
Say that I hate may hates,
 Say that I love my friends,
Say I believe in Lewis, spit out the later Rodin,
Say that Epstein can carve in stone,
That Brzeska can use the chisel,
Or Wadsworth paint;
 Then they will have my guts;
They will cut down my wage, force me to sing their cant,
Uphold the press, and be before all a model of literary decorum.
 Merde!
Cowardly editors threaten,
Friends fall off at the pinch, the loveliest die.
That is the path of life, this is my forest.

C194 Continued

CHRONICLES.

I.

Lest the future age looking back upon our era should be misled, or should conceive of it as a time wholly cultivated and delightful, we think it well to record occasional incidents illustrative of contemporary custom, following, in so far as is convenient, the manner of John Boccacio. Let it then stand written that in the year of grace, 1914, there was in the parish of Kensington a priest or vicar, portly, perhaps over fed, indifferent to the comfort of others, and well paid for official advertisement and maintenance of the cult of the Gallilean . . . that is to say of the contemporary form of that cult.

And whereas the Gallilean was, according to record, a pleasant, well-spoken, intelligent vagabond, this person, as is common with most of this sect was in most sorts the reverse . . their hymns and music being in the last stages of decadence.

The said vicar either caused to be rung or at least permitted the ringing of great bells, untuneful, ill-managed, to the great disturbance of those living near to the church. He himself lived on the summit of the hill at some distance and was little disturbed by the clatter.

The poor who lived in the stone court-yard beneath the belfry suffered great annoyance, especially when their women lay sick. Protest, was however, of no avail. The ecclesiastic had the right to incommode them. The entire neighbourhood reeked with the intolerable jangle. The mediaeval annoyance of stench might well be compared to it. We record this detail of contemporary life, because obscure things of this sort are wont carelessly to be passed over by our writers of fiction, and because we endeavour in all ways to leave a true account of our time.

We point out that these bells serve no purpose, no one pretends that they advance the cult of the Gallilean, no on, pretends that a musical chime of bells would be less efficient They serve as an example of atavism. Once such bells were of use for alarm, or told the hour to a scattered peasantry, or announced a service to a village without other chronometers, now they persist in thickly populated portions of our city, without use, without other effect than that of showing the ecclesiastical pleasure in aimless annoyance of others.

The three circumjacent temples of Bacchus debased and the one shrine of Aphrodite popularis, lying within the radius of this belfry cause less discord and less bad temper among the district's inhabitants.

The intellectual status of this Gallilean cult in our time may be well judged when we consider that you would scarcely find any member of the clergy who would not heartily approve of this biweekly annoyance of the citizens. For in this place at least the ringers must enforce their consummate incompetence by pretending to practice their discords, which are, very likely, worse than any untrained hand could accomplish,

II.

ON THE RAGE OR PEEVISHNESS WHICH GREETED THE FIRST NUMBER OF BLAST.

The first number of BLAST which came to many as cooling water, as a pleasant light, was greeted with such a mincing jibber by the banderlog that one is fain examine the phenomenon. The jibber was for the most part inarticulate, but certain phrases are translatable into English. We note thereby certain symptoms of minds bordering on the human. First that the sterile, having with pain acquired one ready made set of ideas from deceased creators of ideas, are above all else enraged at being told that the creation of ideas did not stop at the date of their birth; that they were, by their advent into this life, unable to produce a state of static awe and stolidity. The common or homo canis snarls violently at the thought of there being ideas which he doesn't know. He dies a death of lingering horror at the thought that even after he has learned even the newest set of made ideas, there will still be more ideas, that the horrid things will grow, will go on growing in spite of him.

BLAST does not attempt to reconcile the homo canis with himself. Of course the homo canis will follow us. It is the nature of the homo canis to follow. They growl but they follow. They have even followed thing in black surtouts with their collars buttoned behind.

OYEZ. OYEZ. OYEZ.

Throughout the length and breadth of England and through three continents BLAST has been REVILED by all save the intelligent.

WHY ?

Because BLAST alone has dared to show modernity its face in an honest glass.

While all other periodicals were whispering PEACE in one tone or another; while they were all saying "hush" (for one "interest" or another), "BLAST" alone dared to present the actual discords of modern "civilization," DISCORDS now only too apparent in the open conflict between teutonic atavism and unsatisfactory Democracy.

It has been averred by the homo canis that Blast is run to make money and to attract attention. Does one print a paper half a yard square, in steam-calliope pink in order to make it coy and invisible? Will Blast help to dispel the opinion of the homo canis, of the luminaries of the British bar (wet or dry), of the L.C.C. etc., that one makes one's art to please them?

Will the homo canis as a communal unit, gathered together in his aggregate, endure being deprived of his accustomed flattery, by Blast?

Does anything but the need of food drive the artist into contact with the homo canis?

Would he not retire to his estates if he had 'em? Would he not do his work quietly and leave the human brotherhood to bemuck the exchanges, and to profit by his productions, after death had removed him from this scene of slimy indignity?

C195 Chronicles. *Blast*, 2 (July 1915) 85–86.
Signed: E. P. *Contents:* I. 'Lest the future age . . . '—II. On the Rage or Peevishness Which Greeted the First Number of *Blast*—III. Lawrence [*sic*] Binyon.

The melancholy young man, the aesthetic young man, the romantic young man, past types; fabians, past; simple lifers past. The present: a generation which ceases to flatter.

Thank god for our atrabilious companions.

And the homo canis?

Will go out munching our ideas. Whining.

Vaguely one sees that the homo canis is divisible into types. There is the snarling type and the smirking. There was the one who "was unable to laugh" at the first number of Blast. The entrails of some people are not strong enough to permit them the passion of hatred.

III.

LAWRENCE BINYON.

We regret that we cannot entitle this article "Homage to Mr. Lawrence Binyon," for Mr. Binyon has not sufficiently rebelled. Manifestly he is not one of the ignorant. He is far from being one of the outer world, but in reading his work we constantly feel the influence upon him of his reading of the worst English poets. We find him in a disgusting attitude of respect toward predecessors whose intellect is vastly inferior to his own. This is loathesome. Mr. Binyon has thought he has plunged into the knowledge of the East and extended the borders of occidental knowledge, and yet his mind constantly harks back to some folly of nineteenth century Europe. We can see him as it were constantly restraining his inventiveness, constantly trying to conform to an orthodox view against which his thought and emotions rebel, constantly trying to justify Chinese intelligence by dragging it a little nearer to some Western precedent. Ah well! Mr. Binyon has, indubitably, his moments. Very few men do have any moments whatever, and for the benefit of such readers as have not sufficiently respected Mr. Binyon for his, it would be well to set forth a few of them. They are found in his "Flight of the Dragon," a book otherwise unpleasantly marred by his recurrent respect for inferior, very inferior people.

P. 17. Every statue, every picture, is a series of ordered relations, controlled, as the body is controlled in the dance, by the will to express a single idea.

P. 18. In a bad painting the units of form, mass, colour, are robbed of their potential energy, isolated, because brought into no organic relation.

P. 19. Art is not an adjunct to existence, a reproduction of the actual.

P. 21. FOR INDEED IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL THAT THE SUBJECT-MATTER SHOULD REPRESENT OR BE LIKE ANYTHING IN NATURE; ONLY IT MUST BE ALIVE WITH A RHYTHMIC VITALITY OF ITS OWN.

On P. Fourteen he quotes with approbation a Chinese author as follows:—As a man's language is an unerring index to his nature, so the actual strokes of his brush in writing or painting betray him and announce either the freedom and nobility of his soul or its meanness and limitation.

P. 21. You may say that the waves of Korin's famous screen are not like real waves: but they move, they have force and volume.

P. 90. It would be vain to deny that certain kinds and tones of colour have real correspondence with emotional states of mind.

P. 91 Chemists had not multiplied colours for the painter, but he knew how to prepare those he had.

P. 94. Our thoughts about decoration are too much dominated, I think, by the conception of pattern as a sort of mosaic, each element in the pattern being repeated, a form without life of its own, something inert and bounded by itself. We get a mechanical succession which aims at rhythm, but does not attain rhythmic vitality.

E.P.

With help from the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa and the decipherings of two professors learned in Chinese inscriptions, Ezra Pound has given us in English fourteen poems from the Chinese ("Cathay"; Elkin Matthews, London), twelve of them being from Rihaku, of the eighth century, A.D., and the other two being from writers of a still earlier date. They have a decided interest to students of literature, and their local color and their naiveté of expression give to many of them a wider interest. Any poem that has come down to us through twelve centuries of chance and change has an appeal to our curiosity. The following has also an appeal to the unchanging heart of mankind:

THE RIVER-MERCHANT'S WIFE: A LETTER.

BY EZRA POUND, FROM THE CHINESE OF RIHAKU.

WHILE my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.

Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever and forever.
Why should I climb the lookout?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-Yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.

C196

C195 Continued
C196 THE RIVER-MERCHANT'S WIFE. *Current Opinion*, New York, LIX. 1 (July 1915) 55.
Reprinted from Cathay (1915)—A9.

The monkeys make sorrowful noise over-
head.
You dragged your feet when you went
out.
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the
different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!
The leaves fall early this autumn, in
wind.
The paired butterflies are already yellow
with August
Over the grass in the West garden,
They hurt me.
I grow older,
If you are coming down through the
narrows of the river Kiang,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you,
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

LOVE-SONG TO EUNOE

By Ezra Pound

BE wise:
Give me to the world,
Send me to seek adventure.

I have seen the married,
I have seen the respectably married
Sitting at their hearths:
It is very disgusting.

I have seen them stodged and swathed in contentments.
They purr with their thick stupidities.

O Love, Love,
Your eyes are too beautiful for such enactment!
Let us contrive a better fashion.

O Love, your face is too perfect,
Too capable of bearing inspection;
O Love,
Launch out your ships,
Give me once more to the tempest.

C197

C196 Continued
C197 LOVE-SONG TO EUNOË. *Smart Set*, XLVI. 3 (July 1915) 395.

"The Pleasing Art of Poetry"

The pleasing Art of Poetry's design'd
To raise the heart and moralise the mind;
The chaste delights of Virtue to inspire,
And warm the bosom with seraphic fire:
Sublime the passions, lend devotion wings,
And celebrate the *First Great Cause* of things.

(Motto verses of the title-page, E. Tompkin's Anthology, published 1791, for E. Wenman, No. 144, Fleet Street, London.)

CURIOSITY, gentle reader, may sometimes have shaken you; you may have wondered, as I have wondered, at the stupidities of the race. I do not know whether the stupidities of contemporary mankind are more annoying when they seem to crop up as perfect miracles of nature without cause and without antecedent excuse, or when we try philosophically to determine how such and such asses came to exist as they are.

We none of us read very much, unless we are studious or stalled away in the country; we have each of us smiled in a very superior manner when we hear that Shelley was once denounced as an atheist. "*Could* people have been so silly?"

No, that is not the question. Wordsworth even, that placid sheep, was likewise denounced as an atheist. But since we must live in the world, if we would live at all, our problem is whether or no there still exists a numerous and powerful body of people who would still condemn Shelley as profane if they read him, and who not only continue to exist, but who maintain a strangle hold on a good portion of English and American letters.

I pass over the ancient English periodicals, for they have long since been forgotten save in aged gentlemen's clubs, "Blackwoods," "The Cornhill." The very names remind one of one's courses in high school and of the century before last, and yet they continue existing.

They are no longer sought for entertainment. In America the atavisms still flourish, and it is a peculiar thing that in America no writer is "taken seriously" unless he complies with the defunct standards of "the Better Magazines," which same "better magazines" have done their utmost to keep America out of touch with the contemporary world, and have striven with all their inertia to "keep things" anchored to 1876. It is only by an organised rebellion, partially managed from London, that modern French writers have been forced into the United States, and now begin to appear in some of the newer papers.

We will say, for the sake of politeness, that the "Century," "Harper's," "Scribner," "The Atlantic," were founded by ambitious men, anxious to build up the national consciousness, to promote American letters, etc.

We will even admit their ability. We deny, however, that their successors have had any measure of this, or that they have done anything toward vitalising or representing the growing thought of the nation: inferior men, trying to preserve the mould left them by their predecessors; almost anonymous men, men of no creative ability, trying as long as possible to bear the cloak which has been left them without letting the public know that there is a new body inside it.

This is, of course, less immediately irritating to the public than to writers themselves. The ignorant young writers comply, or attempt to comply, and are thus ruined, thinking they approach a classical standard. The readers, if they are honestly in search of enlivenment, leave the old magazines unread, or "petrify in their tracks" and go on believing the world is the same as when they began being guided by the "Century" in the year 1869.

We, while our good manners last, go on excusing our elders. The forbearance and tolerance of youth for the stupidities of the elderly is, past all expression, amazing. Also we have our own feuds, we do not combine against the senile. We are making a new earth, and we have different ideas as to the pattern. The senile are all at one—they wish to stay as they are.

After our first enthusiasm we become analytical and try to account for the senile.

Bear with me a moment, I may bring forth a few documents which will gently amuse you.

Have you ever attempted to wonder just why the elderly are stupid in "that particular way." Why a certain magazine refused, for instance, to publish a story where the hero on going to bed with his wife left "his trousers hung over a chair-back"? Why the language of the classics is debarred? Why a modern author is expected to indulge in circumlocutions which would have shocked even Miss Austen?

No, reader, you never have. You have never been marooned in a country cottage with a dozen stray books printed about the end of the eighteenth century in England.

If you will by diligent search come at a dozen books, ordinary books, of that date, not books still remembered as classics, but books which were acceptable in their day, which roused no comment that was not approbation, books that went into ordinary homes as Christmas gifts, then, gentle reader, you will find the true key to what is now called "sound opinion." The people who read these books had minds which petrified early, and they brought up their children and grandchildren on the ideas which they had imbibed in their youth. And the minds of their children and grandchildren, by hereditary predilection, petrified early, and thus you may come at the core of opinion if you read their grand-parents' books.

When the "Century" or "Harper's" make what they consider a "dashing sally," or put forward a bold opinion or innovation, you may be sure that they are "considering a modification" of what was *sound* opinion in the year 1791.

And after you have mellowed your mind with such works you will perhaps find the universe less perplexing. Note especially that opinion at that date was not deep-rooted, it was not immemorial wisdom.

Mr. Tomkins in his anthology includes no single Elizabethan, and never a line from Herrick. He entitles his book as follows:

POEMS
ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS
Selected to enforce the
PRACTICE OF VIRTUE
AND
With a View to comprise in One Volume the
BEAUTIES
OF
ENGLISH POETRY.
BY E. TOMKINS.

A new edition.

Then follows the charming set of verses which I have set at the head of this article. And then follows the author's preface, a most invulnerable writing, as follows:

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Editor of this Collection has not much to say on the present occasion. Truth is seldom verbose: the truest things are most easily expressed in the shortest periods.

POETRY is an Art of which no liberal or cultivated mind can or ought to be wholly ignorant. The pleasure which it gives, and, indeed, the necessity of knowing enough of it to mix in modern conversation, will evince the utility of the following Compilation, which offers in a small compas the very flower of English Poetry, and in which care has been taken to select not only such pieces as Innocence may read without a blush, but such as will even tend to strengthen that Innocence.

VOLTAIRE, speaking of the English Poets, gives them the preference in Moral pieces to those of any other nation; and, indeed, no Poets have better settled the bounds of Duty, or more precisely determined the rules for Conduct in Life than ours.

In this little Collection the Reader therefore may find the most exquisite pleasure, while he is at the same time learning the duties of life; and while he courts only Entertainment, be deceived into Wisdom.

In a word, it is the peculiar property of POETRY to do good *by stealth;* to hide the thorny path of Instruction by covering it with flowers; and the veriest Infidel in

C198 "The Pleasing Art of Poetry." *New Age*, XVII. 10 (8 July 1915) 229–31.

Polite Learning must be something more than abandoned if he will not visit the Temple of Instruction when Pleasure leads the way to it. E. T.

Gentle reader, could I in an encyclopædic treatise have shown you more clearly why Keats, and Shelley and Wordsworth once came as an "excitement." And even that is not my object.

We might, as we read Mr. Tomkins, be reading an editorial in the "Century." The underlying priggery has so little changed. They were a little more frank in 1791, that is the only difference.

And their narrowness was about equal. The "Century" and its contemporaries imagine that God's final and explicit revelation came about 1876. They have heard of Lamb and Wordsworth, but they care nothing about the real tradition of letters, which begins at least as early as 600 B.C.

1791 was tarred with the same brush. They did not admit the Elizabethans, let alone Chaucer. Mr. Tomkins' index seems to contradict me. It announces "Spring: An Ode . . . Johnson, p. 224." But it is not Ben Jonson; it is the Johnson spelled with an "h," Dr. Johnson. The beauties of English poetry include Pope, Milton, Miss Carter, Cotton, Thomson, and Melmouth.

And the poetry is just like that which appears in our best magazines, save that Pope's is more finished and Milton's more filled with Latinisms.

> 'Tis not her jewels but her mind;
> A meeker, purer, ne'er was seen;
> It is her virtue charms mankind!

chaunts Dr. Fordyce, that precursor of Emerson, in a poem entitled "Virtue and Ornament," and dedicated "To the Ladies." He has not the Whitmanian élan, not the wicked Swinburnian gusto, nor the placid and well-fed enjoyment of the late William Morris.

Of course, the language, the very phrases, are those of our best magazines. Mrs. Greville talks of "Cynthia's silver light," and says that the wanton sprite "Tripp't o'er the green." Lady Craven writes, "While zephyr fanned the trees; No sound assailed my mind's repose."

Dr. Cotton opens a poem with the trenchant line: "Man is deceived by outward show." (We might be reading Henry VanDyke.)

Cunningham must have got into the collection by mistake, for he has the terribly erotic lines:

> I kiss'd the ripe roses that glow'd on her cheek,
> And lock'd the loved maid in my arms.

We suspect an almost pre-Swinburnian fury of alliteration, but find presently that the poem is a strictly proper pastoral, full of unreality. He goes to sleep "reclin'd" on her bosom, and her Image still softens his dreams.

> Together we range o'er the slow-rising hills,
> Delighted with pastoral views,
> Or rest on a rock whence the streamlet distils,
> And mark out new themes for my Muse.

And then, in the next verse, we learn that the affair is quite—oh quite—proper; the lady is an allegory.

> And shepherds have nam'd her, Content.

Mr. Cunningham is absolved. He has not brought the blush to the cheek of innocence; he has perhaps even strengthened it as the collector had hoped, though he may have left it somewhat disappointed. But what matter? It was a Spartan age, and so like our "best magazines."

It is, on the whole, a charming collection. George Lord Lyttleton spares the blushes of innocence by warning "Belinda" of the wickedness of the male. But perhaps you have had enough poetry; let us turn to safe prose.

Mr. Jones, author of "History of England" and other works, flourished some three decades after Mr. Tomkins. Here is a notable preface:

> INTRODUCTION.
>
> Man must be enlightened to know good from evil, and to attain this desirable end, no means can be more simple or more proper than the study of the wonderful works of his Creator,* and the effects which the due observance of his laws, or the violation of them, have wrought among his own species.
>
> The world remains unchanged, the seasons still maintain their limited course; but nations, and kingdoms, and empires have risen to greatness, or fallen into utter degradation, by the influence of those passions which are implanted in every bosom, and which it is the proper business of our temporary sojourn here to direct and guide into proper channels. The experience of past ages attests the truth of this observation, and its records will be found in the following pages.

Trenchant, concise, unassuming, how like the editorials in the "Century," "Harper's," the "Atlantic"; how like the elderly generation of American literati now moving slowly—alas! too slowly—to their collective tomb!

Mr. Jones was, however, alive to the benefits of science. He goes on to say:

> Ancient geographers considered the world to be a flat surface surrounded with water, but later discoveries and experiments† have proved that its figure is round. The habitable parts of the earth are calculated at thirty-nine millions of square miles. . . .
>
> The inhabitants of this vast space are computed to be about eight hundred millions, of whom nearly one-half are Pagans, and only one-sixth Christians. (Etc.)

Mr. Jones wrote in 1829. Burns was long dead, Keats was dead, and Shelley and Byron. I spare to name the French writers.

Mr. Jones makes only one statement with which the "best magazines" of America will disagree. He says:

> The world is divided into four quarters, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, of which the former, though much the smallest, is the most important.

With that slight exception, the book can be safely recommended to all young American authors who aspire to success in serious literature and who desire the approbation of their impeccable elders.

EZRA POUND.

This letter is too good and too self-revealing to remain in the obscurity of an autograph collection. It comes to "the editor of the Boston Transcript" from London, and it is written and signed by Ezra Pound:

I dont know that it is worth my while to call any one of your reviewers a liar, but the case has its technical aspects and the twistings of malice are, to me at least, entertaining.

I note in "Current Opinion" for June a quotation from your paper to the effect that my friend Robert Frost has done what no other American poet has done in this generation "and that is, unheralded, unintroduced, untrumpeted, he won the acceptance of an English publisher on his own terms" etc.

Now seriously, what about me? Your . . . reviewer might acquaint himself with that touching little scene in Elkin Mathews' shop some years since.

Mathews. "Ah, eh, ah, would you, now, be prepared to assist in the publication?"

E. P. "I've a shilling in my clothes, if that's any use to you."

Mathews. "Oh well I want to publish 'em. Anyhow."

And he did. No, sir, Frost was a bloated capitalist when he struck this island, in comparison to yours truly, and you can put that in your editorial pipe though I don't give a damn whether you print the fact.

You might note en passant that I've done as much to boom Frost as the next man. He came to my room before his first book "A Boy's Will" was published. I reviewed that book in two places and drew it other reviewers' attention by personal letters. I hammered his stuff into "Poetry," where I have recently reviewed his second book, with perhaps a discretion that will do him more good than pretending that he is greater than Whitman. E. L. Masters is also doing good work.

You understand I dont in the least mind being detested by your understrappers, but I think you owe it to the traditions of the Transcript to keep them within the bounds of veracity.

Of course, from the beginning, in my pushing Frost's work I have known that he would ultimately be boomed in America by fifty energetic young men who would use any club to beat me, that was well in my calculation when I prophecied his success with the american public, and especially with the american reviewers, and I rejoice to see that it has caught on.

But your critic's statement is caddish. Moreover I think it unwise that you should encourage that type of critic which limits the word "american" to such work only as happens to flatter the parochial vanity. It is not even Chauvinism, it is stupid.

/ / /

Mr. Pound, be it noted, has now so thoroughly expatriated himself that he spells "American" with a small "a."

C199 ✉ *Boston Evening Transcript*, Boston, Mass. (14 July 1915) 21.
On Robert Frost, and Ezra Pound's own first publication in England. Quoted in a column by E. F. E., "Writers and Books: The Literary World Today." Reprinted (from retained carbon copy?) with the (incorrect) supplied date "August," in *Letters*—A64—pp. 62–63.

THE VORTICISTS.

To the Editor of the "Westminster Gazette."

Dear Sir,—I beg leave to point out that your contributor "J. M. M.," in your issue for July 22, under a pretence of friendliness, takes opportunity to make a grave misrepresentation of the late Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's work. Mr. "J. M. M." states that "Vorticism was only a passing phase in his (Gaudier-Brzeska's) development."

That statement is absolutely false. Gaudier-Brzeska was admitted to be a great sculptor by numerous people possessed of conflicting ideas. On the other hand, he was, I believe, the third man to enter into an agreement to use the words "Vorticism" and "Vorticist" to mean a certain type of art, a certain æsthetic belief applicable through all the arts, and the artists working with such belief.

In so far as the Vorticist creed has been defined with particular relation to sculpture Gaudier-Brzeska, and no one else, has enunciated the definitions. His statement of his creed in his first "Vortex," in "Blast" last year, was not in any sense the mood of a moment, it was a very clear statement of ideas which he had been long maturing.

Mr. "J. M. M.'s" use of the word "passing phase" is very nearly insulting to the dead man if you will consider it side by side with Gaudier-Brzeska's last statement of his belief sent from the trenches and written under fire. War had not shaken his Vorticism out of him at the time of writing that brief message for publication by his confrères, nor had he up to two days before his death, when he last wrote to me, made any sign of recantation.

Either your correspondent is ignorant whereof he writes, or he has a certain access of what Kandinsky has termed "inner need" to complain of Gaudier-Brzeska's passion for sincerity. Gaudier-Brzeska was as confirmed and thorough-going a Vorticist as any who have survived him.—Believe me, your obedient servant,

EZRA POUND.

5, Holland-place Chambers, Kensington, W., July 27.

[Mr. Ezra Pound is, apparently, still giddy with the whirl of the "Vortex," and he seems to consider that the late Henri Gaudier-Brzeska would have continued in the same state. This is, perhaps, a matter of opinion, in which I myself was a convinced optimist. What is not a matter of opinion is that the term "Vorticism" has, since its promulgation, come to signify extravagance and *fumisterie* in art. Because of this, I was anxious that the readers of the *Westminster Gazette* should not be prejudiced against a sculptor who had genius, merely because his fellow-Vorticists had none. Mr. Ezra Pound's letter has convinced me that my anxieties were justified.—J. M. M.]

C199a ✉ The Vorticists. *Westminster Gazette*, London, XLVI. 6908 (30 July 1915) 3.
On J[ohn]. M[iddleton]. M[urry].'s "grave misrepresentation" of Gaudier-Brzeska's work in the issue for 22 July, with his reply.

Poems, by E. Scotton Huelin. *Sounds From Another Valley,* by H. F. Sampson. *The Song of the Five,* by Cecil Garth. Elkin Mathews.

I have before me three books. They are what the reviewers call "little books," meaning anything which does not cost five shillings. In this case they are all "good," and none is distinguished. True, none of them treats of the war, but on the other hand none of them is as interesting as Edgar Master's last book, none has the tang of J. S. Eliot's newest work, or of that of Orrick Johns at his best.

In no case do I wish to offer the young (?) writers advice. The reviewer does, as a matter of course, usually start to offer advice. If you see a man like Johns, who hits the bulls-eye about one time in six, but hits it, you of necessity want to offer advice. If a new, presumably youngish, poet convinces you of his personality, his impulse, and constantly mars his effects by flaws of surface, by *gaucherie,* there is a certain kind of purely technical advice which can be offered by someone longer in the lists, and which may even be accepted and do no harm, or very little harm, or even some good. The gist of it is to make the young writer more constantly aware, more vividly aware, of his medium. I think such advice can scarcely ever be given to advantage save by someone who believes in or admires the work which he is striving to correct or guide forward.

That aside, I have before me three books, each in a different fashion:

Mr. E. Scotton Huelin is up to date; he might have been reading Tagore and the imagists. He writes mostly *vers libre.*

Mr. H. F. Sampson might have been reading Swinburne and the nineties.

Mr. Cecil Garth might have been reading Browning.

All of these men are poetic, they all have a right to sing. Mr. Huelin is pictorial and somewhat pale in emotion; he will drag in his "little self of yesterday." I suppose he is the new poet of the season, *the* new poet of the season. And Mr. Sampson is vigorous. And Mr. Garth—oh, well, I like Mr. Garth, but I can't admit that he has yet learned to write.

And I sit here in the sun feeling that I am doing these poets an injury in not "getting up an enthusiasm." They are, I believe, the pick of the season. I am in each case convinced of the sincerity, of the poetic nature, of the writer, and there, I suppose, is an end of it. You *can't* call them writers of promise; they simply *don't* promise. In the case of Eliot, of Johns, one can take a reasonable chance on the future.

E. P.

C200 [A review, signed: E. P., of] *Poems,* by E. Scotton Huelin; *Sounds from Another Valley,* by H. F. Sampson: *The Song of the Five,* by Cecil Garth. *Poetry,* VI. 5 (Aug. 1915) 257–8.

ALBATRE

By Ezra Pound

THIS lady in the white bath-robe, which she calls a peignoir,
Is, for the time being, mistress of my friend,
And the delicate white feet of her little dog
Are not more delicate than she is.

Nor would Gautier himself have despised their contrasts in whiteness.

As she sits in the great chair
C201 Between the two indolent candles.

"BLAST" AND A CRITIC.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "THE OUTLOOK."]

SIR,—In the last number of THE OUTLOOK Mr. Hueffer expresses some surprise that a certain journalist should have alluded to Gaudier-Brzeska's death as a joke. Surely this should have caused no surprise. The journalist in question has done the same sort of thing before. True, in the former case the artist had not died in battle, but then . . Let me be precise: the first number of *Blast* contained a very dignified obituary notice of the late Spencer Gore, by Wyndham Lewis. Spencer Gore had not been killed in battle; he had died of pneumonia, with almost equally tragic suddenness; but the same reviewer treated this death as a joke. It is what the artist can expect from gutter æsthetes and journalists. That Gaudier-Brzeska died in battle also appeals to this writer's sense of the comic, but this should not cause surprise. This form of mirth is evidently ingrained in his character.—I am, Sir, yours, &c., EZRA POUND.

C202 5 Holland Place Chambers, Kensington, W.

C201 ALBÂTRE. *Smart Set*, XLVI. 4 (Aug. 1915) 130.
Reprinted from *Poetry and Drama* for Mar. 1914—C132.

C202 ✉ "Blast" and a Critic. *Outlook*, London, XXXVI. 914 (7 Aug. 1915) 183.

Letters From the People

Mr. Pound, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Joyce

5, Holland Place Chambers,
Kensington, W.,
London, England.

Editor of Reedy's Mirror:

I did not know that simmerings of our parochial tea-pot gave echo so far afield, but since you have devoted half a column to Mr. Stephens' fireworks, perhaps I may be permitted a word or two, for the enlightenment of my three friends in St. Louis.

Ich teue euch zu wissen that my original "stirring up of the animals" in the *New Age*, was not an article about Mr. Stephens. My article had two parts. In the first I said that Ireland was a dead country, that the Irish had not recognized Synge in his lifetime and that they had not yet decently accepted him.

When I pick up an Irish paper and find such ravings as "The vulgarities, obscenities and blasphemies of the late decadent J. M. Synge," I cannot believe that the rank and file of that unfortunate nation have yet been brought to understand the high honor which the gods conferred upon them in permitting one of the world's great dramatists to be born within the girdle of their seas.

The second part of my article was not an attack on Mr. Stephens, whose works seems to me sometimes amusing, but never very important. I wrote to say that the prose of Mr. James Joyce was *really good.*

The Irish journalists are not less ready to turn one off it than they were to decry J. M. Synge. They like mediocrity. James Joyce is not mediocre.

Some of the stories in his "Dubliners" are written with the hard perfection of books destined to remain. They irritate the Irish genteel. There was a good deal of difficulty in getting the book published.

Mr. Joyce's poetry is not better than his prose. It is good poetry. There was a little book of it published ten years ago, one poem of which will be found in the first anthology, "Des Imagistes."

Mr. Joyce stands out from the ruck of contemporary prose writers both by reason of his hard technique and by reason of his fullness of mind.

The fag of contemporary prose books, novels, etc., is that they arise from a foundation of vacancy. I mean that a method has been discovered. Thousands of writers can tell tales, after a fashion. Half a hundred can "do the trick" quite reasonably well. *But,* the instant a modern novelist flags, the instant the artifice breaks down we are, in most cases, confronted by "the author," who is of such barren, inadequate, uninteresting personality, that one ceases to have the slightest interest in anything such a person might have to say.

Trade has brought us a generation of writers like plumbers. They can, lots of 'em, put in a good sink.

It is for this reason that one breaks out into cantillations when one finds a prose writer who appears to have a mind well furnished, a capacity for interesting thought.

Some years ago Frederic Manning brought out "Scenes and Portraits," and we had then another such writer, in a very different tradition from Mr. Joyce.

As for Mr. Stephens saying he knew all about Joyce so long ago, of course, everyone knew of "Chamber Music," but as a great part of Mr. Joyce's best work, "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," was only available in manuscript, I am reasonably sure that Mr. Stephens did not know "all" about Mr. Joyce.

The joy of Ireland at having produced, or rather expulsed, another really important writer will, of course, be made manifest in various ways. They will both "ignore" and "attack."

Those who care about really good letters will be glad to know that Mr. Joyce has been permitted to leave Trieste and is now safe in Switzerland.

Faithfully yours,

EZRA POUND.

C203 ✉ Mr. Pound, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Joyce. *Reedy's Mirror*, XXIV. 24 (6 Aug. 1915) 13.

American Chaos.

I.

"THE colourless and formless and intangible!" No, the good Plato was writing of something else; besides, he said it was visible to the mind, the lord of the soul, etc. And in the present case nothing is particularly visible, it is mud-coloured, formless, disagreeable.

We are faced with an insoluble ignorance, we are so faced because, since the death of Laurence Sterne or thereabouts, there has been neither in England nor America any sufficient sense of the value of realism in literature, of the value of writing words that conform precisely with fact, of free speech without evasions and circumlocutions.

It is a deep chagrin to me that my country is not at this moment England's ally in war, yet when I curse my country I find myself cursing her for distinctly English habits, for habits imported from England.

There is a prudery doth hedge the printed word.

I turn to "The History and Topography of the United States of America," edited by John Howard Hinton, A.M., assisted by several literary gentlemen in America and England, A.D. 1834. Mr. Hinton was English, he was very enthusiastic about America, he vigorously defends the American nation against Mrs. Trollope. He writes as follows: "With respect to original works on general literature, if America has less to boast of than Europe, she has still less to be ashamed of. If her genius has not been employed to enliven the fancy, neither is it devoted to the pollution of the heart."

It is a chaste and virginal policy. It has been fostered as the delicate hyacinth in the gardens of "our best magazines," and it blossoms afresh in a letter I have before me (*sic*): "Most Americans don't want to get mixed up in the war, even for honour." The corespondent had originally written simply "for honour," but went back and put in the "even" over a *caret* mark.

The whole page is so priceless a "human document" that I feel no sympathetic misanthropist should be unduly deprived of its aroma (*sic*).

"Well, the awful struggle drags on and we are heartily sick of it. To talk 'war' is now considered 'bad form' in society, and one characterises himself as a bore by introducing the subject. We are deluged with literature on the subject. I have read on the subject to a standstill. I can't see any conclusion to it but the exhaustion of Europe. In the meantime, it makes ??? (word illegible) very bad with us in spite of the influx of gold. It seems to be congested in spots. I do hope the war is bungled to an end this year; otherwise, Europe will become bankrupt. This U.S. will naturally forge ahead, but I assure you we are in no exultant humour and take little credit for an ascendancy that arises from a lowering of the standard of prosperity. I think our position might be explained as of one awestruck. America turns with horror from the cataclysm. Most Americans don't want to get mixed up in the war even for *honour*. This sounds base, but we feel that wager of battle is not the proper procedure for human beings to follow. The Fair is grand—a great success artistically *and* financially. About 100,000 attendance yesterday. It is a great education. Science has made wonderful progress in ten years. They make a Ford auto every 16 *seconds*. Think of it. They exhibit a dram or so of somostherium (!) worth 300,000 dols. There is only one-fifth of ounce in the whole world. Art gallery is fine. French and Canadian buildings beautiful, and direct lighting effects delightful to the eye. . . . I conclude with this thought that has struck me forcibly. Germany is whipping or fighting combined Europe with three American inventions—*the submarine, the aeroplane,* and the *42-centimetre gun* (refused by our Government as useless to us, which it is). Am well. Love to all."

MM. mes lecteurs, that is the end of the letter.

The author of "Candide" is dead, so no author else will be able to invent a full book of similar letters. But we insult the memory of "Candide"; it is Candide minus his charm. It is a human document. It is not unlike a recent work of imagination, "An Englishman's Home."

It would be unfair of me to say that I think it represents the soul of all my compatriots, but it is sufficient excuse for living abroad. The epistle was not written to me, it came into my hands by sheerest accident. The English recipient asked me to explain my country.

The mind of the author of the letter was doubtless nourished on the "Century Magazine," which was in its turn nourished on certain English traditions. They are about your worst, but they are not yet extinct among you. What gentle evasions!

Having printed this letter, there are doubtless several readers (American readers) who will cry out against me. They will say I am biased against America. I present simply the fact. This letter was written.

For the benefit of those who will read American attacks upon me based on my having printed this letter, I must explain two words. I must define them as they are understood by all genteel Americans.

(1) Cynicism: a printed statement of any fact known to nine-tenths of the population.

(2) A Jaundiced Mind: one capable of "cynicism."

It is possibly a crime to set a whole democracy to analysing its own subjectivity. It is possible that no democracy is of itself capable of any save ignoble ideas. If we must take the quoted letter as a sort of slime-bottom of American feeling, it cannot be denied that certain noble growths have appeared above it. To wit: Mr. Roosevelt's dogmas put forth at the beginning of the war; and other facts (*sic*). Wm. Marion Reedy's paper in St. Louis has been calling for the Rattle Snake Flag (a rather fine Colonial emblem with the device "Touch me not").

I am told that in Philadelphia pro-German sentiments will exclude one from all decent company, and that the Germans "are out walking the streets, starving, save for what the Germans do for them."

I am told that one man with "a name too German to write or pronounce raises the Stars and Stripes every morning on a pole in his front yard *as a sort of sacrificial act*" (sentimental).

I get a wild Socialist paper from Chicago definitely pro-English.

I get a perfectly sincere letter from a fine chap in New York definitely neutral—"hadn't thought enough about the war to take sides."

I find an American business-man here in London putting up with the unending tedium and stupidity of your minor officials simply because he "knows Germans," and therefore wants the Allies to win.

And on the whole, *mes amis*, what do you expect of us? You have not said you wanted us to fight. You cannot expect our Socialists to be enthusiastic over a conscription urged *not by military authority*, but by Brunner, Mond and Co. and their like. England is perhaps inarticulate. She is, or has been, careless of the figure she cuts before strangers—a fine trait in an individual, but perhaps not prudent in a great nation. Your papers have been at least as full of exhortations to grab trade as to show boldness. (I dare say it is a necessity, I mean I can think of no excuse for such writings and such publications unless the upkeep of the country demands them as the sole means of getting investors to invest in new concerns at a time when they might invest in war loans or prove over-cautious.)

You cannot expect men on farms in Missouri to share my conviction (a conviction grown, perhaps, out of comfort and fortuitous and happy contact) that there is in "England" some ineradicable character much finer than "the English Government."

You cannot expect us to be interested in Earl So-and-so's interest or Lord So-and-so's shares in . . . .

And, thanks to the hatred of realist letters in both countries, nearly all that is finest in either is hopelessly obscured from the other.

EZRA POUND.

C204 American Chaos [I]. *New Age*, XVII. 19 (9 Sept. 1915) 449.

American Chaos.

II.

"ENGLAND is the only country in the world where a man will lie without being paid for it." The rich echo of those words is still in my head, and there mingles with it that saying of Flaubert's anent the war of 1870, "If they had read my 'Education Sentimentale' this would not have happened."

If the gentle reader read my article last week he may remember that I set out to find fault with my own country, and in so doing I found that if England and America might be united politically over the doctrines of Magna Charta, they were also inextricably united analytically or for the purpose of analysis in certain mutual faults, and in particular their neglect of realist writing.

No, the point is *not* clear, gracious reader, the point is technical. Most points of such importance are technical. It is like trying to argue with a Chancellor of the Exchequer who has never read John S. Mill on "Exchange." Two large, amicable nations, once allied very closely by blood, exchange not only cash, credit, gold, etc., but they also exchange impressions. (For I hold, in opposition to most of my compatriots, that *some* Englishmen are capable of receiving impressions.)

The German, I am told, "lies on system, because he thinks the truth might be dangerous."

The Englishman lies unconsciously, because he wants to be considered as holding "sound opinions." The growth of "sound opinion" in England is a curious and recondite affair.

The American falsifies, either because, as men of other and older races, he wishes to sell you a horse (or a pup), or because he wishes to seem genteel, or because of a curious sense of humour.

But "firm friendship between nations" can scarcely result from mendacity alone. You may hang together because of necessity or interest, or because of a union of ideals (though this last is a tenuous bond).

Commercial interest is a still more tenuous bond. It is by no means demonstrable that English and American commercial interests are identical. So that America might make war out of hatred of Germany, but scarcely from love of England?

Yes, that is about it.

And the American nation does not seem grand and noble in the eyes of her erstwhile mother?

No, not particularly.

And since I wrote the first of these papers yesterday afternoon (September 1) Germany has patched up that "Lusitania" matter, etc., etc., so we shall hear no more about that?

Until she sinks something else.

Is there any clear idea whether or not England wants America as an ally?

There is not. There are only contradictory rumours.

Is America "in the war already"—I mean, is she so involved financially as to be giving as much aid, or practically as much, as if she were actually at war?

I wish I were sure of it.

Had anyone, a year ago, any clear idea of what the war was about?

Oh, well now . . .

Can we say that it has developed into a war of ideals, a war between two ideas of the State: that is to say, Germany believes in the State and individuals be damned, and "the Allies" believe that the individual has certain inalienable rights which it is the duty of the State to preserve to him?

In this latter case, America is unquestionably an ally, or would be if she knew "where she was at," and if she were not almost wholly inarticulate.

And both England and America, pauvre Amerique, are very nearly inarticulate, because it is the confirmed habit of their Press to be either corrupt or argumentative and of their literature to be "evasive."

How, in heaven's name, can two nations become acquainted?

You have contacts viâ the Press, and the Press is mostly ignoble. I do not mean that "both" sides, all sides, etc., do not fill their columns with noble sentiments, but that there exists a certain discrepancy between the sentiment and the fact, or between the V.C.'s on page 4 and the "spelter, etc.," on page 7.

If self-interest is to clothe itself in a beautiful symbolism it must *clothe* itself sufficiently.

There are contacts in commerce, personal contacts, and contacts through literature and the arts.

The contacts of commerce do not breed friendship. The American business-man meets "inaccessible" boards, petty, impertinent under-officials, etc. He is not soothed any more than the Englishman who undergoes the same experience.

Personal contacts are fortuitous and about neutralise each other.

The Press one discounts. No one believes the newspapers even when they tell the truth.

Ultimately, the impression of national character or national honesty is a *literary* impression. If we find a body of writers in any country setting down their beliefs and impressions in clear words that conform to fact as we know it or find it, we begin, without fuss or ebullition, to have a quiet amity or respect for that nation.

Whenever I meet an interesting man in either England or America he invariably tells me things which he "is not allowed to print." (This is not a matter of war censorship; I am aiming no shaft at that very necessary board.)

I do not know where the blame lies in England; it is hardly my job to investigate.

As for America, the blame is ultimately upon the "better magazines" which have stifled American thought with "the genteel tone"—i.e., with a habit of mental evasion.

This habit of evasion shows itself naïvely when some subsidised professor complains that the "audience is at fault." That is choice. Having never tried to interest the intelligent and now finding themselves at the mercy of cheaper periodicals, they pay a man to explain that the fault is with the reader.

"So near is work to play in life as in art," as they tell you in "Harper's"; or, further along, "Art circles in many grooves" (apt word).

"The art of fiction is mostly concerned with life as a play," again "Harper's." It is a fine, lofty sentiment.

And the result of it? Or perhaps not the result? That private letters from America are interesting and that printed American writing is not.

Even from men who are obviously carrying on some "campaign of enlightenment" I get letters saying very much the sort of thing I believe, but differing materially from their printed expressions.

Quite natural!

Yes, but until there is an exact correspondence between what the man says to his friend in private and what he writes in his book or his paper *there is no literature,* and there is no firm basis for alien friendship and acquaintance.

And hence the term "chaos" at the head of these two articles. Until America can support such exact expression she is "uninteresting"? No, perhaps that is not the *mot juste*; but she is certainly unsatisfactory.

And "satire"? Ah, until American can understand that a satire consisting merely in a statement of fact (undistorted fact, known perfectly well to the reader) is not intended to be "comic," we must still sigh with Leopardi—

> . . . vedo le mura e gli archi
> E le colonne e i simulacri . . .
> Ma la gloria non vedo.

EZRA POUND.

C205 American Chaos [II]. *New Age,* XVII. 20 (16 Sept. 1915) 471.

FOREWORD TO THE CHORIC SCHOOL

By Ezra Pound

Mr. Rodker tells me that he is 21, and I must therefore suppose that the date of his birth was somewhere in or about the year of grace 1894 . . . the decorative noon of "The Nineties." He tells me likewise that he has no history to speak of. I first came across his work during my informal connection with "The Egoist" and promptly rejected it. Later he sent me his "London Night" and in this series of poems I discerned, or believed that I discerned, the stray gleams of individuality (vide "Poetry" for Dec., 1914). In England Mr. Rodker has published one volume called "Poems."

I could not make much of his cadence until one evening, after Mr. Selwin Image had read a quaint and gracious essay on Carols to the Poets Club, Miss Sainsbury and her company, including Miss Dillon, came in at the end of the hall and danced out their poems. I then understood the curious breaks and pauses, the elaborate system of dots and dashes with which this new group is wont to adorn its verses.

Their dancing is touched perhaps with the ubiquitous influence of Pavlowa and "the Russians," but the planning is quite their own. Their work has about it an aroma, sensuous and naïvely sophisticated fitted to "cause *admiratio*" to my more scholarly and puritanical mind. Remembering how great an effect *Al' entrade del tens clar* and the later dance songs (it was such music that sent folk dancing from Provence to the far north country) have had on our European metric and poesy, I was at once interested and excited by the possibility which their work has, a possibility of reanimating our verse. And this was all the more engaging, as it seemed certain that they had come on their form in no spirit of research, but simply because they wanted to dance and had no orchestra. Many hold that poetry was associated with dancing before men tried to wed words with music. At any rate the dance basis is fundamental in much early poetry.

To preserve that laudable balance which makes men successful reviewers the apologist should here begin a sentence "Whether this new mode of dance poem . . ." I shall leave that sentence unwritten, Miss Dillon is very charming when she dances her "Leaf." In some dance poems the "whole art" is the words *with* the dancing, and in such poems the isolated words are per force incomplete.

June, 1915.

C206 Foreword to the Choric School. *Others*, Grantwood, N. J., I. 4 (Oct. 1915) [53–54].

REVIEWS

ROBERT BRIDGES' NEW BOOK

A certain element in the American literary weeklies and monthlies is still descanting on its opinion that "*vers libre* won't do." We are expected to read long papers full of abstract and indefinite words saying that "the poet's true freedom," etc., is not to be gained through this gate. The writers must be innocent of any knowledge of the poetic tradition, otherwise they would know that practically all forms of verse date from antiquity: China and India and Greece had free verse before some forgotten Italian got stuck in the beginning of a *canzone* and called the fragment a sonnet. Egypt had vowel-chants, and the middle ages their polyrythmical sequaires and litanies.

And after all these things came the English exposition of 1851 and the Philadelphia Centennial, introducing cast-iron house decorations and machine-made wood fret-work, and there followed a generation of men with minds like the cast-iron ornament, and they set their fretful desire upon machine-like regularity. Miss Mitford had objected to Dante because he was "Gothic"; the indigenous Anglo-Saxon rhythms were neglected because society did not read Anglo-Saxon. And the most imitative generation of Americans ever born on our continent set themselves to exaggerating the follies of England.

For these provincials it is what I can call by no more fitting name than "a smack in the eye" that Robert Bridges, Laureate, whose name is almost a synonym for classic and scholarly poetry, should have labeled one poem in his latest book "experiment in free verse."

. . . .

Robert Bridges' work has been always a subject for debate. There is the party which compares it to the innumerable pseudo-renaissance-classic façades of the buildings of the University of London, etc., and finds it unreadable; and the opposing party which says that if one will only read through the collected edition he will find a reasonable number of poems which will stand comparison with the best in the language.

Beyond dispute, his command of the sheer mechanics of quantitative verse can be looked on with nothing but envy. I have a grave respect for any man who is restless and persistent in the study and honor of his craft.

There are two poems in his last book which it is better to quote than to comment on. The first shows well what he has won from untiring practice of quantitative metres, and from, I should think, the reading of Middle-English.

C207 Robert Bridges' New Book. *Poetry*, VII. 1 (Oct. 1915) 40–44.
Signed: E. P. A review of *Poems Written in the Year MCMXIII.*

It is as follows:

THE FLOWERING TREE

What fairy fann'd my dreams
    while I slept in the sun?—
As if a flowering tree
    were standing over me:
Its young stem strong and lithe
    went branching overhead,
And willowy sprays around
    fell tasseling to the ground,
All with wild blossom gay
    as is the cherry in May
When her fresh flaunt of leaf
    gives crowns of golden green.

The sunlight was emmesh'd
    in the shifting splendor
And I saw through on high
    to soft lakes of blue sky:
Ne'er was mortal slumber
    so lapt in luxury.
Rather—Endymion—
    would I sleep in the sun
'Neath the trees, divinely,
    with day's azure above,
When my love of beauty
    is met by beauty's love.

So I slept enchanted
    under my loving tree,
Till from his late resting
    the sweet songster of night
Rousing awaken'd me:
    Then! this—the birdis note—
Was the voice of thy throat
    which thou gav'st me to kiss.

The other poem is a brief epigram, bitter as Palladas, full of emotional violence held in by rigid, delicate barriers:

ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης

Who goes there? God knows. I'm nobody. How shall I answer?
  Can't jump over a gate nor run across the meadow.
I'm but an old whitebeard of inane identity. Pass on.
  What's left of me today will very soon be nothing.

This is worthy of a place in the Greek anthology, not only because it is hard and concise as their epigrams, but because it is novel. It is the only poem I can think of which shows quite this sense of the attrition of personality through living. It is not age which speaks, but a mood that is permanent and recurrent in life, and therefore so fine a matter of art.

The thin volume contains also some whimsical lines on *Flycatchers,* inspired possibly by the sight of some of his colleagues on the Academic Committee, but the American reader may imagine that it was written about this or that well-known editor, and get from it an equal pleasure. Dr. Bridges recalls the time when, "a chubby young chap," he sat with others on a school form

While an authoritative old wiseacre
Stood over us and from a desk fed us with flies.

Dead flies—such as litter the library south-window,
That buzzed at the panes until they fell stiff-baked on the sill.

. . . . . .

A dry biped he was, nurtured likewise
On skins and skeletons, stale from top to toe,
With all manner of rubbish and all manner of lies.

The island is to be congratulated on having at last obtained a laureate who declines to treat himself as an institution. *E. P.*

HER LITTLE BLACK SLIPPERS

By Ezra Pound

AT the table beyond us;
With her little black slippers off;
With her little white-stocking'd feet .
Carefully kept from the floor by a napkin,
She converses:
"Connaissez—vous Ostende?"
The gurgling Italian lady on the other side of the restaurant
Attempts to recall her Pekinese,
. . . . Fruitlessly . . . .
For the sombre male customer caresses it
. . . . Effusively . . . .
The gurgling Italian lady on the other side of the restaurant
Glares, grunts, and replies monosyllabicly
To the remarks of the first, possibly Spanish, French product,
And I wait.
I converse with my *vis-à-vis*.
I wait with patience.
To see how she will climb back into her black suède
Bright-buckled slippers.
She re-enters them with a groan.

C208

INCONSIDERABLE IMBECILITIES

(From one number of the *Times* Literary Supplement)

THE *Times* Literary Supplement has become duller than ever; even the lush fatuity of sentimental pedantry has now subsided into degenerated dulness; but however curious, as it were, and, true, we give a few of these jewels " of purest ray serene," even though, as it were, we cannot explain their origin save haply on the hypothesis that we " 'spects they growed." You recognise the style ? Then, here goes.

" There are few thinking people but realise . . . great war . . . death-agony . . . old order . . . birth-travail. Amid the present darkness and confusion men poor . . . neglected records of the past . . . if haply . . . this war of the nations . . . (Etc. for two and a half columns.) This is a remarkable book which all should read. . . .

It is extremely difficult for a Russian to obtain a true notion of our passions. . . . As yet, however, struggles the twelfth hour of the night.—STEPHEN GRAHAM.

One passage, at least, of which more anon . . . it is a classic study of the forces which we must either destroy or perish. . . .

She gives us a book which bears on every page the stamp of literal truth.

Where are those gorgeous daggers now ?

The morals and tempers of the Company's servants left something to be desired. . . . (*This does not refer to the Amalgamated Press Co.*)

In the present crash of worlds . . .

Sir James Wilson's friends in Strathearn have kept their old grammar unimpared. (*Good news for the Allies.*)

C208a

C208 HER LITTLE BLACK SLIPPERS. *Smart Set*, XLVII. 2 (Oct. 1915) 134.
Reprinted as "The Little Black Slippers" in *Hamilton Literary Magazine* for Nov. 1915. Reprinted by the author as "Black Slippers: Bellotti."

C208a Inconsiderable Imbecilities. *Egoist*, II. 10 (1 Oct. 1915) 161.
Quotations from the *Times Literary Supplement*, London; selected, anonymously, by Ezra Pound.

. . . the river Earn runs out into the Firth of Tay.

The heart of the peasant, above all the heart of the *petite femme de province*. . . . (*Culture.*)

municipium . . . civitas . . . comitatus . . . conjuratio . . . contadi . . . privilegia . . . Grandi Vassalli . . . Populus. . . .' (*More culture.*)

Why, for instance, do we hear nothing . . . of the perilous journeys of their merchants to the Fairs of Champagne, nothing of the *Caorsini senesi* in England, nothing of the *campsores domini papæ*, and next to nothing of the *Arti*? (*Still more culture.*)

We do not think we have ever read anything to equal it even in Italian. (*Supremest culture.*)

. . . the pre-eminently Parisian talent of M. Abel Hermant.

. . . in the masculine qualities lying at the root of both there is an affinity between literature and journalism. (*Obviously—in the* Times.

This provocative statement . . .

But a poem carries transports. . . . (*We commend this discovery to H.M. War Office.*)

Just as we were, to have left enough, and, curiously, to have discarded enough, is the proof of Mr. Faber's art.

They surrender that indefinable thing, personality, that inexplicable thing, poetry.

It is always tempting to confront the past with the present.

. . . gathered them by force and cunning beneath his banner for bloody onslaught, and to glut the lust of gain.

For Attila and Wilhelm, any pretext might serve for war . . .

Aetius and Joffre alike for the moment were too subtle to guess the brute simplicity of the hostile design . . .

. . . the Visigoths, even as the Americans of to-day . . .

In the field of biography many notable memoirs . . .

The religious aspect of the war . . .

. . . the land of Holmes and Lowell and of Emerson himself.

. . . so rich and fruitful a mind as that of Mr. Glover . . .

As a poet should, she reports visions. . . . But she is, perhaps, happiest when her thought is most clear cut, as in the fancy beginning

Like a swallow seems my Love,
Thus would I her semblance pruv.

(This is but a meagre choice ; many rare and fragrant fruits of style and thought remain to be culled from this, &c., &c., &c.)

This Super-Neutrality.

MAN, "the spectator of the ages," is, at this moment, presented with a choice spectacle of neutralities. There is the neutrality of Roumania, the neutrality of Greece. There is Ferdinand the nefarious living up to the Bourbon tradition—that of supporting a throne contrary to the interest of his subjects and by the aid of Austria—and there is President Wilson.

Writing as a citizen of a country which has quite possibly disgraced itself, I am constantly in mind of the fact that a man can be so clever at selling a horse as to lose his best friend in the process. I say "a country which has quite possibly disgraced itself," because it is impossible at the present moment for any man not connected with the Foreign Office, or some official department of either the United States or England, to have any exact notion of the rôle which America has played, and is playing, in the present war.

Rumour says, "Oh, Wilson was ready to come in after the 'Lusitania,' absolutely, and Sir Edward Grey begged him, whatever he did, *not* to go to war," etc., etc.

I should think that this rumour was very likely nonsense. American news and discussion of American affairs in the English papers are at one moment silly and querulous, and at the next moment full of a futile indefinite optimism. For instance, the "Times," that august mouthpiece, heads its report of Mr. Wilson's speech to the D.A.R. as "America First, Rebuke to Pro-German Agents," yet there is nothing in their half-column to show that Dear Woodrow was not scolding at Col. Waterson and people like myself who believe that America's place is with the Allies; that he was not lumping us all in with Bernstorff and with men who have (so far as a mere member of the unofficial public can ascertain) fostered sabotage, attempted assassination and committed within America's borders acts hostile and prejudicial to her welfare.

The hysterical wail of "America First" is just as stupid and atavistic as "Deutschland über Alles," if it is to be interpreted as "America First, at the expense of the rest of humanity."

President Wilson, from this distance, appears to be a man incapable of receiving ideas. I think he has even confessed or boasted of this incapacity. It was, perhaps, a sincere confession. Still, the type which cannot receive ideas is a low type of human being, a type of low vitality. (It is, perhaps, a "safer" type, in ordinary circumstances, than the decadence of its opposite, i.e., the frothy type which receives too many ideas, and is bewildered and excited thereby.)

However, Dr. Wilson is a professional student of American Constitutional law, or some such subject, and he was elected to his present magistrature because a reasonable number of people considered him honest. It is reasonable to suppose that he has access to many more facts about this war than I have. His responsibility for the welfare of the American people is much greater than that of any individual journalist.

Still, when he uses such phrases as, "Fellow-citizens born in other lands who have not entertained with sufficient intensity affection for the American ideal," I, as a native-born American descended on all eight sides from families whose forebears went to that country at dates running from 1634 to 1708, feel that I have a right openly to consider the "American ideal," both in its theory and its practice. From the meagre facts at my disposal I am inclined to think that Woodrow Wilson, Ph.D., has betrayed or distorted it.

It is open to anyone to know that the Republic was founded, largely by Washington and Hamilton, on the basis of a very few, very humanitarian aspirations, which were in the last quarter of the eighteenth century much more striking innovations than they would be in the present: "The asylum in the West," "Is, and of a right ought to be, born free and equal," etc., etc.

The United States were not at that date a strong nation, and they could not set up more than an "asylum." They could provide, and did provide, as England had done before them, a place of refuge for the oppressed. . . . German "forty-eighters" were to come with the others. The United States could not at that time pretend to put down tyrants partout. They did shortly engage in a scrimmage with Tripolitan pirates, and carried on a rather English tradition of maintaining the decency of the seas.

The second great phase in building up the American "ideal" or "tradition" was the phase of the Civil War.

I will point out most emphatically that the South was technically right in her attitude. You may consider her position both in regard to the constitution, which had not considered secession, and in regard to the "Articles of Confederation" which had preceded the constitution, and which may be fairly taken as a guide to the intentions of the parties contracting, i.e., the representatives of the thirteen covenanting States.

Simply, the Northern States had no technical right to wipe out the oppression of slavery in the Southern States, and they had no legal authority to insist on the Southern States remaining in a Union which forbade that oppression within its borders.

It was a very good thing to have slavery done away with. It was a finer interpretation of the principles agreed upon by the founders, even though it is unlikely that any majority of the founders ever thought of applying their ideals to the negro.

If tyranny is visible in our modern world it is visible in the militarism of Germany, in the rule of Ferdinand of Bulgaria and in the Armenian massacres. It is more insidiously present in "Kultur," i.e., German State-education, press campaigns, subsidised professors, etc.

I detest Armenians, I mistrust all accounts of Armenians, I believe them to have been invented by the late Mr. Gladstone, whose memory is, to me, most unsympathetic. I am willing to concede to Herr Treitschke (or however he spells himself) that the immolation of Armenians is very good for the rest of the race. Personally, I could do without all the inhabitants of Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, the Balkans, and the Near East in general. I am firmly convinced that the slaughter of one or two dozen carefully selected inhabitants of this city would be of advantage to the race at large.

But the general principle that murder is not good for the race more than outweighs the theoretical or hypothetical advantage of the above-mentioned slaughter.

Civilisation would not be advanced by the reinstatement of murder among the more respectable arts. Civilisation would not have been advanced by the maintenance of the patriarchal institution of slavery.

The President of the United States is in a peculiar position, he is, if you like, a wilted cod-fish, a mouthpiece, a man employed to protect the interests of the American people, and bound to consider the interests of that people primarily. But the interest of that people is not solely one of immediate cash. Also after the safety of that people is within its own borders reasonably secure, there is the interest of humanity, concerning which Mr. Wilson has occasionally spoken.

Let us say that as soon as man has made sure of the subsistence of his family he has some duty toward the race, not much, but a little. The same is true of a nation, proportionately, and the accumulated duty or responsibility of a great nation amounts to a very great deal.

It is possible that America is doing her share. It is possible that the Central Powers of Europe are being slowly and certainly crushed, that they are hemmed in, surrounded, debilitated, beyond hope. One has no means of ascertaining the fact. But still, if this is the case, it is possible that America is not disgraced, and that her entry into the war would only be an added confusion, that her "bet of 500,000,000 dollars on the Allies," her last act of hyper-neutrality, is all that can be asked for the moment.

EZRA POUND.

C209 This Super-Neutrality. *New Age*, XVII. 25 (21 Oct. 1915) 595.

THE TEA SHOP

The girl in the tea shop
    is not so beautiful as she was,
The August has worn against her.
She does not get up the stairs so eagerly,
Yes, she also will turn middle-aged,
And the glow of youth that she spread about us
    as she brought us our muffins
She will spread about us no longer.
    She also will turn middle-aged.

PHYLIDULA

Phylidula is scrawny but amorous,
Thus have the gods awarded her
That in pleasure she receives more than she can give,
If she does not count this blessed
Let her change her religion.

THE PATTERNS

Erinna is a model parent,
Her children have never discovered her adulteries.

Lalage is also a model parent,
Her offspring are fat and happy.

SHOP GIRL

For a moment she rested against me
Like a swallow half blown to the wall,
And they talk of Swinburne's women,
And the shepherdess meeting with Guido,
And the harlots of Baudelaire.

ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE

She was as pale as one
Who has just produced an abortion.

Her face was beautiful as a delicate stone
With the sculptor's dust still on it.

And yet I was glad that it was you and not I
Who had removed her from her first husband.

C210 [POEMS]. *Others*, I. 5 (Nov. 1915) 84–85.
Contents: The Tea Shop—Phylidula [*sic*]—The Patterns—Shop Girl—Another Man's Wife—Coda.

CODA

O my songs,
Why do you look so eagerly and so curiously into peo-
ple's faces,
Will you find your lost dead among them?

DECEMBER, 1915

TWO POEMS

NEAR PERIGORD

A Perigord, pres del muralh tan que i puosch 'om gitar ab malh.

OU'D have men's hearts up from the dust
And tell their secrets, Messire Cino,
Right enough? Then read between the lines
of Uc St. Cire,
Solve me the riddle, for you know the tale.

Bertrans, En Bertrans, left a fine canzone:
"Maent, I love you, you have turned me out.
The voice at Montfort, Lady Agnes' hair,
Bel Miral's stature, the vicountess' throat,
Set all together, are not worthy of you . . ."
And all the while you sing out that canzone,
Think you that Maent lived at Montaignac,
One at Chalais, another at Malemort

C211

C210 Continued
C211 TWO POEMS. *Poetry*, VII. 3 (Dec. 1915) 111–21.
Contents: Near Perigord—Villanelle: The Psychological Hour.

Hard over Brive—for every lady a castle,
Each place strong.

Oh, *is* it easy enough?
Tairiran held hall in Montaignac,
His brother-in-law was all there was of power
In Perigord, and this good union
Gobbled all the land and held it later
for some hundreds years.
And our En Bertrans was in Altafort,
Hub of the wheel, the stirrer-up of strife,
As caught by Dante in the last wallow of hell—
The headless trunk "that made its head a lamp,"
For separation wrought out separation,
And he who set the strife between brother and brother
And had his way with the old English king,
Viced in such torture for the "counterpass."

How would you live, with neighbors set about you—
Poictiers and Brive, untaken Rochechouart,
Spread like the finger-tips of one frail hand;
And you on that great mountain of a palm—
Not a neat ledge, not Foix between its streams,
But one huge back half covered up with pine,
Worked for and snatched from the string-purse of Born—
The four round towers, four brothers—mostly fools:
What could he do but play the desperate chess,
And stir old grudges?

"Pawn your castles, lords!
Let the Jews pay."

And the great scene—
(That, maybe, never happened!)
Beaten at last,
Before the hard old king:
"Your son, ah, since he died
My wit and worth are cobwebs brushed aside
In the full flare of grief. Do what you will."

Take the whole man, and ravel out the story.
He loved this lady in castle Montaignac?
The castle flanked him—he had need of it.
You read today, how long the overlords of Perigord,
The Talleyrands, have held the place, it was no transient
fiction.
And Maent failed him? Or saw through the scheme?

And all his net-like thought of new alliance?
Chalais is high, a-level with the poplars.
Its lowest stones just meet the valley tips
Where the low Dronne is filled with water-lilies.
And Rochecouart can match it, stronger yet,
The very spur's end, built on sheerest cliff,
And Malemort keeps its close hold on Brive,
While Born his own close purse, his rabbit warren,
His subterranean chamber with a dozen doors,

A-bristle with antennae to feel roads,
To sniff the traffic into Perigord.
And that hard phalanx, that unbroken line,
The ten good miles from thence to Maent's castle,
All of his flank—how could he do without her?
And all the road to Cahors, to Toulouse?
What would he do without her?

"Papiol,
Go forthright singing—Anhes, Cembelins.
There is a throat; ah, there are two white hands;
There is a trellis full of early roses,
And all my heart is bound about with love.
Where am I come with compound flatteries—
What doors are open to fine compliment?"
And every one half jealous of Maent?
He wrote the catch to pit their jealousies
Against her, give her pride in them?

Take his own speech, make what you will of it—
And still the knot, the first knot, of Maent?

Is it a love poem? Did he sing of war?
Is it an intrigue to run subtly out,
Born of a jongleur's tongue, freely to pass
Up and about and in and out the land,
Mark him a craftsman and a strategist?
(St. Leider had done as much at Polhonac,

Singing a different stave, as closely hidden.)
Oh, there is precedent, legal tradition,
To sing one thing when your song means another,
"Et albirar ab lor bordon—"
Foix' count knew that. What is Sir Bertrans' singing?

Maent, Maent, and yet again Maent,
Or war and broken heaumes and politics?

II

End fact. Try fiction. Let us say we see
En Bertrans, a tower-room at Hautefort,
Sunset, the ribbon-like road lies, in red cross-light,
South toward Montaignac, and he bends at a table
Scribbling, swearing between his teeth, by his left hand
Lie little strips of parchment covered over,
Scratched and erased with *al* and *ochaisos*.
Testing his list of rhymes, a lean man? Bilious?
With a red straggling beard?
And the green cat's-eye lifts toward Montaignac.

Or take his "magnet" singer setting out,
Dodging his way past Aubeterre, singing at Chalais
In the vaulted hall,
Or, by a lichened tree at Rochecouart

C211 Continued

Aimlessly watching a hawk above the valleys,
Waiting his turn in the mid-summer evening,
Thinking of Aelis, whom he loved heart and soul . . .
To find her half alone, Montfort away,
And a brown, placid, hated woman visiting her,
Spoiling his visit, with a year before the next one.
Little enough?
Or carry him forward. "Go through all the courts,
My Magnet," Bertrand had said.

We come to Ventadour
In the mid love court, he sings out the canzon,
No one hears save Arrimon Luc D'Esparo—
No one hears aught save the gracious sound of compliments.
Sir Arrimon counts on his fingers, Montfort,
Rochecouart, Chalais, the rest, the tactic,
Malemort, guesses beneath, sends word to Coeur de Lion:

The compact, de Born smoked out, trees felled
About his castle, cattle driven out!
Or no one sees it, and En Bertrans prospered?

And ten years after, or twenty, as you will,
Arnaut and Richard lodge beneath Chalus:
The dull round towers encroaching on the field,
The tents tight drawn, horses at tether
Further and out of reach, the purple night,

The crackling of small fires, the bannerets,
The lazy leopards on the largest banner,
Stray gleams on hanging mail, an armorer's torch-flare
Melting on steel.

And in the quietest space
They probe old scandals, say de Born is dead;
And we've the gossip (skipped six hundred years).
Richard shall die tomorrow—leave him there
Talking of *trobar clus* with Daniel.
And the "best craftsman" sings out his friend's song,
Envies its vigor . . . and deplores the technique,
Dispraises his own skill?—That's as you will.
And they discuss the dead man,
Plantagenet puts the riddle: "Did he love her?"
And Arnaut parries: "Did he love your sister?
True, he has praised her, but in some opinion
He wrote that praise only to show he had
The favor of your party, had been well received."

"You knew the man."
"*You* knew the man."
"I am an artist, you have tried both métiers."
"You were born near him."
"Do we know our friends?"
"Say that he saw the castles, say that he loved Maent!"
"Say that he loved her, does it solve the riddle?"

End the discussion, Richard goes out next day
And gets a quarrel-bolt shot through his vizard,
Pardons the bowman, dies.

Ends our discussion. Arnaut ends
"In sacred odor"—(that's apochryphal!)
And we can leave the talk till Dante writes:
Surely I saw, and still before my eyes
Goes on that headless trunk, that bears for light
Its own head swinging, gripped by the dead hair,
And like a swinging lamp that says, "Ah me!
I severed men, my head and heart
Ye see here severed, my life's counterpart."

Or take En Bertrans?

III

Ed eran due in uno, ed uno in due. Inferno, XXVIII, 125.

I loved a woman. The stars fell from heaven.
And always our two natures were in strife.
Bewildering spring, and by the Auvezère
Poppies and day's-eyes in the green émail
Rose over us; and we knew all that stream,
And our two horses had traced out the valleys;
Knew the low flooded lands squared out with poplars,
In the young days when the deep sky befriended.

And great wings beat above us in the twilight,
And the great wheels in heaven
Bore us together . . . surging . . . and apart . . .
Believing we should meet with lips and hands.

High, high and sure . . . and then the counterthrust:
"Why do you love me? Will you always love me?
But I am like the grass, I can not love you."
Or, "Love, and I love and love you,
And hate your mind, not *you*, your soul, your hands."

So to this last estrangement, Tairiran!

There shut up in his castle, Tairiran's,
She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her hands,
Gone—ah, gone—untouched, unreachable!
She who could never live save through one person,
She who could never speak save to one person,
And all the rest of her a shifting change,
A broken bundle of mirrors . . . !

VILLANELLE: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HOUR

I

I had over-prepared the event—
that much was ominous.
With middle-aging care
I had laid out just the right books,
I almost turned down the right pages;

Beauty is so rare a thing . . .
So few drink of my fountain.

So much barren regret!
So many hours wasted!
And now I watch from the window
rain, wandering busses.

Their little cosmos is shaken—
the air is alive with that fact.
In their parts of the city
they are played on by diverse forces;

I had over-prepared the event.
Beauty is so rare a thing . . .
So few drink at my fountain.

Two friends: a breath of the forest . . .
Friends? Are people less friends
because one has just, at last, found them?

Twice they promised to come.
"Between the night and morning?"

Beauty would drink of my mind.
Youth would awhile forget
my youth is gone from me.
Youth would hear speech of beauty.

II

("Speak up! You have danced so stiffly?
Someone admired your works,
And said so frankly.

"Did you talk like a fool,
The first night?
The second evening?"

"*But* they promised again:
'Tomorrow at tea-time.' ")

III

Now the third day is here—
no word from either;
No word from her nor him,
Only another man's note:
"Dear Pound, I am leaving England."
Ezra Pound

ON "NEAR PERIGORD"

The historical data for this poem are, first, Uc de St. Circ's statement that Bertrans de Born was in love with the Lady Maent, wife of Sir Tairiran of Montaignac, and that when she turned him out he wrote a canzon, *Domna pois de me no'us cal.* My translation of this poem appeared first in *Poetry and Drama* over a year ago. I reprint it here for clarity:

THE CANZON

From the Provencal of En Bertrans de Born—Original composed about 1185 A. D.

Lady, since you care nothing for me,
And since you have shut me away from you

Causelessly,
I know not where to go seeking,
For certainly
I will never again gather
Joy so rich, and if I find not ever
A lady with look so speaking
To my desire, worth yours whom I have lost,
I'll have no other love at any cost.

And since I could not find a peer to you,
Neither one so fair, nor of such heart,
So eager and alert,
Nor with such art
In attire, nor so gay,
Nor with gift so bountiful and so true,
I will go out a-searching,
Culling from each a fair trait
To make me a borrowed lady
Till I again find you ready.

Bels Cembelins, I take of you your color,
For it's your own, and your glance,
Where love is;
A proud thing I do here,
For as to color and eyes
I shall have missed nothing at all,
Having yours.
I ask of Midons Aelis (of Montfort)
Her straight speech free-running,
That my phantom lack not in cunning.

At Chalais of the Viscountess, I would
That she give me outright
Her two hands and her throat.
So take I my road
To Rochechouart,
Swift-foot to my Lady Anhes,
Seeing that Tristan's lady Iseutz had never
Such grace of locks, I do ye to wit,
Though she'd the far fame for it.

Of Audiart at Malemort,
Though she with a full heart

Wish me ill,
I'd have her form that's laced
So cunningly,
Without blemish, for her love
Breaks not nor turns aside.
I of Miels'de'ben demand
Her straight fresh body,
She is so supple and young
Her robes can but do her wrong.

Her white teeth, of the Lady Faidita
I ask, and the fine courtesy
She hath to welcome one,
And such replies she lavishes
Within her nest.
Of Bels Mirals, the rest:
Tall stature and gaiety,
To make these avail
She knoweth well, betide
No change nor turning aside.

C212 On "Near Perigord." *Poetry,* VII. 3 (Dec. 1915) 143–6.
Notes, signed: E. P., including (pp. 143–5) his translation of Bertrans de Born's canzon "Dompna pois de me no'us cal," reprinted from *Poetry and Drama* for Mar. 1914—C132.

Ah, Belz Senher, Maent, at last
I ask naught from you,
Save that I have such hunger for
This phantom
As I've for you, such flame-lap.
And yet I'd rather
Ask of you than hold another,
Mayhap, right close and kissed.
Ah, lady, why have you cast
Me out, knowing you hold me so fast?

Besides these strophes there is also a four-line coda to his jongleur, Papiol, as follows:

Papiol, my lodestone, go, through all the courts sing this canzon, how love fareth ill of late; is fallen from his high estate.

Second, as to the possibility of a political intrigue behind the apparent love poem we have no evidence save that offered by my own observation of the geography of Perigord and Limoges. I must leave the philologists and professional tacticians to decide whether Bertrans's proclivities for stirring up the barons were due to his liver or to "military necessity." When he did not keep them busy fighting each other they most certainly did close in upon him—at least once.

The traditional scene of Bertrans before King Henry Plantagenet is well recounted in Smith's *Troubadours at Home*. It is vouched for by many old manuscripts and seems as well authenticated as most Provençal history, though naturally there are found the usual perpetrators of "historic doubt." I can not develop the matter in the foregoing poem, as it would overbalance the rest of the matter set forth and is extraneous to my main theme.

If my hasty allusion to the scene of de Born and King Henry is obscure, I can only reply that Heine has made an equally erudite allusion. His poem, in the *Neue Gedichte*, entitled *Bertrand de Born*, is as follows:

Ein edler Stolz in allen Zügen,
Auf seiner Stirn Gedankenspur,
Er konnte jedes Herz besiegen,
Bertrand de Born, der Troubadour.

Es kirrten seine süssen Töne
Die Löwin des Plantagenet's;
Die Tochter auch, die beiden Söhne,
Er fang sie alle in sein Netz.

Wie er den Vater selbst bethörte!
In Thränen schmolz des Königs Zorn,
Als er ihn lieblich reden hörte,
Den Troubadour, Bertrand de Born.

E. P.

REMY DE GOURMONT.

It is foolish, perhaps, to say that a man "stands for all that is best in such and such a country." It is a vague phrase, and the use of vague phrases is foolish, and yet Remy de Gourmont had in some way made himself into a symbol of so much that is finest in France that one is tempted to apply some such phrase to him.

I think no man in France could have died leaving so personal a sense of loss among scattered groups of intelligent young men who had never laid eyes on him. I do not mean to say that he was the "greatest writer in France." That method of assessing authors by size is unfortunate and Victorian. There were in France a few pre-eminently good writers: Anatole France, Remy de Gourmont, Henri de Regnier, Francis Jammes, Laurent Tailhade. There are popular figures and crazes like Maeterlinck, Claudel, and Paul Fort. I am not an examining board trying to determine which of these gentlemen is to receive the highest award. I am not determining a percentage of bay leaves. The writings of the five first-mentioned men are all of them indispensable to one's comfort.

Yet before the war Anatole France was so old that communication between him and the active part of our world had almost ceased. And Henri de Regnier was set apart, as it were, amid "The Spoils of Poynton," or behind some such metaphorical barrier. And M. Jammes, after four beautiful books to his credit, had gone *gaga* over catholicism, and from Remy de Gourmont alone there proceeded a personal, living force. "Force" is almost a misnomer; let us call it a personal light.

The man was infused through his work. If you "hold a pistol to my head" and say: "Produce the masterpiece on which you base these preposterous claims for M. de Gourmont!" I might not be able to lay out an array of books to equal those of his elder friend, M. France, or of M. de Regnier, or to find three volumes of poems to compare with the first books by Francis Jammes, or, indeed, to uphold that test against various men whose names I have not mentioned. You, on the other hand, would be in very much the same fix if you were commanded suddenly to produce the basis of your respect for De Quincey or Coleridge.

It is, I think, Coleridge who says that the test of a great poet is not to be found in individual passages, but in a mysterious

C213 Remy de Gourmont [Part I]. *Fortnightly Review*, XCVIII (N. S.). 588 (1 Dec. 1915) [1159]–1166.

pervasive essence, "everywhere present and nowhere a distinct excitement."

As you read M. de Gourmont's work it is not any particular phrase, poem, or essay that holds you, so much as a continuing sense of intelligence, of a limpid, active intelligence in the mind of the writer.

I express, perhaps, a personal and an unpopular emotion when I say that this constant sense of the intelligence of the man behind the writing is a great comfort. I even hope that intelligence, in writers, is coming back, if not into fashion, at least into favour with a public large enough to make certain kinds of books once more printable. We have suffered a period in which the glorification of stupidity and the worship of unintelligent, "messy" energy have been too much encouraged. (With the appearance of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, and the more "normal" part of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's narrative writings, one may even hope that intelligence shall once more have its innings, even in our own stalwart tongue.)

The qualities of M. de Gourmont's intelligence? Limpidity and fairness and graciousness, and irony, and a sensuous charm in his decoration when he chose to make his keen thought flash out against a richly-coloured background; these things were all in his writing. The peculiarity of his narrative work may have been just this method of resting the mind as it were by an "aroma." What shall I call it?

He stirs the "senses of the imagination," the reader is pervaded by luxurious rest, and then when the mind is most open, de Gourmont darts in with his acumen, a thrust, an incisive or revolutionary idea, spoken so softly.

His "Diomèdes" searches for truth in the Rue Bonaparte and environs. As Turgenev builds up a whole novel to enforce two or three Russian proverbs; to make you know that he, the author, has understood some very simple phrase in all its profundity; as in the "Nichée de Gentilshommes" he has put first, "The heart of another is a dark forest," and then in the middle of the book, man, his hero, opposed to the old trees of his dismantled garden, and then finally old Maria Timofevna's "Nothing but death is irrevocable," so, in a very different manner, Remy de Gourmont has embedded his philosophy in a luxurious mist of the senses. But this particularity of method would, in itself, amount to very little.

M. de Gourmont wrote, twice a month, a little "Epilogue" in the *Mercure de France.* Early in his career he had written a large and beautiful book on *Le Latin Mystique du Moyen Age,* and in this book he laid before his few readers a great amount of

forgotten beauty, the beauty of a period slighted by philological scholars. These were causes contributory to his position, but no one of them would have accounted for it.

His work had what very little work ever has, despite continuous advertisements to the contrary. It had a personal charm, and this charm was that of intelligence.

Ideas came to him as a series of fine wines to a delicate palate, and he was never inebriated. He never ran *amok*. And this is the whole difference between the French and Tedescan systems: a German never knows when a thought is "only to be thought" —to be thought out in all its complexity and its beauty—and when it is to be made a basis of action.

I believe England guards against such mistakes by mistrusting thought altogether. At least I once saw a very amusing encounter, as follows: A Russian, who had taken degrees at Leipzig on prehistoric Greek philosophers, came to England. He believed that "The Germans are the only Greeks of to-day." He was going, at least he said he was going, "to convert England to philosophy." It was a noble adventure.

He propounded his crusade in a company consisting of two foreigners, myself, and one Englishman. All the Englishman said was, "I don't believe in ideas."

It was a very sincere personal statement. The Russian shortly afterwards retired to Paris, to start a peripatetic school in the "Jardins du Luxembourg," but he finally went to America, and was at once made a professor.[1]

England has been very safe with her "Don't believe in ideas." Germany has got decidedly and disgustingly drunk. But Paris is the laboratory of ideas; it is there that poisons can be tested, and new modes of sanity be discovered. It is there that the antiseptic conditions of the laboratory exist. That is the function of Paris.

It was peculiarly the function of M. Remy de Gourmont.

For years he has written "controversially," if I may use a word with such strong connotations. I believe he has never once made an over-statement, or, for that matter, an under-statement of his thought. I don't say that he has always been right. But he had this absolute fairness, the fairness of a man watching his own experiment in laboratory. And this absolute fairness, this absolute openness to all thought, is precisely the most difficult thing to attain.

We are all touched with the blight of Tertullian. Whatever our aims and ambitions and our firm conviction to the contrary,

(1) This tale is not a figment of my imagination; it is not an allegory, but fact.

we have our moments off guard when we become unfair, and partisan, and personal in our spite, and intolerant.

M. de Gourmont carried his lucidity to the point of genius. All ideas, all works of art, all writing came to him, and he received them all graciously, and he praised graciously, or ignored graciously. And he wrote beautifully and graciously from himself. He was the friend of intelligence. He had not lost touch with "*les jeunes.*"

And that last is more important and more difficult than one might think. If a man has "come in" with one generation and taken part in the development of and triumph of one "new" set of ideas, it is especially and peculiarly difficult for him to adapt himself to the next set, which comes in some twenty years later. No man can lead two movements, and it is very hard for him to understand two movements. A movement degenerates into over-emphasis. It begins with the recognition of a neglect. When youth is divided into acrimonious parties it is perhaps difficult for age to tell which side has the intelligence, but you could trust M. de Gourmont to discover intelligence in whatever form it might appear.

It is a slight thing that I am going to tell now, but it is not without its minute significance. When I was in Paris some years ago I happened, by merest accident, to be plunged into a meeting, a vortex of twenty men, and among them five or six of the most intelligent young men in Paris. I should say that Paris is a place like another; in "literature" the French are cursed with amorphous thought, rhetoric, bombast, Claudel, &c., stale Hugo, stale Corneille, &c., just as we are cursed here with stale Victoriana, stale Miltoniana, &c. The young party of intelligence in Paris, a party now just verging on the threshold of middle-age, is the group that centred about "L'Effort Libre." It contains Jules Romains, Vildrac, du Hamel, Chennviere, Jouve, and their friends. These men were plotting a gigantic blague. A "blague" when it is a fine blague is a satire upon stupidity, an attack. It is the weapon of intelligence at bay; of intelligence fighting against an alignment of odds. These men were thorough. They had exposed a deal of ignorance and stupidity in places when there should have been the reverse. They were serious, and they were "keeping it up." And the one man they mentioned with sympathy, the one older man to whom they could look for comprehension, and even for discreet assistance, was Remy de Gourmont. Remy would send them a brief telegram to be read at their public meeting.

That is, at first sight, a very trifling matter, but, if examined closely, it shows a number of things : first, that M. de Gourmont

was absolutely independent, that he was not tied to any institution, that his position was based on his intelligence alone and not on his "connections" (as I believe they are called in our "literary world").

"Franchement d'écrire ce qu'on pense, seul plaisir d'un écrivain." "To put down one's thought frankly, a writer's one pleasure." That phrase was the centre of M. de Gourmont's position. It was not a phrase understood superficially. It is as much the basis of a clean literature, of all literature worth the name, as is an antiseptic method the basis of sound surgical treatment.

"Franchement," "Frankly," is "Frenchly," if one may drag in philology. If, in ten lines or in a hundred pages, I can get the reader to comprehend what that one adjective *means* in literature, what it means to all civilisation, I shall have led him part of the way toward an understanding of M. de Gourmont's importance.

"Frankly" does not mean "grossly." It does not mean the over-emphasis of neo-realism, of red-bloodism, of slums dragged into light, of men writing while drugged with two or three notions, or with the lust for an epigram. It means simply that a man writes his thought, that is to say, his doubts, his inconclusions as well as his "convictions" (which last are so often borrowed affairs).

There is no lasting shelter between an intelligent man and his own perception of truth, but nine-tenths of all writing displays an author trying, by force of will, to erect such shelter for others. M. de Gourmont was one of the rare authors who did not make this stupid endeavour; who wholly eschewed malingering.

It was not a puritanical privation for him, it was his nature to move in this way. The mind, the imagination is the proper domain of freedom. The body, the outer world, is the proper domain of fraternal deference.

The tedium and the habit of the great ruck of writers is that they are either incoherent and amorphous, or else they write in conformity to, or in defence of, a set of fixed, rigid notions, instead of disclosing their thought . . . which might, in rare cases, be interesting. It is to be noted that de Gourmont is never tedious. That is the magic of clarity.

"A very few only, and without gain or joy to themselves, can transform directly the acts of others into their own personal thoughts, the multitude of men thinks only thoughts already emitted, feels but feelings used up, and has but sensations as faded as old gloves. When a new word arrives at its destination, it arrives like a post-card that has gone round the world

and on which the handwriting is blurred and obliterated with blots and stains."

I open the "Chevaux de Diomèdes" at random and come upon that passage of M. de Gourmont's thought.

"Non è mai tarde per tentar l'ignoto,
Non è mai tarde per andar più oltre,"

but it was never with the over-orchestration of the romantic period, nor with the acrid and stupid crudity of societies for the propagation of this, that, and the other, that de Gourmont's mind went placidly out into new fields.

He never abandoned beauty. The mountain stream may be as antiseptic as the sterilised dressing. There was the quality and the completeness of life in M. de Gourmont's mode of procedure. Just as there is more wisdom, perhaps more "revolution," in Whistler's portrait of young Miss Alexander than in all the Judaic drawings of the "prophetic" Blake, so there is more life in Remy than in all the reformers.

Voltaire called in a certain glitter to assist him. De Gourmont's ultimate significance may not be less than Voltaire's. He walked gently through the field of his mind. His reach, his ultimate efficiency are just this; he thought things which other men cannot, for an indefinitely prolonged period of time, be prevented from thinking. His thoughts were not merely the fixed mental habits of the animal *homo*.

And I call the reader to witness that he, de Gourmont, differed from Fabians, Webbists, Shavians (all of whom, along with all dealers in abstractions, are ultimately futile). He differed from them in that his thoughts had the property of life. They, the thoughts, were all related to life, they were immersed in the manifest universe while he thought them, they were not cut out, put on shelves and in bottles.

Anyone who has read him will know what I mean. Perhaps it is quite impossible to explain it to one who has not.

. . . . . .

In poetry as in prose M. de Gourmont has built up his own particular form. I am not sure that he was successful, in fact, I am rather convinced that he was not successful in the "Simone," where he stays nearer the poetic forms invented by others. His *own* mode began, I think, with the translation of the very beautiful "sequaire" of Goddeschalk in "Le Latin Mystique." This he made, very possibly, the basis of his "Livre de Litanies," at least this curious evocational form, the curious repetitions, the personal sweeping rhythm, are made wholly his own, and he

used them later in "Les Saints de Paradis," and last of all in the prose sonnets.

These "sonnets" are among the few successful endeavours to write poetry *of our own time.* I know there is much superficial modernity, but in these prose sonnets Remy de Gourmont has solved the two thorniest questions. The first difficulty in a modern poem is to give a feeling of the reality of the speaker, the second, given the reality of the speaker, to gain any degree of poignancy in one's utterance.

That is to say, you must begin in a normal, natural tone of voice, and you must, somewhere, express or cause a deep feeling. I am, let us say, in an omnibus with Miscio Itow. He has just seen some Japanese armour and says it is like his grandfather's, and then simply running on in his own memory he says: "When I first put on my grandfather's helmet, my grandmother cried . . . because I was so like what my grandfather was at eighteen."

You may say that Itow is himself an exotic, but still, there is material for an hokku, and poetry does touch modern life, or at least pass over it swiftly, though it does not much appear in modern verses.

M. de Gourmont has not been driven even to an exotic speaker. His sonnets begin in the metropolis. The speaker is past middle age. It is a discussion of what he calls in the course of the sequence of poems "la géométrie subordonnée du corps humain."

I shall give a dozen or more phrases from the sequence (which consists, if I remember rightly, of about two dozen poems). By this means I shall try to give, not a continuous meaning, but simply the tone, the conversational, ironic, natural tone of the writing. The scientific dryness, even, as follows:—

"Mes déductions sont certains. . . .

"Mais le blanc est fondamental. . . .

"J'ai plus aimé les yeux que toutes les autres manifestations corporelles de la beauté. . . .

"Les yeux sont le manomètre de la machine animale. . . .

"Et leurs paroles signifient le désir de l'être, ou la placidité de sa volonté. . . .

"Mais on pense aussi avec les mains, avec les genoux, avec les yeux, avec la bouche et avec le cœur. On pense avec tous les organes, . . .

"Et à vrai dire, nous ne sommes peut-être que pensée. . . .

"Je parlerais des yeux, je chanterais les yeux toute ma vie. Je sais toutes leurs couleurs et toutes leurs volontés, leur destinée. . . .

"Dont je n'ignore pas les correspondances. . . .

"C'est une belle chose qu'une tête de femme, librement inscrite dans le cercle esthétique. . . ."

Or even more solidly:—

"Je sculpte une hypothèse dans le marbre de la logique éternelle. . . .

"Les épaules sont des sources d'où descend la fluidité des bras. . . ."

And then, when one is intent and wholly off guard, comes, out of this "unpoetic," unemotional *constatation*, the passage :—

> "Les yeux se font des discours entre eux.
> Près de se ternir . . . les miens te parleront encore, mais ils n'emporteront pas bien loin ta réponse,
> Car on n'emporte rien, on meurt. Laisse-moi donc regarder les yeux que j'ai decouverts,
> Les yeux qui me survivront."

He has worn off the trivialities of the day, he has conquered the fret of contemporaneousness by exhausting it in his pages of dry discussion, and we come on the feeling, the poignancy, as directly as we do in the old poet's—

> Λέγουσιν αἱ γυναῖκες
> Ανακρέων γέρων εἶ.
>
> "Dicunt mihi puellae
> Anacreon senex es."

It is the triumph of skill and reality, though it is barbarous of me to try to represent the force of the original poems by such a handful of phrases taken at random, and I am not trying to convince anyone who will not read the "Sonnets in Prose" for himself.

EZRA POUND.

REMY DE GOURMONT

Remy de Gourmont is dead and the world's light is darkened. This is another of the crimes of the war, for M. de Gourmont was only fifty-seven, and if he had not been worried to death, if he had not been grieved to death by the cessation of all that has been "life" as he understood it, there was no reason why we should not have had more of his work and his company.

He is as much "dead of the war" as if he had died in the trenches, and he left with almost the same words on his lips. "Nothing is being done in Paris, nothing can be done, *faute de combatants.*" There was an elegy on current writing by him in the *Mercure.* It was almost the same tone in which Gaudier-Brzeska wrote to me a few days before he was shot at Neuville St. Vaast: "Is anything of importance or even of interest going on in the world—I mean the 'artistic London?' "

M. de Gourmont is irreplaceable. I think I do not write for myself alone when I say no other Frenchman could have died leaving so personal a sense of loss in the minds of many young men who had never laid eyes on him. Some fames and reputations are like that; Mallarmé is almost a mantram, a word for conjuring. A critique of M. de Gourmont's poetry would be by no means a critique of M. de Gourmont's influence. For, again, I think that every young man in London whose work is worth considering at all, has felt that in Paris existed this gracious presence, this final and kindly tribunal where all work would stand on its merits. One had this sense of absolute fairness—no prestige, no over-emphasis, could work upon it.

"Permettre à ceux qui en valent la peine d'écrire franchement ce qu'il pense—seul plaisir d'un écrivain:" these were almost the last words he wrote to me, save a postscript on the outside of the envelope; and they are almost his "whole law and gospel." And indeed a right understanding of them means the whole civilization of letters.

Outside a small circle in Paris and a few scattered groups elsewhere, this civilization does not exist. Yet the phrase is so plain and simple: "to permit those who are worth it to write frankly what they think."

That is the end of all rhetoric and of all journalism. By end I do not mean goal, or ambition. I mean that when a nation, or a group of men, or an editor, arrives at the state of mind where he really understands that phrase, rhetoric and journalism are done with. The true aristocracy is founded, permanent and indestructible. It is also the end of log-rolling, the end of the British school of criticism for the preservation of orderly and innocuous persons. It is the end of that "gravity" to which Sterne alludes as "a mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind."

M. de Gourmont did not make over-statements. His Diomedes is a hero because he is facing life, he is facing it quite sincerely, with no protection whatever. Ibsen with his smoky lightning had rumbled out, "There is no intermediator between God and man." M. de Gourmont, with his perfect and gracious placidity, had implied—yes, implied, made apparent rather than stated—that no formula can stand between man and life; or rather that no creed, no dogma, can

C214 Remy de Gourmont [Part II]. *Poetry*, VII. 4 (Jan. 1916) 197–202.

protect the thinking man from looking at life directly, forming his own thought from his own sensuous contact and from his contact with thoughts.

Nietzsche has done no harm in France because France has understood that thought can exist apart from action; that it is perfectly fitting and expedient clearly to think certain things which it is neither fitting nor expedient to "spoil by action."

"Spoil by action" is perhaps a bad memory of the phrase; but just as Dante was able to consider two thoughts as blending and giving off music, so Diomedes in De Gourmont's story is able to think things which translation into action would spoil. As for Diomedes' career, I am perfectly willing to accept Robert Frost's statement that "there is nothing like it in New England." What there is in all provincial places is an attempt to suppress part of the evidence, to present life out of proportion with itself, squared to fit some local formula of respectability.

Remy de Gourmont had written all his life in absolute single-mindedness; it was to express his thought, his delicate, subtle, quiet and absolutely untrammeled revery, with no regard whatsoever for existing belief, with no after-thought or beside-thought either to conform or to avoid conforming. That is the sainthood of literature.

I think I can show what I mean almost by a single sentence. In the midst of the present whirlwind of abuse he said quietly: "By Kultur, the Germans mean what we mean by 'state education.' "

It had been so all his life; on whatever matter, however slight the matter or however strong his own passion, there had been that same quiet precision, that same ultimate justness.

The rest of us—oh, the rest of us are caught in the flurry of controversy. Remy de Gourmont had found—it might not be incorrect to say that Paris had given him—a place where all things could be said quietly and openly, where one would not think of circumlocution and prejudice, where circumlocution and prejudice would have seemed unnatural.

> *En tous les pays il y a un noyau de bons esprits, d'esprits libres. Il faut leur donner quelque chose qui les change de la fadeur des magasines, quelque chose qui leur donne confiance en eux-mêmes, et leur soit un point d'appui.*

That is good news, but for years M. de Gourmont had believed it and written accordingly. He had written selflessly, and was glad when other men could write well. He dared to write for the few, for the few who are not a clique or a faction, but who are united by the ability to think clearly, and who do not attempt to warp or to smother this faculty; who do not suppress part of the evidence.

The significance of M. de Gourmont and the significance of his poetry are two things apart. He has written for the most part beautiful prose, much controversy, a book on *Le Latin Mystique du Moyen Age,* etc. He has written a *poème champêtre* and some *Litanies.*

I have praised these litanies elsewhere, and a man's obituary notice is not, perhaps, the best place for analyzing his metric. Suffice it to say that the litanies are a marvel of rhythm, that they have not been followed or repeated, that M. de Gourmont was not of "the young French school." If

he is "grouped" anywhere he must be grouped, as poet, among *les symbolistes*. The litanies are evocation, not statement.

M. de Gourmont was indubitably "of the young" in the sense that his mind had not lost its vigor, that he was alive to contemporary impressions, that he had not gone gaga over catholicism like poor Francis Jammes, nor wallowed in metrical journalism like the ill-starred Paul Fort. He had never lost touch with the men born ten or twenty years after he was; for a man of fifty-seven that is a very considerable achievement. Or rather it is not an achievement, for it can not be done by effort; it can only come from a natural freshness and aliveness of the mind, and is a matter of temperament.

I had forgotten the French Academy until an article in *L'Humanité* reminded me that M. de Gourmont was not a member thereof; that the ancient association which contains Auguste Swallou, Thibaudet de Mimmil, and so many other "immortals" had not seen fit to elect him. It is evident that the "Académie Françoise" has outlived its usefulness, and if France does not set an example what *can* be expected of other academies? In M. de Gourmont's case the academy had no excuse. He had not only written supremely, but he had given back to the world a lost beauty—in *Le Latin Mystique*, in the *Sequaire* of Goddeschalk with its *Amas ut facias pulchram*.

But perhaps, as a friend of mine wrote when Swinburne was refused sepulture in Westminster Abbey (they said there was no room and buried the canon's wife the week after), perhaps, as my friend wrote at the time, "perhaps it is just as well—he suffered fools badly."

I have known also that the really distinguished member, at a meeting of another great "body," encouraged one of his more serious colleagues, who was showing signs of tedium, with "Come, come, we are not here to enjoy ourselves."

M. de Gourmont has gone—

Blandula, tenulla, vagula—

almost with a jest on his lips, for his satire on *M. Croquant et la Guerre* continues in the current *Mercure*.

Ezra Pound

REFLECTION

I KNOW that what Nietzsche said is true,
And yet—
I saw the face of a little child in the street,
And it was beautiful.

C215

C214 Continued

C215 REFLECTION. *Smart Set*, XLVIII. 1 (Jan. 1916) 219.
An unsigned poem, with text: "I know that what Nietzsche said is true, | And yet— | I saw the face of a little child in the street, | And it was beautiful." Probably by Ezra Pound. (Reprinted in *Collected Early Poems* ([1976])—A98—p. 286.)

MR. JAMES JOYCE AND THE MODERN STAGE.

A PLAY AND SOME CONSIDERATIONS.

TWO months ago I set out to write an essay about a seventeenth century dramatist. As I had nearly finished translating one of his plays into English, my interest in him must have been more than that of a transient moment. His own life was full of adventure. The play had a number of virtues that one could quite nicely mark out on a diagram. It was altogether a most estimable "subject"; yet, when I began to ask myself whether my phrases really corresponded to fact, whether it was worth while causing a few readers to spend their time on the matter, I was convinced that it was not. I believed that old play and the author had fallen into desuetude from perfectly justifiable causes. I agreed to let the dead bury their dead, and to let other people write about the drama, and I returned to some original work of my own.

Last week I received a play by Mr. James Joyce and that argumentative interest, which once led me to spend two years of my life reading almost nothing but plays, came back upon me, along with a set of questions "from the bottom up": Is drama worth while? Is the drama of today, or the stage of today, a form or medium by which the best contemporary authors can express themselves in any satisfactory manner?

C216 Mr. James Joyce and the Modern Stage. A Play and Some Considerations. *Drama*, Chicago, Ill., VI. 21 (Feb. 1916) 122–32.
A review of *Exiles*. (A quotation from this review, in nine lines, was printed on page [1] of *Extracts from Press Notices of Exiles by James Joyce* ([Zürich? The Author? 1918]), a four-page leaflet, measuring 21.2 x 13.9 cm.)

Mr. Joyce is undoubtedly one of our best contemporary authors. He has written a novel, and I am quite ready to stake anything I have in this world that that novel is permanent. It is permanent as are the works of Stendhal and Flaubert. Two silly publishers have just refused it in favor of froth, another declines to look at it because "he will not deal through an agent"—yet Mr. Joyce lives on the continent and can scarcely be expected to look after his affairs in England save through a deputy. And Mr. Joyce is the best prose writer of my generation, in English. So far as I know, there is no one better in either Paris or Russia. In English we have Hardy and Henry James and, chronologically, we have Mr. James Joyce. The intervening novelists print books, it is true, but for me or for any man of my erudition, for any man living at my intensity, these books are things of no substance.

Therefore, when Mr. Joyce writes a play, I consider it a reasonable matter of interest. The English agent of the Oliver Morosco company has refused the play, and in so doing the agent has well served her employers, for the play would certainly be of no use to the syndicate that stars *Peg o' My Heart;* neither do I believe that any manager would stage it nor that it could succeed were it staged. Nevertheless, I read it through at a sitting, with intense interest. It is a long play, some one hundred and eighty pages.

It is not so good as a novel; nevertheless it is quite good enough to form a very solid basis for my arraignment of the contemporary theatre. It lays before me certain facts, certain questions; for instance, are the excellences of this play purely novelist's excellences? Perhaps most of them are; yet this play could not have been made as a novel. It

C216 Continued

is distinctly a play. It has the form of a play—I do not mean that it is written in dialogue with the names of the speakers put in front of their speeches. I mean that it has inner form; that the acts and speeches of one person work into the acts and speeches of another and make the play into an indivisible, integral whole. The action takes place in less than twenty-four hours, in two rooms, both near Dublin, so that even the classical unities are uninjured. The characters are drawn with that hardness of outline which we might compare to that of Dürer's painting if we are permitted a comparison with effects of an art so different. There are only four main characters, two subsidiary characters, and a fishwoman who passes a window, so that the whole mechanics of the play have required great closeness of skill. I see no way in which the play could be improved by redoing it as a novel. It could not, in fact, be anything but a play. And yet it is absolutely unfit for the stage as we know it. It is dramatic. Strong, well-wrought sentences flash from the speech and give it "dramatic-edge" such as we have in Ibsen, when some character comes out with, "There is no mediator between God and man"; I mean sentences dealing with fundamentals.

It is not unstageable because it deals with adultery; surely, we have plenty of plays, quite stageable plays, that deal with adultery. I have seen it in the nickel-plush theatre done with the last degree of sentimental bestiality. I admit that Mr. Joyce once mentions a garter, but it is done in such a way . . . it is done in the only way . . . it is the only possible means of presenting the exact social tone of at least two of the characters.

"Her place in life was rich and poor between," as Crabbe says of his Clelia; it might have been

done in a skit of a night club and no harm thought; but it is precisely because it occurs neither in fast nor in patrician circles, but in a milieu of Dublin genteelness, that it causes a certain feeling of constraint. Mr. Joyce gives his Dublin as Ibsen gave provincial Norway.

Of course, oh, of course, if, *if* there were an Ibsen stage in full blast, Mr. Joyce's play would go on at once.

But we get only trivialized Ibsen; we get Mr. Shaw, the intellectual cheese-mite. That is to say, Ibsen was a true agonist, struggling with very real problems. "Life is a combat with the phantoms of the mind"—he was always in combat for himself and for the rest of mankind. More than any one man, it is he who has made us "our world," that is to say, "our modernity." Mr. Shaw is the intellectual cheese-mite, constantly enraptured at his own cleverness in being able to duck down through one hole in the cheese and come up through another.

But we cannot see "Ibsen." Those of us who were lucky saw Mansfield do the *Peer Gynt.* I have seen a half-private resurrection of *Hedda.* I think that those are the only two Ibsen plays that I have ever had an opportunity of seeing performed, and many others must be in like case. Professionals tell us: "Oh, they have quickened the tempo. Ibsen is too slow," and the like. So we have Shaw; that is to say, Ibsen with the sombre reality taken out, a little Nietzsche put in to enliven things, and a technique of dialogue superadded from Wilde.

I would point out that Shaw's comedy differs essentially from the French comedy of Marivaux or De Musset, for in their work you have a very considerable intensity of life and of passion veiling itself, restraining itself through a fine manner,

C216 Continued

through a very delicate form. There is in Shaw nothing to restrain, there is a bit of intensity in a farce about Androcles, but it is followed by a fabian sermon, and his "comedy" or whatever it is, is based solely on the fact that his mind moves a little bit faster than that of the average Englishman. You cannot conceive any intelligent person going to Mr. Shaw for advice in any matter that concerned his life vitally. He is not a man at prise with reality.

It is precisely this being at grips with reality that is the core of great art. It is Galdos, or Stendhal, or Flaubert, or Turgenev or Dostoevsky, or even a romanticist like De Musset, but it is not the cheese-mite state of mind. It is not a matter of being glum; it can be carried into the most tenuous art.

The trouble with Mr. Joyce's play is precisely that he *is* at prise with reality. It is a "dangerous" play precisely because the author is portraying an intellectual-emotional struggle, because he is dealing with actual thought, actual questioning, not with clichés of thought and emotion.

It is untheatrical, or unstageable, precisely because the closeness and cogency of the process is, as I think, too great for an audience to be able to follow . . . under present conditions.

And that is, in turn, precisely the ground of my arraignment.

All of this comes to saying: can the drama hold its own against the novel? Can contemporary drama be permanent? It is not to be doubted that the permanent art of any period is precisely that form of art into which the best artists of the period put their best and solidest work.

That is to say, the prose of the *trecento* was not so good as Dante's poetry, and, therefore, that age remains in its verse. The prose of the Elizabethan

period was at least no better than Shakespeare's plays and we, therefore, remember that age, for the most part, by drama. The poetry of Voltaire's contemporaries was not so good as his prose and we, therefore, do not remember that period of France by its verses. For nearly a century now, when we have thought of great writers, we have been quite apt to think of the writers of novels. We perhaps think of Ibsen and Synge. We may even think of some poets. But that does not answer our problem.

The very existence of this quarterly and of the Drama League means, I take it, that an appreciable number of people believe that the drama is an important part of contemporary art . . . or that they want it to be an important or even great art of today.

It is a very complex art; therefore, let us try to think of its possibilities of greatness first hand.

ACTING.

I suppose we have all seen flawless acting. Modern acting I don't know, I should say flawless *mimetic* acting is almost as cheap and plentiful as Mr. A. Bennett's novels. There is plenty of it in the market. A lot of clever, uninteresting people doing clever, tolerable plays. They are entertaining. There is no reason to see anyone in particular rather than any other one or any six others. It is a time of commercial efficiency, of dramatic and literary fine plumbing.

But great acting? Acting itself raised to the dignity of an art?

Yes, I saw it once. I saw Bernhardt; she was so wobbly in her knees that she leaned on either her lover or her confidant during nearly all of the play, *La Sorcière,* and it was not much of a play. Her

gestures from the waist up were superb. At one point in the play, she takes off a dun-colored cloak and emerges in a close-fitting gown of cloth of gold. That is all—she takes off a cloak. That much might be stage direction. But that shaky, old woman, representing a woman in youth, took off her cloak with the power of sculpture.

That is to say, she created the image, an image, for me at least, as durable as that of any piece of sculpture that I have seen. I have forgotten most of the play; the play was of no importance.

Here was an art, an art that would have held Umewaka Minoru, great acting.

SPEECH.

But it is impractical? Perhaps only a crazy, romantic play would give a situation of abnormal tragedy sufficient to warrant such gestures? And so on.

I noticed, however, one other thing in that Bernhardt performance, namely, that the emotional effect was greater half an hour after I had left the theatre than at any time during the performance. That, of course, is a "secret of Bernhardt's success."

Maybe, but it is due to a very definite cause, which the practical manager will probably ridicule. It is possible, by the constant reiteration of sound from a very small bell, to put a very large room in a roar, whose source you cannot easily locate. It is equally possible by the reiteration of a cadence . . . say the cadence of French alexandrines, to stir up an emotion in an audience, an emotion or an emotional excitement the source of which they will be unable to determine with any ease.

That is, I think, the only "practical" argument in

favor of plays in verse. It is a very practical argument . . . but it may need the skill of Bernhardt to make it of any avail.

I might almost say that all arguments about the stage are of two sorts: the practical and the stupid. At any rate, the rare actor who aspires to art has at his disposal the two means; that is, speech and gesture. If he aspires to great art, he may try to substitute the significant for the merely mimetic.

THE CINEMA.

The "movie" is perhaps the best friend of the few people who hope for a really serious stage. I do not mean to say that it is not the medium for the expression of more utter and abject forms of human asininity than are to be found anywhere else . . . save possibly on the contemporary stage.

Take, for example, the bathos, the *bassesse,* the consummate and unfathomable imbecility of some films. I saw one a few weeks ago. It began with a printed notice pleading for the freedom of the film; then there was flashed on the screen a testimonial from a weeping Christian, a "minister of a gospel," who declared that having had his emotions, his pity, stirred by a novel of Dickens in his early youth, had done more to ennoble his life, to make him what he was than any sermons he had ever heard. Then we had some stanzas from a poem by Poe (Omission: we had had some information about Poe somewhere before this). Then we had some scenes out of a Poe story in before-the-war costume; then the characters went off to a garden party in quite modern raiment and a number of modern characters were introduced, also a Salome dance in which the lady ended by lying on her back and squirming (as is so usual at an American garden party). Then

C216 Continued

the old before-the-war uncle reappeared. There were a few sub-plots, one taken from a magazine story that I happened to remember; later there came Moses and the burning bush, a modern detective doing the "third degree," Christ on Golgotha, some supernatural or supernormal creatures, quite nondescript, a wild chase over the hills, the tables of the law marked, "Thou shalt not kill," some more stanzas from a lyric of Poe's, and a lady fell off, no, leapt off, a cliff. There had been some really fine apparitions of the uncle's ghost somewhere before this, and finally the murderer awakened to find that he had been dreaming for the last third of the film. General reconciliation!

This film, you will note, observes the one requirement for popular stage success; there is plenty of action . . . and no one but a demi-god could possibly know what is going to come next.

Nevertheless, the "c'mat" is a friend to the lovers of good drama. I mean it is certainly inimical to the rubbishy stage. Because? Because people can get more rubbish per hour on the cinema than they can in the theatre, *and* it is cheaper. And it is on the whole a better art than the art of Frohman, Tree and Belasco. I mean to say it does leave something to the imagination.

Moreover, it is—whether the violet-tinted aesthete like it or not—it is developing an art sense. The minute the spectator begins to wonder why Charles Chaplin amuses him, the minute he comes to the conclusion that Chaplin is better than X——, Y—— and Z——, because he, Chaplin, gets the maximum effect with the minimum effort, minimum expenditure, etc., etc., the said spectator is infinitely nearer a conception of art and infinitely more fit to watch creditable drama than when he, or she, is entranced

by Mrs. So-and-So's gown or by the color of Mr. So-and-So's eyes.

On the other, the sinister hand, we have the anecdote of the proud manager of "the Temple of Mammon" (as a certain London theatre is nicknamed). It was a magnificent scene, an oriental palace *de luxe*, which would have rivalled Belasco's, and the manager, taking a rather distinguished dramatist across the stage, tapped the lions supporting the throne with his gold-headed cane and proudly said, "Solid brass!"

Is it any wonder that the simple Teuton should have supposed this country ripe for invasion?

Well, benevolent reader, there you have it. The drama, the art of Aeschylus and of Shakespeare, the art that was to cast great passions and great images upon the mind of the auditor! There is the "drama" staged for the most part by men who should be "interior decorators" furnishing the boudoirs and reception rooms of upper-class prostitutes, there is the faint cry for art-scenery with as little drama as possible, and there is the trivialized Ibsen, for Shaw is the best we get, and all Shaw's satire on England was really done long since in a sentence quoted by Sterne:

"Gravity: A mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind."

Even so, Shaw is only a stage in the decadence, for if we must call Shaw trivialized Ibsen, what shall we say of the next step lower, to-wit: prettified Shaw?

What welcome is this stage to give the real agonist if he tries to write "drama"? These problems are your problems, gracious reader, for you belong to that large group whose hope is better drama.

Also, in your problem plays you must remember

C216 Continued

that all the real problems of life are insoluble and that the real dramatist will be the man with a mind in search; he will grope for his answer and he will differ from the sincere auditor in that his groping will be the keener, the more far-reaching, the more conscious, or at least the more articulate; whereas, the man who tries to preach at you, the man who stops his play to deliver a sermon, will only be playing about the surface of things or trying to foist off some theory.

So Mr. Joyce's play is dangerous and unstageable because he is not *playing* with the subject of adultery, but because he is actually driving in the mind upon the age-long problem of the rights of personality and of the responsibility of the intelligent individual for the conduct of those about him, upon the age-long question of the relative rights of intellect, and emotion, and sensation, and sentiment.

And the question which I am trying to put and which I reform and reiterate is just this: Must our most intelligent writers do this sort of work in the novel, *solely in the novel,* or is it going to be, in our time, possible for them to do it in drama?

On your answer to that question the claims of modern drama must rest.

EZRA POUND.

America, the most opulent of nations, the most interested in the arts, the most anxious to excel, the most liberal, the most gracious!

This reflection is given off from my mind by two announcements which reach me this morning.

One of the DeGoncourt prizes has been awarded to M. Rene Benjamin, and the *Prix Lasserre* has been given to Charles le Goffic.

I need scarcely remind the reader that for some centuries Paris and London have been the centers of the world's literature. I believe I have pointed out as contributory causes to this effect the treatment accorded to writers in both cities. In England almost any writer of unusual talent who has not systematized and commercialized his production, can get support from the state: first, by pension for life; second, by temporary relief from a royal fund for that purpose. The pensions are announced publicly. The special donations from the royal fund are never published; they are known only to the recipient, to such people as he chooses to tell, and to the two literati of good standing who vouch for his desserts. Not only many of the best writers, but many of the writers who later in life have made very great commercial successes, have enjoyed this bounty in bad seasons and times of stress (late and early).

For this reason it is more likely that a man will turn his thought toward permanent writing in England than in America. Permanent writing does not bring an immediate cash reward, at least it is not likely to. In America the whole strain is on the aspirant. In England the strain is shared to a certain degree by institutions.

London and Paris have other advantages, advantages which America can not compete with until her civilization has been enriched by the presence of generations of excellent writers; but in this matter of cash there is no excuse for our country lagging behind.

France is so poor that I have heard French officials complaining that they can't get funds to catalogue their national library efficiently. The Prix Lasserre is eight thousand francs (sixteen hundred dollars).

The other bit of news to which I referred is in *The Times* the report of a sale of manuscripts, etc., in New York. It seems that Mr. John Lewis has purchased an extra-illustrated copy of the Pickering edition of the *Compleat Angler* (1836) for the sum of $1,650. It is obvious that Mr. Lewis is not competing with DeGoncourt and Lasserre, and that America has as yet no serious intention of competing with London and Paris. *E. P.*

C217 Literary Prizes. *Poetry*, VII. 6 (Mar. 1916) 304–5.
Signed: E. P.

CORRESPONDENCE

I

Extract from a letter:

Poetry must be *as well written as prose.* Its language must be a fine language, departing in no way from speech save by a heightened intensity (*i. e.,* simplicity). There must be no book words, no periphrases, no inversions. It must be as simple as De Maupassant's best prose, and as hard as Stendhal's.

There must be no interjections. No words flying off to nothing. Granted one can't get perfection every shot, this must be one's INTENTION.

Rhythm MUST have a meaning. It can't be merely a careless dash off, with no grip and no real hold to the words and sense, a tumty tum tumty tum tum ta.

There must be no clichés, set phrases, stereotyped, journalese. The only escape from such is by precision, a result of concentrated attention to what one is writing. The test of a writer is his ability for such concentration AND for his power to stay concentrated till he gets to the end of his poem, whether it is two lines or two hundred.

Objectivity and again objectivity, and expression: no hind-side-beforeness, no straddled adjectives (as, "addled mosses dank"), no Tennysonianness of speech; nothing—nothing that you couldn't in some circumstance, in the stress of some emotion, actually say. Every literaryism, every book word, fritters away a scrap of the reader's patience, a scrap of his sense of your sincerity. When one really feels and thinks, one stammers with simple speech; it is only in the flurry, the shallow frothy excitement of writing, or the inebriety of a metre, that one falls into the easy, easy—oh, how easy!—speech of books and poems that one has read.

Language is made out of concrete things. General expressions in non-concrete terms are a laziness; they are talk, not art, not creation. They are the reaction of things on the writer, not a creative act *by* the writer.

"Epithets" are usually abstractions—I mean what they call "epithets" in the books about poetry. The only adjective that is worth using is the adjective that is essential to the sense of the passage, not the decorative frill adjective.

I wish I could see a bit more Sophoclean severity in the ambitions of *mes amis et confrères.* The general weakness of the new school is looseness, lack of rhythmical construction and intensity.

Ezra Pound

C218 ✉ *Poetry*, VII. 6 (Mar. 1916) 321–3.
An extract. On requirements for poetry.

MEDITATIO

I

THOUGHTS, rages, phenomena. I have seen in the course of the morning new ecclesiastical buildings, and I know from the events of the last few months that it is very difficult to get the two most remarkable novels, written in English by our generation, published "through the ordinary channels."

Yet it is more desirable that a nation should have a firm literature than that paste-board nonentities should pour forth rehashed Victoriana on Sundays. Waste! Waste, and again, multiplicitly, waste!

O Christian and benevolent reader, I am not attacking your religion. I am even willing to confess a very considerable respect for its founder, and for Confucius and Mohammed, or any other individual who has striven to implant a germ of intelligence in the soil of the circumjacent stupidity. And I respect him whatever his means and his medium, that is, say, whether he has worked by violent speech, or by suave and persuasive paragraphs, or by pretending to have received his instructions, and gazed unabashed upon the hind side of the intemperate and sensuous J'h'v, on the escarps of Mount Sinai.

Because we, that is to say, you and I and the hypothetical rest of our readers, in normal mood, have no concern with churches, we generally presume that all this pother has been settled long since, and that nobody bothers about it. It is indeed a rare thought that there are thousands of prim, soaped little Tertullians opposing enlightenment, entrenched in their bigotry, mildly, placidly, contentedly entrenched in small livings and in fat livings, and in miserable, degrading curacies, and that they are all sterile, save perhaps in the production of human offspring, whereof there is already a superabundance.

Perhaps 10 per cent. of the activities of the Christian churches are not wholly venal, *mais passons!* And the arts, and good letters, serious writing?

"Oh, you go on too much about art and letters!"

"Bleat about the importance of art!!!" Yes, I have heard these phrases. And very annoying people will "go on about" art.

"In no country in the world do the authorities take such good care of their authors." There are various points of view. There are various tyrannies.

"We are going to have an outbreak of rampant puritanism after the war."

"We shall have a Saturnalia!"

There are various points of view. The monster of intolerance sniffs like a ghoul about the battlefields even. Flammarion or someone said that the sun was about to explode on, I think it was, February the fifth of this year. The end of the world is approaching. Perhaps.

At any rate I am not the first author to remark that the future is unknowable, or at least indefinite and uncertain. Concerning the past we know a little. Concerning "progress," how much?

It is about thirty-nine years since Edmond de Goncourt wrote the preface I quote.

> Thirteen years ago my brother and I wrote in an introduction to "Germinie Lacerteux":
> "Now that the novel is wider and deeper, now that it begins to be the serious, passionate, living great-form of literary study and of social research, now that it has become, by analysis and psychological inquiry, the history of contemporary ethics-in-action (how shall one render accurately the phrase 'l'histoire morale contemporaine'?), now that the novel has imposed upon itself the studies and duties of science, one may again make a stand for its liberties and its privileges.'

There ends his quotation of what they had set down in "the forties."

Now in one's normal mood, in one's normal existence, one takes it for granted that De Goncourt's statement is simple, concise, and accurate. One does not meet people who hold any other view, and one goes on placidly supposing that the question is settled, that it is settled along with Galileo's quondam heresy.

If a man has not in the year of grace 1915 or 1916 arrived at the point of enlightenment carefully marked by the brothers De Goncourt in A.D. 1863, one is not admitted to the acquaintance of anyone worth knowing. I do not say that a person holding a different view would be physically kicked downstairs if he produced a different opinion in an intelligent company; our manners are softened; he would be excreted in some more spiritual manner.

In December 1876, Edmond de Goncourt added, among others, these following sentences:

> In 1877 I come alone and perhaps for the last time to demand these privileges for this new book, written with the same feeling of intellectual curiosity and of commiseration for human sufferings.
> It has been impossible, at times, not to speak *as a physician, as a savant, as a historian.* It would be insulting (*injurieux*) to us, the young and serious school of modern novelists, to forbid us to think, to analyse, to describe all that is permitted to others to put into a volume which has on its cover "Study," or any other grave title. You cannot ask us at this time of day to amuse the young lady in the rail-road carriage. I think we have acquired, since the beginning of the century, the right to write for formed men, without the depressing necessity of fleeing to foreign presses, or to have, under a full republican regime, our publishers in Holland, as we did in the time of Louis XIV and Louis XV.

Well, there you have it. We were most of us unborn, or at least mewling and puking, when those perfectly plain, simple, and one would have supposed obvious sentences were put together.

And yet we are still faced with the problem: Is literature possible in England and America? Is it possible that the great book and the firm book can appear "in normal conditions"? That is to say, under the same conditions that make musical comedy, Edna What's-her-name, Victoria Cross, Clement Shorter, etc. etc., so infernally possible among us!

It seems most unlikely. Of course, five hundred people can do any mortal thing they like, provided it does not imply the coercion of a large body of different people. I mean, for instance, five hundred people can have any sort of drama or novel or literature that they like.

It is possible that the *Mercure de France* has done much to make serious literature possible in France "under present conditions." The Yale University Press in America claims that it selects its books solely on their merit and regardless of public opinion (or perhaps I am wrong, "regardless of their vendibility" may be the meaning of their phrase as I remember it).

And England?

"Oh, Blink is afraid to face the Libraries, I thought so." "The Censor," etc. etc. "We don't think it necessary to superintend the morals of our subscribers." "You can have it by taking a double subscription."

Let me say at once that I make no plea for smuttiness, for an unnecessary erotic glamour, etc. etc. I have what I have been recently informed is a typically "French" disgust at the coarseness of Milton's mind. I have more than once been ridiculed for my prudery.

But if one can't, *parfois*, write "as a physician, as a savant, as a historian," if we can't write plays, novels, poems or any other conceivable form of literature with the scientist's freedom and privilege, with at least the chance of at least the scientist's verity, then where in the world have we got to, and what is the use of anything, *anything?*

EZRA POUND.

C219 Meditatio. *Egoist*, III. 3 (1 Mar. 1916) 37–38.
On censorship. Reprinted as "Meditations."

A Letter from London

EZRA POUND

I SHOULD be very glad if someone in America could be made to realize the sinister bearing of the import duty on books. I have tried in vain to get some of my other correspondents to understand the effect of this iniquity . . . but apparently without success. It means insularity, stupidity, backing the printer against literature, commerce and obstruction against intelligence. I have spent myself on the topic so many times that I am not minded to write an elaborate denunciation until I know I am writing to someone capable of understanding and willing to take up the battle. Incidentally the life of a critical review depends a good deal on controversy and on having some issue worth fighting. Henry IV. did away with the black mediaevalism of an octroi on books, and the position of Paris is not without its debt to that intelligent act. No country that needs artificial aid in its competition with external intelligence is fit for any creature above the status of pig.

The tariff should be abolished not only for itself but because dishonest booksellers shelter themselves behind it and treble the price of foreign books, and because it keeps up the price of printing.

If there is one thing that we are all agreed upon: It is that the canned goods of Curtis and Company and Harper and Company and all the business firms should be set apart from the art of letters, and the artist helped against the tradesman.

As a matter of fact a removal of the tariff wouldn't much hurt even publishers, as the foreign books we really want in America are the sort which the greed of American business publishers forbids their publishing . . . but that is no matter.

It affects every young writer in America, and every reader whether he wish merely to train his perceptions or whether he train them with a purpose, of, say, learning what has been done, what need not be repeated, what is worthy of repetition. There is now the hideous difficulty of getting a foreign book, and the prohibitive price of both foreign and domestic publications. I don't know that I need to go on with it.

Again and yet again it is preposterous that our generation of writers shouldn't have the facility in getting at contemporary work, which one would have in Paris or Moscow. It's bad enough for the American to struggle against the dead-hand of the past generation composed of clerks and parasites and against our appalling *decentralization*, i. e., lack of metropoles and centers, having full publishing facilities and communication with the outer world—(which last is being slowly repaired)—also our scarcity of people who know.

C220

Ezra Pound, London:

Thanks for the January-February issue. Your magazine seems to be looking up. A touch of light in Dawson and Seiffert—though THE LITTLE REVIEW seems to me rather scrappy and unselective. I thought you started out to prove Ficke's belief that the sonnet is "Gawd's own city." However, he seems to have abandoned that church. I still don't know whether you send me the magazine in order to encourage me in believing that my camp stool by Helicon is to be left free from tacks, or whether the paper is sent to convert me from error.

I am glad to see in it some mention of Eliot, who is really of interest.

The Egoist is about to publish Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" in volume form (since no grab-the-cash firm will take it) and do Lewis's "Tarr" as a serial. I think you will be interested in the two novels, and I hope you will draw attention to them, and to the sporting endeavor of *The Egoist* to do in this dark isle what the *Mercure* has so long done in France, i. e., publish books as well as a magazine.

Incidentally, Chicago should not depend on New York for its books.

C221

C220 ✉ A Letter from London. *Little Review*, Chicago, Ill., III. 2 (Apr. 1916) 7–8.
On the tariff on books.

C221 ✉ *Little Review*, III. 2 (Apr. 1916) 36.
An extract. On the Jan./Feb. issue, and on the *Egoist*.

STATUS RERUM—THE SECOND

It is over three years since I set out to write *Status Rerum* (number one), as a brief summary of the state of affairs in contemporary poetry. It appeared in POETRY as a summary of affairs in England, for my remarks about American verse were at that time deemed by our editor either impolite or imprudent. My opinion of the work of nearly all the older living American poets, save Bliss Carman, has no whit changed; to them and to their generation of editors we owe nothing which would look polite in print. Perhaps I may now be permitted to say this, because it may be a sort of surety for my candor, seeing that I am about to present a more pleasing schedule.

During three years of varying irritation and consolation I have seen POETRY print a certain amount of rubbish and a very considerable amount of the best work now done in English. I do not think that our editors have missed much that was really worth printing. I dare say there is not enough really good poetry actually written per month to fill completely all the space in this magazine.

It has published the best current work of Mr. Yeats and of Ford Madox Hueffer, the only two older poets whose writing has any lively significance. It has published Padraic Colum, Allen Upward, "H. D.," T. S. Eliot, Aldington at his best, Orrick Johns, Frost, Carlos Williams, Bodenheim, Sandburg, myself, Rodker, etc.

The St. Louis *Mirror* scored in getting the *Spoon River Anthology*—that is the one big hole in our record, and POETRY was not slow to recognize the merit of that work. The best English work that we have missed has been a few short poems by Harold Monro and a few by Mrs. Anna Wickham.

Imagism, before it went off into froth, and before stray editors used to write to me to complain that their mail was full of imitations of "imagism, vorticism, *vers libre,* etc., with no body to it"—the early imagism—had its first breath of air in these pages. At present its chief defects are sloppiness, lack of cohesion, lack of organic centre in individual poems, rhetoric, a conventional form of language to be found also in classical text-books, and in some cases a tendency more than slight towards the futurist's cinematographic fluidity.

However, coming at the noble art from the angle of nationalism or chauvinism, dividing the produce geographically, one finds some ground, or at least some excuse, for congratulating ourselves or our country.

Looking at the names of English writers in my first *Status Rerum,* I find that not one of them has bettered his position one iota. Only Mr. Yeats and Mr. Hueffer have done work worthy of notice. The rest have either stagnated or relapsed completely into silence.

As for the younger generation, in 1912 America had very little wherewith to challenge comparison with England or France. At the present writing one can select an all-America team of *les jeunes* to compete with *les jeunes* of either France or England or any other nation.

I am not "buttering" anyone. One usually refrains from complimenting young poets, for it may be thought that com-

C222 Status rerum—the Second. *Poetry,* VIII. 1 (Apr. 1916) 38–43.
In continuation of C68.

pliments tend to make them sit down and contemplate their own beauties, which is not one's intention. I am simply cataloguing cold facts. I do not know Mr. Masters' age, but his work is of our decade; its relations are with our decade and not with the decade preceding, and if we are judging the output of the last three years we must count it in.

With regard to the best work done in these three years we may as well recognize that a certain part of it is American. Eliot, Frost and "H. D." are Americans; so also are Williams, Sandburg, Bodenheim, Orrick Johns, John Gould Fletcher, etc.

Against a team made up of these writers you can place in England: Aldington, Monro, Rodker, Flint, Lawrence, Mrs. Wickham, Douglas Goldring; and we suffer in no degree by the comparison. If Fletcher occasionally goes off in rhetorical bombast, it is at least better than Mr. Abercrombie's bombast. And Lindsay is more alive than his numerous English confrères. As for the sickly multitude pouring out mediocre and sub-mediocre work in both countries—in the first place they don't count, and, in the second place, if any among them do turn out a good scrap of work these scraps neutralize.

Even France—and France has not been at war *all* three years—even France will not leave us hopelessly in the rear. We may estimate the weight of her younger generation at more or less that of Jules Romains, Charles Vildrac, M. Jouve and MM. Klingsor, Jacob, Appollonaire, etc. (Recognizing most emphatically that America of the former generation can in no way compete with the mass of De Regnier, De Gourmont, Francis Jammes, Tailhade, *et leurs amis.*)

The rest of the current French work is full of loose Hugoesque rhetoric, sociology, mucked mysticism for the multitude, aqueous bombast, and all the fluid and ubiquitous diseases. I don't mean to say there is none good, but one's impression of fifty-odd books of their verse is that they need a deal of sorting, a deal of excerpting and compression.

I don't know whether one is to lump the Irish poets into an all-empire team, or to judge them by themselves. James Joyce, by far the most significant writer of our decade, is confining himself to prose; or, to be meticulously exact, he has written a few brief poems, which POETRY will soon publish. I do not know that one can say anything of either Colum or Campbell that one would not have said three years ago.

I shall not indulge in hopes or prophesyings. Certain young American writers have appeared; I can hardly be accused of undue prejudice in favor of my native country in stating the fact of their appearance. But I do not wish to focus attention on what has been done; it is better to keep an eye on what still awaits doing.

Others, with its pages open to any hair-breadth experiment, is deserving of welcome. We can scarcely be too ready to inspect new ventures, and it is a pleasing contrast to the stuffiness of some of our ancestral publications, which still reek of eighteen-fifty. Mr. Kreymborg, its editor, has published Eliot, Cannell, Williams, himself, Carlton Brown, etc. Moreover, certain purely commercial and popular maga-

zines have lifted an eyelid: H. L. Mencken has more or less discovered John McClure, Wattles, and "John Sanborn."

Orrick Johns writes me most vigorously of the genius of a dramatist, Sadakichi Hartman. "But print?—put Rabelais through a bath of perfume, and serve in cigarette holders at a boudoir spree!"

I have not seen enough of the work of most of these writers to form any sort of judgment, but it seems to me that they have among them a sense of activity which was lacking in New York when I passed that way five years ago. At any rate the country looks less like a blasted wilderness than it did a few years since, and for that let us be duly thankful—and let us hope it is not a straw blaze.

Ezra Pound

C223

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

I

ALEXANDER AND PHRINÉ

Phriné. You could learn it from all the Thebans who lived in my time. They will tell you that I offered to restore at my own expense the walls of Thebes which you had ruined, provided that they inscribe them as follows: Alexander the Great had cast down these walls, the courtesan Phriné rebuilt them.

Alexander. Were you so afraid that future ages would forget what profession you followed?

Phriné. I excelled in it, and all extraordinary people, of whatever profession, have been mad about monuments and inscriptions.

Alexander. It is true that Rhodope preceded you. The use she made of her beauty enabled her to build a famous pyramid still standing in Egypt, and I remember that when she was speaking of it the other day to the shades of certain French women who supposed themselves well worth loving, they began to weep, saying that in the country and ages wherein they had so recently lived, pretty women could not make enough to build pyramids.

Phriné. Yet I had the advantage over Rhodope, for by restoring the Theban walls I brought myself into comparison with you who had been the greatest conqueror in the world; I made it apparent that my beauty had sufficed to repair the ravages caused by your valour.

Alexander. A new comparison. Were you then so proud of your galantries?

Phriné. And you? Were you so well content with having laid waste a good half of the universe? Had there been but a Phriné in each of the ruined cities, there would remain no trace of your ravages.

Alexander. If I should ever live again I would wish to be an illustrious conqueror.

Phriné. And I a lovable conqueress. Beauty has a natural right to command men, valour has nothing but a right acquired by force. A beautiful woman is of all countries, yet kings themselves and even conquerors are not. For better argument, your father Philip was valiant enough and you also; neither of you could rouse the slightest fear in Demosthenes, who during the whole course of his life did nothing but make violent speeches against you; yet when another Phriné (for the name is a lucky name) was about to lose a case of considerable importance, her lawyer, having used his eloquence all in vain, snatched aside the great veil which half covered her, and the judges who were ready to condemn her, put aside their intention at the sight of her beauties. The reputation of your arms, having a great space of years to accomplish the object, could not keep one orator quiet, yet a fair body corrupted the whole severe Areopagus on the instant.

Alexander. Though you have called another Phriné to your aid, I do not think you have weakened the case for Alexander. It would be a great pity if——

Phriné. I know what you are going to say: Greece, Asia, Persia, the Indes, they are a very fine shopful. However, if I cut away from your glory all that does not belong to you; if I give your soldiers, your captains, and even chance what is due to them, do you think your loss would be slight? But a fair woman shares the honour of her conquests with no one, she owes nothing save to herself. Believe me, the rank of a pretty woman is no mean one.

Alexander. So you seem to have thought. But do you think the rôle is really all that you made it?

Phriné. No. I will be perfectly frank with you. I exaggerated the rôle of a pretty woman, you strained over hard against yours. We both made too many conquests. Had I had but two or three affairs of gallantry, it would have been all quite in order, there would have been nothing to complain of; but to have had enough such affairs to rebuild the Theban wall was excessive, wholly excessive. On the other hand, had you but conquered Greece, and the neighbouring islands, and perhaps even part of lesser Asia, and made a kingdom of them, nothing would have been more intelligent nor in reason; but always to rush about without knowing whither, to take cities without knowing why, to act always without any design, was a course that would not have pleased many right-minded people.

Alexander. Let right-minded people say what they like. If I had used my bravery and fortune as prudently as all that, I should scarcely ever be mentioned.

Phriné. Nor I either, had I used my beauty so prudently. But if one wishes merely to make a commotion, one may be better equipped than by possessing a very reasonable character.

C222 Continued

C223 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. I. Alexander and Phriné. *Egoist*, III. 5 (1 May 1916) 67–68. The first of 12 instalments.

THIS CONSTANT PREACHING TO THE MOB

Time and again the old lie. There is no use talking to the ignorant about lies, for they have no criteria. Deceiving the ignorant is by some regarded as evil, but it is the demagogue's business to bolster up his position and to show that God's noblest work is the demagogue. Therefore we read again for the one-thousand-one-hundred-and-eleventh time that poetry is made to entertain. As follows: "The beginnings of English poetry . . . made by a rude war-faring people for the entertainment of men-at-arms, or for men at monks' tables."

Either such statements are made to curry favor with other people sitting at fat sterile tables, or they are made in an ignorance which is charlatanry when it goes out to vend itself as sacred and impeccable knowledge.

"The beginnings—for entertainment"—has the writer of this sentence read *The Seafarer* in Anglo-Saxon? Will the author tell us for whose benefit these lines, which alone in the works of our forebears are fit to compare with Homer —for whose entertainment were they made? They were made for no man's entertainment, but because a man believing in silence found himself unable to withhold himself from speaking. And that more uneven poem, *The Wanderer,* is like to this, a broken man speaking:

> Ne maeg werigmod wryde withstondan
> ne se hreo hyge helpe gefremman:
> for thon domgeorne dreorigne oft
> in hrya breostcofan bindath faeste.

"For the doom-eager bindeth fast his blood-bedraggled heart in his breast"—an apology for speaking at all, and speech only pardoned because his captain and all the sea-faring men and companions are dead; some slain of wolves, some torn from the cliffs by sea-birds whom they had plundered.

Such poems are not made for after-dinner speakers, nor was the eleventh book of the Odyssey. Still it flatters the mob to tell them that their importance is so great that the solace of lonely men, and the lordliest of the arts, was created for their amusement. *Ezra Pound*

C224 This Constant Preaching to the Mob. *Poetry*, VIII. 3 (June 1916) 144–5.
Reprinted as "The Constant Preaching to the Mob."

AWOI NO UYE: A PLAY BY UJINOBU

By Ezra Pound

INTRODUCTION

The rough draft of this play by Fenollosa and Hirata presents various difficulties. The play is one of the most profound of all the psychological Noh, and with the text before them even Japanese skilled in the art are diffident of insisting on the precise interpretation of certain passages. I wish to say quite simply that if I go wrong I shall be very grateful for correction from any scholar capable of providing it. In certain places it is necessary for me to choose one meaning or another. The poetry of the longer passages is, I think, substantially correct in our rendering, and certainly worth presenting even if the rest of the play were sheer chaos.

The story, as I understand it, is that the "Court Lady Awoi" (Flower-of-the-East) is jealous of the other and later co-wives of Genji. This jealousy reaches its climax and she goes off her head with it when her carriage is overturned and broken at the Kami festival. The play opens with the death-bed of Awoi, and in Mrs. Fenollosa's diary I find the statement that "Awoi, her struggles, sickness, and death are represented by a red, flowered kimono, folded once lengthwise and laid at the front edge of the stage."

The objective action is confined to the apparitions and exorcists. The demon of jealousy, tormenting Awoi, first appears in the form of the Princess Rakujo, then with the progress and success of the exorcism the jealous quintessence is driven out of this personal ghost and appears in its own truly demonic ("henya") form,—"That awful face with its golden eyes and horns revealed." The exorcist Miko is powerless against this demon, but the yamabushi exorcists "advancing against it making a grinding noise with the beads of their rosaries and striking against it" finally drive it away.

The ambiguities of certain early parts of the play seem mainly due to the fact that the "Princess Rokujo," the concrete figure on the stage, is a phantom or image of Awoi-no-Uye's own jealousy. That is to say, Awoi is tormented by her own passion, and this passion obsesses her first in the form of a personal apparition of Rokujo, then in demonic form.

This play was written centuries before Ibsen declared that life is a "contest with the phantoms of the mind." The difficulties of the translator have lain in separating what belongs to Awoi herself from the things belonging to the ghost of Rokujo, very much as modern psychologists might have difficulty in detaching the personality or memories of an obsessed person from the personal memories of the obsession. Baldly: an obsessed person thinks he is Napoleon; an image of his own thought would be confused with scraps relating perhaps to St. Helena, Corsica, and Waterloo.

The second confusion is the relation of the two apparitions. It seems difficult to make it clear that the "henya" has been cast out of the ghostly personality, and that it had been, in a way, the motive force in the ghost's actions. And again we cannot be too clear that the ghost is not actually a separate soul, but only a manifestation made possible through Awoi and her passion of jealousy. At least with this interpretation the play seems quite coherent and lucid.

Rokujo or Awoi, whichever we choose to consider her, comes out of hell-gate in a chariot "because people of her rank are always accustomed to go about in chariots. When they, or their ghosts, think of motion, they think of *going in a chariot*, therefore they take that form." There would be a model chariot shown somewhere at the back of the stage.

The ambiguity of the apparition's opening line is, possibly, to arouse the curiosity of the audience. There will be an air of mystery and they will not know whether it is to be the chariot associated with Genji's liaison with Yugawo, the beautiful heroine of the play "Hajitomi," or whether it is the symbolic chariot drawn by a sheep, a deer, and an ox. But I think we are nearer the mark if we take Rokujo enigmatic line "I am come in three chariots" to mean that the formed idea of a chariot is derived from these events and from the mishap to Awoi's own chariot, all of which have combined and helped the spirit world to manifest itself concretely. Western students of ghostly folklore would tell you that the world of spirits is fluid and drifts about seeking shape. I do not wish to dogmatize on these points.

The Fenollosa-Hirata draft calls the manifest spirit "The Princess Rokujo," and she attacks Awoi (represented by the folded kimono). Other texts seem to call this manifestation "Awoi-no-Uye," i.e., her mind or troubled spirit, and this spirit attacks her body. It will be perhaps simpler for the reader if I mark her speechs simply "Apparition," and those of the second form "Henya."

I do not know whether I can make the matter more plain or summarize it other than by saying that the whole play is a dramatization, or externalization, of Awoi's jealousy. The passion makes her subject to the demon-possession. The demon first comes in a disguised and beautiful form. The prayer of the exorcist forces him first to appear in his true shape, and then to retreat.

But the "disguised and beautiful form" is not a mere abstract sheet of matter. It is a sort of personal or living mask, having a ghost life of its own; it is at once a shell of the princess, and a form, which is strengthened or made more palpable by the passion of Awoi.

Japanese art amounts to very little if the spectator expects to have things trepanned into him, but it is both profound and vigorous if the spectator will allow his faculties to act.

AWOI NO UYE

Scene in Kioto.

Daijin. I am a subject in the service of the Blessed Emperor Shujakuin. They have called in the priests and the high-priests for the sickness of Awoi-no-Uye of the house of Sadaijin. They prayed but the gods give no sign. I am sent to Miko the wise to bid him pray to the spirits. Miko, will you pray to the earth?

Miko.

Tenshojo, chishojo,
Naigeshojo, Rakkonshojo.

Earth, pure earth,
Wither, by the sixteen roots
(Wither this evil)!

Apparition. It may be, it may be, I come from the gate of hell in three coaches. I am sorry for Yugawo, and the carriage with broken wheels. And the world is plowed with sorrow as a field is furrowed with oxen. Man's life is a wheel on the axle, there is no turn whereby to escape. His hold is light as dew on the Basho leaf. It seems that the last spring's blossoms are only a dream in the mind. And we fools take it all, take it all as a matter of course. Oh, I am grown envious from sorrow. I come to seek consolation. (*Singing*) Though I lie all night hid for shame in the secret carriage looking at the moon for sorrow, yet I would not be seen by the moon.

Where Miko draws the magical bow,
I would go to set my sorrow aloud.

(*Speaking*) Where does that sound of playing come from? It is the sound of the bow of Adzusa!

Miko. Though I went to the door of the square building, Adzumaya . . . .

Apparition. . . . . you thought no one came to knock.

C225 AWOI NO UYE: A PLAY BY UJINOBU. *Quarterly Notebook*, Kansas City, Mo., I. 1 (June 1916) [9]–16. Edited by Ezra Pound from the Fenollosa manuscripts, with an introduction.

Miko. How strange! It is a lady of high rank whom I do not know. She comes in a broken carriage, a green wife clings to the shaft. She weeps. Is it . . . .

Daijin. Yes, I think I know who it is. (*To the apparition*) I ask you to tell me your name.

Apparition. In the world of the swift-moving lightning I have no servant or envoi, neither am I consumed with self-pity. I came aimlessly hither, drawn only by the sound of the bow. Who do you think I am? I am the spirit of the Princess Rokujo, and when I was still in the world, spring was there with me. I feasted upon the cloud with the Sennin,[1] they shared in my feast of flowers. And on the Evening-of-Maple-leaves I had the moon for a mirror. I was drunk with colour and perfume. And for all my gay flare at that time I am now like a shut Morning-glory, awaiting the sunshine. And now I am come for a whim, I am come uncounting the hour, seizing upon no set moment. I would set my sorrow aside. Let someone else bear it awhile.

Chorus. Love turns back toward the lover, unkindness brings evil return. It is for no good deed or good purpose that you bring back a sorrow among us, our sorrows mount up without end.

Apparition. The woman is hateful! I cannot keep back my blows. (*She strikes.*)

Miko. No. You are a princess of Rokujo! How can you do such things? Give over. Give over.

Apparition. I cannot. However much you might pray. (*Reflectively, as if detached from her action, and describing it*) So she went toward the pillow, and struck. Struck.

Miko. Then standing up . . . .

Apparition. This hate is only repayment.

[1] Spirits not unlike the Irish "Sidhe."

Miko. The flame of jealousy . . . .

Apparition. . . . . will turn on one's own hand and burn.

Miko. Do you not know?

Apparition. Know! This is a just revenge.

Chorus.

Hateful, heart full of hate,
Though you are full of tears
Because of others' dark hatred,
Your love for Genji
Will not be struck out
Like a fire-fly's flash in the dark.

Apparition. I, like a bush . . . .

Chorus.

. . . . am a body that has no root.
I fade as dew from the leaf,
Partly for that cause, I hate her,
My love cannot be restored . . . .
Not even in a dream.

It is a gleam cast up from the past. I am full of longing. I would be off in the secret coach, and crush her shade with me.

Daijin. Help. Awoi-no-Uye is sinking. Can you find Kohijiri of Tokokawa?

Kiogen. I will call him. I call him.

Waki (*Kohijiri*). Do you call me to a fit place for prayer? To the window of the nine wisdoms; to the cushion of the ten ranks, to a place full of holy waters; and where there is a clear moon?

Kiogen. Yes, yes.

Waki. How should I know? I do not go about in the world. You come from the Daijin. Wait. I am ready. I will come. (*He crosses the stage or bridge.*)

Daijin. I thank you for coming.

Waki. Where is the patient?

Daijin. She is there on that bed.

Waki. I will begin the exorcism at once.

Daijin. I thank you. Please do so.

Waki (*beginning the ritual*). Then Gioja called upon En No Giojo, and he hung about his shoulders a cloak that had swept the dew of the seven jewels in climbing the peaks of Tai and of Kori in Uoshine. He wore the cassock of forbearance to keep out unholy things. He took the beads of red wood, the square beads with hard corners, and whirling and striking, said prayer. But one prayer.

Namaku, Samanda, Basarada.

(*During this speech the "Apparition" has disappeared. That is, the first "Shite," the "Princess of Rokujo." Her costume was "The under kimono black satin, tight from the knees down, embroidered with small, irregular, infrequent circles of flowers; the upper part, stiff gold brocade, just shot through with purples, greens, and reds."*)

(*The Henya has come on. Clothed in a scarlet hakama, white upper dress, and "The terrible mask with golden eyes." She has held a white scarf over her head. She looks up. Here follows the great dance climax of the play.*)

Henya (*threatening*). O, Gioja, turn back! Turn back, or you rue it.

Waki. Let whatever evil spirit is here bow before Gioja, and know that Gioja will drive it out. (*He continues whirling the rosary.*)

Chorus (*invoking the powerful good spirits*). On the East stand Gosanzu Miowo.

Henya (*opposing other great spirits*). On the South stand Gundari Yasha.

Chorus. On the West stand Dai Uaka Miowo.

Henya. On the North stand Kongo. . . .

Chorus. . . . . Yasha Miowo.

Henya. In the middle Dai Sai . . . .

Chorus.

Tudo Miowo
Namaku Samanda Basarada!
Senda Wakaroshara Sowataya
Wun tarata Kamman,
Choga Sesha Tokudai Chiye
Chiga Shinja Sokushin Jobutsu.

Henya (*overcome by the exorcism*). O, terrible names of the spirits. This is my last time. I cannot return here again.

Chorus. By hearing the scripture the evil spirit is melted. Bosatsu came hither, his face was full of forbearance and pity. Pity has melted her heart, and she has gone into Buddha. Thanksgiving.

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

Translated by Ezra Pound

II

DIDO AND STRATONICE

Dido. Alas, my poor Stratonice, I am unhappy. You know what my life was. I maintained so precise a fidelity to my first husband, that I burned myself alive to prevent my receiving another. For all that I have not escaped evil rumour. It has pleased a poet, a certain Virgil, to transform so strict a prude as I was into a young flirt, charmed by a stranger's nice face the first day she sees him. My whole story turned upside down. The funeral pyre is left me, I admit, but my reason is no more the fear of being forced into a second marriage; I am supposed to be in despair lest the stranger abandon me.

Stratonice. And the consequences might be most dangerous. Very few women will care to immolate themselves for wifely fidelity, if a poet, after their deaths, is to be left free to say what he likes of them. But, perhaps, your Virgil was not so very far wrong; perhaps he has unravelled some intrigue of your life which you had hoped to keep hidden. Who knows? I should not care to take oath about your pyre.

Dido. If there was the slightest likelihood in Virgil's suggestion, I should not mind being suspected; but he makes my lover Æneas, a man dead three centuries before I came into the world.

Stratonice. There's something in what you say. And yet you and Æneas seem to have been expressly made for each other. You were both forced to leave your native countries; you sought your fortunes with strangers—he a widower, you a widow: all this is in harmony. It is true you were born three hundred years after his death; but Virgil saw so many good reasons for bringing you together that he has counted time for a trifle.

Dido. Is that sensible? Good heavens, are not three hundred years always three hundred, can two people meet and fall in love, despite such an obstacle?

Stratonice. Oh, Virgil was very clever in that. Assuredly he was a man of the world, he wished to show that we must not judge other people's love affairs by appearance, and that those which show least are often the truest.

Dido. I am not at all pleased that he should attack my reputation for the sake of this pretty fable.

Stratonice. But he has not turned you into ridicule, has he? He has not filled your mouth with silliness?

Dido. Not in the least. He has recited me his poems. The whole part that concerns me is divine, almost to the slander itself. In it I am beautiful, I say very fine things about my fictitious passion; and if Virgil had been obliged in the Æneid to show me as a respectable woman, the Æneid would be greatly impoverished.

Stratonice. Well, then, what do you complain of? They ascribe to you a romance which does not belong to you: what a misfortune! And in recompense they ascribe to you a beauty and wit which may not have been yours either.

Dido. A fine consolation!

Stratonice. I am not sufficiently your intimate to be sure how you will feel this, but most women, I think, would rather that people spoke ill of their

character than of their wit or their beauty. Such was my temperament. A painter at the court of my husband, the Syrian king, was discontented with, me, and to avenge himself he painted me in the arms of a soldier. He showed the picture and fled. My subjects, zealous for my glory, wished to burn the picture in public, but as I was painted admirably well and with a great deal of beauty—although the attitude was scarcely creditable to my virtue—I forbade them the burning, had the painter recalled and pardoned him. If you will take my advice, you will do likewise with Virgil.

Dido. That would be all very well if a woman's first merit were to be beautiful or to be full of wit.

Stratonice. I cannot decide about this thing you call the first merit, but in ordinary life the first question about a woman one does not know is: Is she pretty? The second: Is she intelligent? People very rarely ask a third question.

From the Chinese.

By Ezra Pound.

From the Notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa.

OLD IDEA OF CHOAN.

I.

THE narrow streets cut into the wide highway at Choan,
Dark oxen, white horses, drag on the seven coaches with outriders.
The coaches are perfumed wood,
The jewelled chair is held up at the crossway,
Before the royal lodge a glitter of golden saddles, awaiting the princess,
They eddy before the gate of the barons.
The canopy embroidered with dragons drinks in and casts back the sun.

Evening comes. The trappings are bordered with mist.
The hundred cords of mist are spread through and double the trees,
Night birds, and night women, spread out their sounds through the gardens.

II.

Birds with flowery wing, hovering butterflies, crowd over the thousand gates,
Trees that glitter like jade, terraces tinged with silver,
The seed of a myriad hues,
A network of arbours and passages and covered ways,
Double towers, winged roofs, border the network of ways:
A place of felicitous meeting.
Riu's house stands out on the sky, with glitter of colour
As Butei of Kan had made the high golden lotus to gather his dews,
Before it another house which I do not know:
How shall we know all the friends whom we meet on strange roadways?

ROSORIU.

A BALLAD OF THE MULBERRY ROAD.

The sun rises in south-east corner of things
To look on the tall house of the Shin
For they have a daughter named Rafu (pretty girl).
She made the name for herself: "Gauze Veil,"
For she feeds mulberries to silkworms,
She gets them by the south wall of the town.
With green strings she makes the warp of her basket,
She makes the shoulder-straps of her basket from the boughs of Katsura,
And she piles her hair up on the left side of her head-piece.

Her earrings are made of pearl,
Her underskirt is of green pattern-silk,
Her overskirt is the same silk dyed in purple,
And when men going by look on Rafu they set down their burdens,
They stand and twirl their moustaches.

(*Fenollosa MSS, very early.*)

SENNIN POEM.

The red and green kingfishers flash between the orchids and clover,
One bird casts its gleam on another.
Green vines hang through the high forest,
They weave a whole roof to the mountain,
The lone man sits with shut speech,
He purrs and pats the clear strings.

He throws his heart up through the sky,
He bites through the flower pistil and brings up a fine fountain.
The red-pine-tree god looks on him and wonders.
He rides through the purple smoke to visit the sennin,
He takes "Floating Hill"* by the sleeve,
He claps his hand on the back of the great water sennin,

But you, you dam'd crowd of gnats,
Can you even tell the age of a turtle?

KAKUHAKU.

TO-EM-MEI'S "THE UNMOVING CLOUD."

"Wet spring time," says To-em-mei,
"Wet spring in the garden."

I.

The clouds have gathered and gathered, and the rain falls and falls,
The eight ply of the heavens are all folded into one darkness,
And the wide flat road stretches out.

* Name of a Sennin. Sennin—an air spirit.

C227

C226 Continued

C227 FROM THE CHINESE. *New Age*, XIX. 8 (22 June 1916) 186–7.
"From the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa." *Contents:* Old Idea of Choan—A Ballad of the Mulberry Road—Sennin Poem—To-Em-Mei's "The Unmoving Cloud."

I stop in my room towards the East, quiet, quiet,
I pat my new cask of wine.
My friends are estranged, or far distant,
I bow my head and stand still.

II.

Rain, rain, and the clouds have gathered,
The eight ply of the heavens are darkness,
The flat land is turned into river.
"Wine, wine, here is wine!"
I drink by my eastern window.
I think of talking and man,
And no boat, no carriage approaches.

III.

The trees in my east-looking garden are bursting out with new twigs,
They try to stir new affection,

And men say the sun and moon keep on moving because they can't find a soft seat.

The birds flutter to rest in my tree and I think I have heard them saying,
"It is not that there are no other men
But we like this fellow the best,
Yet however we long to speak
He cannot know of our sorrow."

T'AO YUAN MING (A.D. 365-427).

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C228

C227 Continued

C228 . . . TO-EM-MEI'S "THE UNMOVING CLOUD." *Others*, III. 1 (July 1916) 31–32.
"From the Chinese; from the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa." Reprinted from the *New Age* for 22 June 1916—C227.

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

III

ANACREON AND ARISTOTLE

ARISTOTLE. I should never have thought that a maker of ditties would have dared compare himself to a philosopher with so great a reputation as mine.

Anacreon. You did very well for the name of philosopher, yet I, with my "ditties," did not escape being called the wise Anacreon; and I think the title "philosopher" scarcely worth that of "the wise."

Aristotle. Those who gave you that title took no great care what they said. What had you done, at any time, to deserve it?

Anacreon. I had done nothing but drink, sing, and wax amorous; and the wonder is that people called me "the Wise" at this price, while they have called you merely "philosopher" and this has cost you infinite trouble: for how many nights have you passed picking over the thorny questions of dialectic? How many plump books have you written on obscure matters, which perhaps even you yourself do not understand very well?

Aristotle. I confess that you have taken an easier road to wisdom, and you must have been very clever to get more glory with a lute and a bottle than the greatest of men have achieved with vigils and labour.

Anacreon. You pretend to laugh at it, but I maintain that it is more difficult to drink and to sing as I have, than to philosophize as you have philosophized. To sing and to drink, as I did, required that one should have disentangled one's soul from violent passions; that we should not aspire to things not dependent upon us, that we be ready always to take time as we find it. In short, to begin with, one must arrange a number of little affairs in oneself; and although this needs small dialectic, it is, for all that, not so very easy to manage. But one may at smaller expense philosophize as you have philosophized. One need not cure oneself of either ambition or avarice; one has an agreeable welcome at the court of Alexander the Great; one draws half a million crowns' worth of presents, and they are not all used in physical experiments though such was the donor's intention, in a word, this sort of philosophy drags in things rather opposed to philosophy.

Aristotle. You have heard much scandal about me down here, but, after all, man is man solely on account of his reason, and nothing is finer than to teach men how they ought to use it in studying nature and in unveiling all these enigmas which she sets before us.

Anacreon. That is just how men destroy custom in all things! Philosophy is, in itself, an admirable thing, and might be very useful to men, but because she would incommode them if they employed her in daily affairs, or if she dwelt near them to keep some rein on their passions, they have sent her to heaven to look after the planets and put a span on their movements; or if men walk out with her upon earth it is to have her scrutinize all that they see there; they always keep her busy as far as may be from themselves. However, as they wish to be philosophers cheaply they have stretched the sense of the term, and they give it now for the most part to such as seek natural causes.

Aristotle. What more fitting name could one give them.

Anacreon. A philosopher is concerned only with men and by no means with the rest of the universe. An astronomer considers the stars, a physicist nature, a philosopher considers himself. But who would choose this last rôle on so hard a condition? Alas, hardly any one. So we do not insist on philosophers being philosophers, we are content to find them physicists or astronomers. For myself, I was by no means inclined to speculation, but I am sure that there is less philosophy in a great many books which pretend to treat of it, than in some of these little songs which you so greatly despise, in this one, for example:

Would gold prolong my life
I'd have no other care
Than gathering gold,
And when death came
I'd pay the same
To rid me of his presence.
But since harsh fate
Permits not this
And gold is no more needful,
Love and good cheer
Shall share my care—
Ah—ah—ah—ah—
Shall share
My care.

Aristotle. If you wish to limit philosophy to the questions of ethics you will find things in my moral works worth quite as much as your verses: the obscurity for which I am blamed, and which is present perhaps in certain parts of my work, is not to be found in what I have said on this subject, and every one has admitted that there is nothing in them more clear or more beautiful than what I have said of the passions.

Anacreon. What an error! It is not a matter of defining the passions by rule, as I hear you have done, but of keeping them under. Men give philosophy their troubles to contemplate not to cure, and they have found a method of morals which touches them almost as little as does astronomy. Can one hold in one's laughter at the sight of people who preach the contempt of riches, for money, and of chicken-hearted wastrels brought even to fisticuffs over a definition of the magnanimous?

C229 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. III. Anacreon and Aristotle. *Egoist*, III. 7 (1 July 1916) 103.

KAKITSUHATA.

BY MOTOKIYO

From the notes of Ernest Fenollosa, finished by Ezra Pound.

[I am not greatly concerned with the accuracy of this version of *The Play of the Iris*. I have either found or imagined a certain beauty in Ernest Fenollosa's pencil script. In much I have followed it; in one place I have added or transferred a refrain; in places I have used words which seem to me to belong to the emotion though they have perhaps no strict equivalents in the original text. Either Motokiyo or Fenollosa seems to have thought that the old sage Narihira, a man wise as Anacreon, was in his day the incarnation of Apollo or, as they say, of a certain Bosatsu or high spirit. Secondly, that the music of this spirit was known and was called "Kohi" or "Gobusaki's" music.

As Ovid after favour, and after affairs with ladies of the court, was exiled and died among the Gætae, so Narihira seems, after favour, to have left the court and to have written *Ex Ponto,* poems of regret.

In the play a certain priest, given to melancholy, and a kindliness for the people of old stories, meets with the spirit of one of Narihira's ladies who has identified herself with the Iris; that is to say, the flowers are the thoughts or the body of her spirit.

She tells him of her past and of Narihira's, and how the music of Gobusaki will lift a man's soul into paradise.

The rest is, I hope, apparent in the play as I have set it.—E. P.]

THE SPIRIT OF IRIS, KAKITSUHATA, masked, wearing at first a heavy robe of orange, white, and delicate bluish green.
A PRIEST.
THE CHORUS.

The Scene Is in Mikawa.

[*Four musicians enter and take their places. Three persons of the chorus enter.*]

PRIEST. I am a priest who travels to see the sights in many provinces; I have been to Miyako city and seen all the ward-shrines and places of interest. I will now push on to Togaku; every night it is a new bed and the old urge of sorrow within me. I have gone by Miwo and Owari without stopping, and I am come to Mikawa province to see the flowers of Katitsuhata in the height of their full season. Now the low land is before me, I must go down and peer closely upon them.

Time does not stop and spring passes,
The lightfoot summer comes nigh us,
The branching trees and the bright unmindful grasses
Do not forget their time.
They take no thought, yet remember
To show forth their colour in season,
Now that the bird, Kayodori,
Sings of the Iris, Kayotobana.

I shall seek the Iris, Kakitsuhata, but the bird sings "Kayo, Kayo, pretty, pretty, fine Iris, fine Iris."

SPIRIT. [*Appearing as a girl of the locality.*] Not very. What are you doing here in this swamp?

PRIEST. I am a priest on my travels. I think these very fine iris. What place is this I am come to?

SPIRIT. Eight Bridges, Yatsubashi of Mikawa, an iris plantation. You have the best flowers before you, those of the deepest colour as you would see if you had any power of feeling.

C230 KAKITSUHATA [*i.e.* KAKITSUBATA]. BY MOTOKIYO. FROM THE NOTES OF ERNEST FENOLLOSA, FINISHED BY EZRA POUND. *Drama*, VI. 23 (Aug. 1916) 428–35.

PRIEST. I can see it quite well; they are, I think, the Kakitsuhata iris that are set in an ancient legend. Can you tell me who wrote down the words?

SPITIT. [*Standing by a pillar at the corner of the stage.*] In the *Ise Monogatari* you read, "By the eight bridges, by the web of the crossing waters in Kumoda, the iris come to the full; they flaunt there and scatter and wither." And when they laid a wager with Narihira, he made an acrostic which says, "These flowers brought their court dress from China."

PRIEST. Then Narihira came hither? From the far end of Adzuma?

SPIRIT. Here? Yes, and to every other place in the North, the deep North.

PRIEST. Though he went through many a province, what place was nearest his heart?

SPIRIT. This place; Yatsubashi.

PRIEST. Here with the wide-petaled iris
On the low-land of Mikawa.

SPIRIT. Throughout the length and width of his journeys . . .

PRIEST. . . . their color was alive in his thought.

SPIRIT. He was Narihira of old, the man of the stories. . . .

PRIEST. Yet this iris . . .

SPIRIT. [*Still standing by the pillar and bending sideways.*] These very flowers before you . . .

CHORUS. . . . "are not the thing of importance," she would say.

The water by the shore is not shallow.
The man who bound himself to me
Returned times out of mind in his thought
To me and this cobweb of waters.

It was in this fashion he knew her, when he was strange in this place.

SPIRIT. I should speak.

PRIEST. What is it?

SPIRIT. Though this is a very poor place, will you pass the night in my cottage?

PRIEST. Most gladly. I will come after a little.

[*Up to this point the* SPIRIT *has been disguised, or has appeared to the* PRIEST *as a simple young girl of the locality. She now leaves her pillar and goes off to the other side of the stage, returning in her true appearance; that is, the great lady beloved of old by Narihira. She wears a black hosiben crest or hat, an overdress of gauze, purple with golden flowers, an underdress of glaring orange with green and gold pattern. This shows only a little beneath the great enveloping gauze.*]

SPIRIT. [*To her tire-women.*] No, no; this hat, this ceremonial gown, the Karaginu. . . . Look—

PRIEST. How strange. In that tumble-down cottage, in the bower, a lady clad in bright robes! In the pierced hat of Sukihitai's time! She seems to speak, saying, "Behold me"! What can all of this mean?

SPIRIT.
This is the very dress brought from China,
Whereof they sing in the ballad,
'Tis the gown of the Empress Takamo Kisi,
Who reigned of old in Leiwa Muno;
She is Narihira's beloved,
Who danced the Gosetsu music;
At eighteen she won him,
She was his light in her youth.

This hat is for Gosetsu dancing,
For the Dance of Toyo no Akari;
Narihira went covered in like.
A hat and a robe of remembrance!
I am come clad in a memory.

PRIEST. You had better put them aside. But who are you?

SPITIT. I am indeed the spirit, Kakitsuhata, the colors of remembrance. And Narihira was the incarnation of the Bosatsu of Gobusaki's music. Holy magic is run through his words and through the notes of his singing, till even the grass and the flowers pray to him for the blessings of dew.

PRIEST. A fine thing in a world run waste,
I preach the law of Bosatsu
To the plants that are without mind.

SPIRIT. This was our service to Buddha,
This dance, in the old days.

PRIEST. [*Hearing the music.*] This is indeed spirit music.

SPIRIT. [*Beginning the words of the dance ritual.*] He took the form of a man

PRIEST. Journeying out afar
From his bright city.

SPIRIT. Saving all . . .

PRIEST. . . . by his favor.

CHORUS. Going out afar and afar
I put on robes for the dance.

SPIRIT. A robe for the sorrow of parting.

CHORUS. I send the sleeves back to the city.

SPIRIT. This story has no beginning and no end;
No man has known the doer and no man has seen the deed.
In the old days a man,
Wearing his first hat-of-manhood,
Went out a-hunting
Toward the town of Kasaga in Nara.

CHORUS. We think it was in the time
Of the reign of Nimmio Tenno.
He was granted by Imperial Decree:
"About the beginning of March,
When the mists are still-banked upon Oyuchiyama the mountain,"
He was granted the hat-insignia, sukihitai,
As chief messenger to the festival of Kasuga.

SPIRIT. An unusual favor.

CHORUS. It was a rare thing to hold the plays and Genbuki ceremony in the palace itself. This was the first time it happened.

But the world's glory is only for once,
Comes once, blows once, and soon fades,
So also to him, he went out
To seek his luck in Adzuma.
Wandering like a piece of cloud, at last
After years he came
And looking upon the waves at Ise no Owai,
He longed for his brief year of glory:
"The waves, the breakers return,
But my glory comes not again,
Narihira, Narihira,
My glory comes not again."

He stood at the foot of Amasa of Shimano, and saw the smoke curling upwards.

SPIRIT. The smoke is now curling up
From the peak of Amasa.
"Narihira, Narihira,
My glory comes not again."

CHORUS. Strangers from afar and afar,
Will they not wonder at this?
He went on afar and afar
And came to Mikawa, the province,
To the flowers Kakitsuhata
That flare and flaunt in their marsh
By the many-bridged cob-web of waters.
"She whom I left in the city?" thought Narihira.
But at the place of eight bridges the stream-bed is never dry.
He was pledged with many a lady;
And from the jeweled blind
The fire-flies drift away
Scattering their little lights
And then flying and flying:
Souls of fair ladies
Going up into heaven
And here in the under-world
The autumn winds come blowing and blowing
And the wild ducks cry: "Kari . . . Kari."
I who speak, an unsteady wraith,
A form impermanent, drifting after this fashion,
Am come to enlighten these people,
Whether they know me I know not.

SPIRIT. A light that does not lead on to darkness.

CHORUS. [*Singing the poem of Narihira's.*]
No moon!
The spring
Is not the spring of the old days,
My body
Is not my body
But only a body grown old.
"Narihira, Narihira,
My glory comes not again."

CHORUS. Know then that Narihira of old made these verses for the Queen Leiwa Tenno. The body unravels its shread, the true image divides into shade and light. Narihira knew me in the old days. Doubt it not, stranger. And now I begin my dance, wearing the ancient bright mantle.

The Dance and Its Descriptions.

SPIRIT. The flitting snow before the flowers:
The butterfly flying.

CHORUS. The nightingales fly in the willow tree:
The pieces of gold flying.

SPIRIT. The Iris Kakitsuhata of the old days
Is planted anew.

CHORUS. With the old bright color renewed.

SPIRIT. Thus runs each tale from its beginning,
We wear the bright iris crest of Azame.

CHORUS. What are the colors of the iris?
Are they like one another, the Hana, the Kakitsuhata, the Azame?

[*The grey and olive robed chorus obscure the bright dancer.*]

What is that that cries from the tree?

[*The* SPIRIT *is going away, leaving its apparition, which fades as it returns to the ether.*]

SPIRIT. It is only the cracked husk of the locust,
The withering husk of the iris.

CHORUS. [*Closing the play.*]
The sleeves are white like the snow of Unohana
Dropping their petals in April.
Day comes, the purple flower
Opens its heart of wisdom,
It fades out of sight by its thought,
The flower soul melts into Buddha.

[I have purposely left one or two points of this play unexplained in the opening notice. I do not think anyone will understand the complete beauty of it unless he reads it often, but I wish to prevent anyone's thinking he understands it until he has read it twice at the least. The emotional tone is perhaps apparent. The spirit manifests itself in that particular iris marsh, because Narihira in passing that place centuries before had thought of her. I have underlined the words which mark this, but I think few will have noticed them, for we are little accustomed to Japanese thought and its manners. Our own art is so much an art of emphasis, and even of over-emphasis, that I would gladly persuade the reader to consider the possibilities of an absolutely *unemphasized* art, an art where the author trusts implicitly to his auditor's knowing what things are profound and important.

The Muses were "the Daughters of Memory." It is by memory that this spirit appears, she is able or "bound" to appear because of Narihira's passing thought of the iris. That is to say, the flowers as well as the first shadowy and then bright apparition are the outer veils of her soul. Beauty is the road to salvation, and her apparition "to win people to the lord" or "to enlighten these people," is part of the ritual, that is to say, she demonstrates the "immortality of the soul or the permanence" or endurance of the individual personality by her apparition, first as a simple girl of the locality, secondly in the ancient splendours.—E. P.]

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

IV

HOMER AND ÆSOP

HOMER. These fables which you have just told me cannot be too greatly admired. You must have needed great art to disguise the most important moral instruction in little stories like these, and to hide your thoughts in metaphor so precise and familiar.

Æsop. It is very pleasant to be praised for such art by you who understood it so deeply.

Homer. Me? I never attempted it.

Æsop. What, did you not intend to conceal profound arcana in your great poems?

Homer. Unfortunately, never at all.

Æsop. But in my time all the connoisseurs said so; there was nothing in the *Iliad* or in the *Odyssey* to which they did not give the prettiest allegorical meanings. They claimed that all the secrets of theology and of physics, of ethics, and even of mathematics were wound into what you had written. Assuredly there was difficulty in getting them unwrapped: where one found a moral sense, another hit on a physical, but in the end they agreed that you had known everything and that you had said everything, if only one could well understand it.

Homer. Lying aside, I suspected that people would be found to understand subtleties where I had intended none. There is nothing like prophesying far distant matters and waiting the event, or like telling fables and awaiting the allegory.

Æsop. You must have been very daring to leave your readers to put the allegories into your poems! Where would you have been had they taken them in a flat literal sense?

Homer. If they had! It would have incommoded me little.

Æsop. What! The gods mangling each other, thundering Zeus in an assembly of divinities threatens Hera, the august, with a pummelling; Mars, wounded by Diomed, howls, as you say, like nine or ten thousand men, and acts like none (for instead of tearing the Greeks asunder, he amuses himself complaining to Zeus of his wound), would all this have been good without allegory?

Homer. Why not? You think the human mind seeks only the truth: undeceive yourself. Human intelligence has great sympathy with the false. If you intend telling the truth, you do excellently well to veil it in fables, you render it far more pleasing. If you wish to tell fables they will please well enough without containing any truth whatsoever. Truth must borrow the face of falsehood to win good reception in the mind, but the false goes in quite well with its own face, for it so enters its birthplace and its habitual dwelling, the truth comes there as a stranger. I will tell you much more: if I had killed myself imagining allegorical fables, it might well have happened that most folk would have found the fables too probable, and so dispensed with the allegory; as a matter of fact, and one which you ought to know, my gods, such as they are, without mysteries, have not been considered ridiculous.

Æsop. You shake me, I am terribly afraid that people will believe that beasts really talked as they do in my fables.

Homer. A not disagreeable fear!

Æsop. What! if people believe that the gods held such conversations as you have ascribed to them, why shouldn't they believe that animals talked as I make them?

Homer. That is different. Men would like to think the gods as foolish as themselves, but never the beasts as wise.

C231

Ezra Pound Files Exceptions

London, Eng., July 30, 1916.

Editor of Reedy's Mirror:

In the interests of accuracy:

1.

I was not born in Utah, "it is immaterial," but still I am not to be confused with "Ezra, the Mormon," however charming and sympathetic or fictitious he may have been. I was born in Idaho, in Hailey, in "the residence now occupied by Mr. Plughoff" (unless he has moved). There is, so far as I know, no memorial tablet.

2.

I am not the "head of the vorticist movement." I said quite clearly in my memoir of Gaudier-Brzeska that the vorticist movement implied no series of personal subordinations. The pleasure of the vorticist movement was to find oneself at last *inter pares*. Mr. Wyndham Lewis is a man of so marked a genius, of such swift and profound intuitions that it would be ridiculous to speak of anyone else as being his "head." I cannot picture either Brzeska or Etchells considering himself as anyone's elbow or shin-bone. As an active and informal association it might be said that Lewis supplied the volcanic force, Brzeska the animal energy, and perhaps that I had contributed a certain Confucian calm and reserve. There would have been no movement without Lewis. His mind seems to me more original very few minds which are capable of originating anything or of discovering anything for themselves.)

At any rate, if you are irrevocably wedded to the phrase, "head of the movement," you would be more correct in applying the title to Lewis than to anyone else.

3.

Let us come to your remarks about Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture in your issue for July 14:

A.

You say it seems to you "a new language known only to the sculptor."

Has any new light ever come in the arts or in the sciences save through a new speech known, *at first*, only to the artist or the inventor?

There was a language known only to abstract mathematicians (I believe to the men who experimented in "determinants"). This language gradually became known to physicists, or to a physicist, and you have now the very popular wireless telegraph, which is still "incomprehensible" to a very great number of people.

The intelligent man will learn as much as he can rather than pretend to be more ignorant than he is.

C232

C231 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. IV. Homer and Æsop. *Egoist*, III. 8 (Aug. 1916) 119.

C232 ✉ Ezra Pound Files Exceptions. *Reedy's Mirror*, XXV. 32 (18 Aug. 1916) 535–6.
On W. M. Reedy's review of *Gaudier-Brzeska*—A10b—in the issue for 14 July.

B.

You ask: "What is formless form?" And then you rush on to talk about *"mutually agreed upon symbols."* I have not talked about "formless form." But try to follow me for a moment.

A circle or a triangle has just as much form as the Albert Memorial. Its form is simpler, to be sure.

Some centuries ago John Heydon professed to derive aesthetic satisfaction from the perfection of simple geometrical forms. There is the fable of Glotto's circle. I do not base an argument on these records. I adduce them simply to persuade you that it is possible to distinguish between a simple form and a "formless form." The latter term is your own. I do not profess to understand it.

Now it is manifestly ridiculous to say that you cannot take pleasure in a form *merely because* it is not the form of a man, an animal or a bunch of asparagus.

Many forms, such as those of the stone zoological garden on the Albert Memorial, are incapable of delighting us by the mere fact that they portray easily recognizable flora and fauna.

The perspective of arches as one looks toward the Koran *niche* in the Mosque of Cordova gives one infinitely more pleasure than the idiotic representative slush which "ornaments" St. Paul's Cathedral. The so-called ornaments obviously *represent* certain "saints" (behold your "mutually agreed upon symbol." The damn things are "saints," models of virtue, sacred effigies of deceased Orientals). The *form* of this statuary suggests nothing so much as plates of decomposed ice cream on a warm day, or soiled clothes dumped out of a hamper.

The arches in Cordova have, however, no form save the form of very beautiful arches. They do not *represent* anything else. The combination or composition is interesting. It required more skill to arrange this series of arches than to make one beautiful arch. If I claim an architectural pleasure in seeing this series of arches no one will call me fanatic or even fantastic. Yet this pleasure is a pleasure in form, in unadulterated form.

Ultimately all sculpture is judged by its form. As music is judged by its sound.

If sculpture were judged by the closeness with which it copies pre-existing material objects, the plaster cast of mould of the object would be the apex of the achievement.

You do not demand that the musician copy natural sounds. You permit him to start with a simple melodic form and develop his fugue, his harmony, or whatever he chooses.

In the case of Gaudier's "Dancer," you find your "themes given you" with the utmost clarity and distinctness. You have the circle on the breast and the triangle on the face. These two forms become animate, move, interplay, an increasing suggestion of power and movement in their various positions, distortions, culminating in the great sweep of the shoulders, the back of the statue, the arm thrown over the head.

It seems to me foolish to talk of this as the "powerfully crude suggestions of the beginning of sculpture." If, however, it did not suggest even to you the adverb "powerfully," I would think it failed through being over-intellectual, over- civilized in its concept, lacking in the emotional energy of great art.

There is in this work nothing of the "Rodin impression of emergence" theory.

C.

When you write, "Without interposition of symbol, without ornament," you are right. When you add "without proportion or form," you are in error.

Brzeska's statues have form. No material object can escape it. My contention is that they have very interesting and expressive forms. It is not necessary that one should associate their form or forms with the forms of anything else. It is for the spectator to decide whether the forms of this sculpture are *in themselves* delightful. There is no need of referring the form of the statue to the form of something extraneous.

As to proportion: "The Boy with a Coney" has "scale." Perhaps I had better define that last term. Scale is a very skillful sort of proportion. We say that a statue or a painting has "scale" when its proportions are so finely arranged that it might be reproduced in various sizes without the destruction of its beauty. This process is not infinite. It is not necessary that every work of art should possess it

Still, when a novelist says by way of praise that a six-line poem has the "form of a novel" or that it "is like a good novel" or "contains" a novel, he is making an interesting criticism of the poet's sense of proportion and balance and "form" (if one be permitted to use the word as it were metaphorically).

When a statue one foot high could be reproduced at forty times that size and still remain finely proportioned, this possibility is an interesting commentary on the sculptor's sense of "proportion."

D.

So let us leave Hamlet's clouds which were so "like" something or other. The musician Eric Satie once wrote a pre-

C232 Continued

lude which he called "Prelude in the shape of a pear." It served as a designation.

E.

As for understanding and "mutually agreed upon symbols" and the general "intelligibility," I open a weekly abomination and find a reproduction of a piece of sculpture labeled, "Figure Representing Aspiration." It displays a plump, lolling female and an infant deficient in the spankable parts. One can go down to the "Tate" in peace time and see messy pictures by the late Mr. Watts called "Hope," "Love," etc. These works do not please me. I never see why "Hope" mightn't just as well be something else. And as for the figure "representing" Aspiration. Does it represent "Aspiration?" I never saw aspiration looking like that. But I have seen spaghetti piled on a plate and the *form* was decidedly similar. A great deal of "representational" sculpture is, *in form*, not unlike plates of spaghetti.

In conclusion, I would advise the patient to look carefully at the illustrations to the Gaudier-Brzeska. I would then advise him to get the local art gallery to provide him with Wyndham Lewis' "Timon" portfolio. I would then ask him to go forth again into the world and see what he can see where before he saw little or nothing.

The great mass of mankind are ignorant of the shape of nearly everything that they see or handle.

The artisan knows the shape of some of his tools. You know the shape of your pen-handle, but hardly the shape of your typewriter. The store of forms in the average man's head is smaller than this meager verbal vocabulary.

Yours,

EZRA POUND.

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

V

SOCRATES AND MONTAIGNE

MONTAIGNE. Is it really you, divine Socrates? How glad I am of this meeting! I am quite newly come to this country, and I have been seeking you since my arrival. Finally, after having filled my book with your name and your praises, I can talk with you, and learn how you possessed that so *naïve* * virtue, whereof the *allures* * were so natural, and which was without parallel in even your happy age.

Socrates. I am very glad to see a ghost who appears to have been a philosopher; but since you are newly descended, and seeing that it is a long time since I have seen any one here (for they leave me pretty much alone, and there is no great crowding to investigate my conversation), let me ask you for news. How goes the world? Has it not altered?

Montaigne. Immensely. You would not know it.

Socrates. I am delighted. I always suspected that it would have to become better and wiser than I had found it in my time.

Montaigne. What do you mean? It is madder and more corrupt than ever before. That is the change I was wishing to speak of, and I expected you to tell me of an age as you had seen it, an age ruled by justice and probity.

Socrates. And I on the other hand was expecting to learn the marvels of the age wherein you have but ceased to exist. But, men at present, do you say, have not corrected their classic follies?

Montaigne. I think it is because you yourself are a classic that you speak so disrespectfully of antiquity; but you must know that our habits are lamentable, things deteriorate day in and day out.

* Termes de Montaigne.

Socrates. Is it possible? It seemed to me in my time that things were already in a very bad way. I thought they must finally work into a more reasonable course, and that mankind would profit by so many years of experiment.

Montaigne. Do men ever experiment? They are like birds, caught always in the very same snares wherein have been taken a hundred thousand more of their species. There is no one who does not enter life wholly new, the stupidities of the fathers are not the least use to their children.

Socrates. What! no experiments? I thought the world might have an old age less foolish and unruled than its youth.

Montaigne. Men of all time are moved by the same inclinations, over which reason is powerless. Where there are men there are follies, the same ones.

Socrates. In that case why do you think that antiquity was better than to-day?

Montaigne. Ah, Socrates, I knew you had a peculiar manner of reasoning and of catching your collocutors in arguments whereof they did not foresee the conclusion, and that you led them whither you would, and that you called yourself the midwife of their thoughts conducting accouchement. I confess that I am brought to bed of a proposition contrary to what I proposed, but still I will not give in. Certain it is that we no longer find the firm and vigorous souls of antiquity, of Aristides, of Phocion, of Pericles, or, indeed, of Socrates.

Socrates. Why not? Is nature exhausted that she should have no longer the power of producing great souls? And why should she be exhausted of

C233

C232 Continued

C233 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. V. Socrates and Montaigne. *Egoist*, III. 9 (Sept. 1916) 133–4.

nothing save reasonable men? Not one of her works has degenerated; why should there be nothing save mankind which degenerates?

Montaigne. It's flat fact: man degenerates. It seems that in old time nature showed us certain great patterns of men in order to persuade us that she could have made more had she wished, and that she had been negligent making the rest.

Socrates. Be on your guard in one thing. Antiquity is very peculiar, it is the sole thing of its species: distance enlarges it. Had you known Aristides, Phocion, Pericles and me, since you wish to add me to the number, you would have found men of your time to resemble us. We are predisposed to antiquity because we dislike our own age, thus antiquity profits. Man elevates the men of old time to abase his contemporaries. When we lived we overestimated our forbears, and now our posterity esteems us more than our due, and quite rightly. I think the world would be very tedious if one saw it with perfect precision, for it is always the same.

Montaigne. I should have thought that it was all in movement, that everything changed; that different ages had different characteristics, like men. Surely one sees learned ages, and ignorant, simple ages and ages greatly refined? One sees ages serious, and trifling ages, ages polite, ages boorish?

Socrates. True.

Montaigne. Why then are not some ages more virtuous, others more evil?

Socrates. That does not follow. Clothes change, but that does not mean a change in the shape of the body. Politeness or grossness, knowledge or ignorance, a higher or lower degree of simplicity, a spirit serious or of roguery, these are but the outside of a man, all this changes, but the heart does not change; and man is all in the heart. One is ignorant in one age, but a fashion of knowledge may come, one is anxious for one's own advantage but a fashion for being unselfish will not come to replace this. Out of the prodigious number of unreasonable men born in each era, nature makes two or three dozen with reason, she must scatter them wide over the earth, and you can well guess that there are never enough of them found in one spot to set up a fashion of virtue and rightness.

Montaigne. But is this scattering evenly done? Some ages might fare better than others

Socrates. At most an imperceptible inequality. The general order of nature would seem to be rather constant.

SEPTEMBER, 1916

POEMS OLD AND NEW

THE FISH AND THE SHADOW

THE salmon-trout drifts in the stream,
The soul of the salmon-trout floats over the stream
Like a little wafer of light.
The salmon moves in the sun-shot, bright, shallow sea.

. . . . . .

As light as the shadow of the fish
that falls through the water,
She came into the large room by the stair.
Yawning a little she came with the sleep still upon her.

"I'm just from bed. The sleep is still in my eyes.
Come. I have had a long dream."

And I: "That wood?
And two springs have passed us!"

C234

C233 Continued

C234 POEMS OLD AND NEW. *Poetry*, VIII. 6 (Sept. 1916) 275–82.
Contents: The Fish and the Shadow—O Atthis ["Ιμερρω"]—The Three Poets—Pagani's—The Lake Isle—Impressions of François-Marie Arouet (de Voltaire)—Homage to Quintus Septimius Florentis Christianus—Dans un omnibus de Londres. A sentence from Ezra Pound's letter concerning "Homage to Quintus Septimius Florentis Christianus" is quoted in "Notes," p. 329.

"Not so far—no, not so far now.
There is a place—but no one else knows it—
A field in a valley . . .
"qu'ieu sui avinen
Ieu lo sai."

She must speak of the time
Of Arnaut de Mareuil, I thought, *"qu'ieu sui avinen."*

Light as the shadow of the fish
That falls through the pale green water.

O ATTHIS

Thy soul
Grown delicate with satieties,
Atthis.

O Atthis,
I long for thy lips.

I long for thy narrow breasts,
Thou restless, ungathered.

THE THREE POETS

Candidia has taken a new lover
And three poets are gone into mourning,
The first has written a long elegy to "Chloris."
To "Chloris chaste and cold," his "only Chloris".
The second has written a sonnet
upon the mutability of woman,
And the third writes an epigram to Candidia.

PAGANI'S

Suddenly discovering in the eyes of the very beautiful Normande cocotte
The eyes of the very learned museum assistant.

THE LAKE ISLE

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Give me in due time, I beseech you, a little tobacco-shop,
With the little bright boxes
piled up neatly upon the shelves
And the loose fragrant cavendish
and the shag,
And the bright Virginia
loose under the bright glass cases,
And a pair of scales
not too greasy,
And the *volailles* dropping in for a word or two in passing,
For a flip word, and to tidy their hair a bit.

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Lend me a little tobacco-shop,
or install me in any profession
Save this damn'd profession of writing,
where one needs one's brains all the time.

C234 Continued

IMPRESSIONS OF FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET (DE VOLTAIRE)

I *Phyllidula and the spoils of Gouvernet*

Where, Lady, are the days
When you could go out in a hired hansom
Without footmen and equipments
And dine in a cheap restaurant?

Phyllidula now, with your powdered Swiss footman
Clanking the door shut,
and lying;
And carpets from Savonnier, and from Persia,
And your new service at dinner,
And plates from Germain,
And cabinets and chests from Martin (almost lacquer),
And your white vases from Japan,
And the lustre of diamonds,
Etcetera, etcetera and *etcetera?*

II *To Madame du Châtelet*

If you'd have me go on loving you
Give me back the time of the thing.

Will you give me dawn light at evening?

Time has driven me out of the fine plaisaunces,
The parks with the swards all over dew,
And grass going glassy with the light on it,
The green stretches where love is and the grapes
Hang in yellow-white and dark clusters ready for pressing.
And if now we can't fit with our time of life
There is not much but its evil left us.

Life gives us two minutes, two seasons—
One to be dull in;
Two deaths—and to stop loving and being lovable,
That is the real death,
The other is little beside it.

Crying after the follies gone by me,
Quiet talking is all that is left us—
Gentle talking, not like the first talking, less lively;
And to follow after friendship, as they call it,
Weeping that we can follow naught else.

III *To Madame Lullin*

You'll wonder that an old man of eighty
Can go on writing you verses . . .

Grass showing under the snow,
Birds singing late in the year!

And Tibullus could say of his death, in his Latin;
"Delia, I would look on you, dying."

And Delia herself fading out,
Forgetting even her beauty.

HOMAGE TO QUINTUS SEPTIMIUS FLORENTIS CHRISTIANUS

Ex Libris Graecae

I

Theodorus will be pleased at my death,
And someone else will be pleased at the death of Theodorus:
And yet every one speaks evil of death.

Incerti Auctoris

II

This place is the Cyprian's, for she has ever the fancy
To be looking out across the bright sea;
Therefore the sailors are cheered, and the waves
Keep small with reverence,
beholding her image.

Anyte

III

A sad and great evil is the expectation of death—
And there are also the inane expenses of the funeral;
Let us therefore cease from pitying the dead
For after death there comes no other calamity.

Palladas

IV *Troy*

Whither, O city, are your profits and your gilded shrines,
And your barbecues of great oxen,
And the tall women, walking your streets, in gilt clothes,
With their perfume in little alabaster boxes?
Where are the works of your home-born sculptors?
Time's tooth is into the lot, and war's and fate's too.
Envy has taken your all
Save your douth and your story.

Agathias Scholasticus

V

Woman? Oh, woman is a consummate rage, but dead or asleep she pleases.
Take her—she has two excellent seasons.

Palladas

VI *Nicharcus upon Phidon his doctor*

Phidon neither purged me, nor touched me;
But I remembered the name of his fever medicine and died.

DANS UN OMNIBUS DE LONDRES

Les yeux d'une morte aimée
M'ont salué.
Enchassés dans un visage stupide
Dont tous les autres traits étaient banals,
Ils m'ont salué.

Et alors je vis bien des choses
Au dedans de ma memoire
Remuer,
S'éveiller.

C234 Continued

Je vis des canards sur le bord d'un lac minuscule,
Auprès d'un petit enfant gai, bossu.

Je vis les colonnes anciennes en "toc"
Du Parc Monceau,
Et deux petites filles graciles,
Des patriciennes
aux toisons couleur de lin,
Et des pigeonnes
Grasses
commes des poulardes.

Je vis le parc,
Et tous les gazons divers
Où nous avions loué des chaises
Pour quatre sous.

Je vis les cygnes noirs,
Japonais,
Leurs ailes
Teintées de couleur sang-de-dragon,
Et toutes les fleurs
D'Armenonville.

Les yeux d'une morte
M'ont salué.

Ezra Pound

THOMAS MACDONAGH AS CRITIC

Literature in Ireland: Studies Irish and Anglo-Irish, by Thomas MacDonagh. Talbot Press, Dublin.

I have before me a very able and interesting book. If the tragic death of the author casts upon it any temporary accidental interest, I would say only that this has in no way influenced my opinion.

It is fine proof of Ireland's real vitality that, at a time when we are so fully tired of Celticism, when Celticism is so truly worn out, we should meet in quick succession a great novelist like James Joyce and so level and subtle a critic as Thomas MacDonagh.

The first part of his present book is taken up with what will seem to some a technical discussion of the "Irish Mode", of the effect of Irish idiom and cadence on English verse. I indicated something of the sort when I pointed out that Mr. Yeats' cadence had been saved from the inanity prevalent among his English contemporaries, by his having been brought up on *The County of Mayo* and such ballads. MacDonagh has gone into the matter fully and carefully. I do not know that many of his dicta will seem startling or heretical to the readers of POETRY, of whom he seems to have been one. (One of the finest tributes to the magazine is that he should have chosen to quote from it at some length, from an essay by A. C. H., who is probably the best critic now writing in America.) But the more books we have

C235

C234 Continued

C235 Thomas MacDonagh as Critic. *Poetry*, VIII. 6 (Sept. 1916) 309–12.
A review of *Literature in Ireland*.

saying these same intelligent things the better, and the sooner will we get rid of the *papier-mâché* tradition which has been a curse on both sides of the Atlantic for so many decades, the heritage of what MacDonagh calls "the genteel days". (This genteelness is much more active and oppressive than anyone not actually engaged in the production of literature is likely to be aware of, and I have never yet met a layman who could not be "made to sit up" by a simple recital of facts regarding it.)

MacDonagh's book is important and I doubt if I can show its trend better than by quotation, even by a very brief and fragmentary quotation of broken phrases:

Difficulty in getting rid of . . . . inversions, poetic words, cumbrous epithets, . . . genteel days.
Metaphor that can not be understood without knowledge of historic events which have not affected Ireland.
Tendency to hammer the stressed syllables and slur the unstressed.
Music goes out of its way, as it were, to follow the varying expression of the word. (This properly commended.)
Mathew Arnold on Celtic literature, largely a work of fiction.

When Mr. A. C. Benson changes *never* into *ne'er* in a poem by Emily Bronté, for the sake of regularity, MacDonagh gives him the drubbing that he deserves. (They have tried to do the same with the *Poema del Cid,* though, as Dr. Rennert has said with such gentleness, cleaning his spectacles, "To suppose that a man who could write a poem like that wouldn't have been able to count ten on his fingers, and put ten syllables in a line if he'd wanted to!")

MacDonagh remarks further:

The Irish reader would be content to pronounce the words as they come, to read the lines as prose reads.
Take the line frankly as if it were a line of prose, only with the beauty of vibration in the voice that goes with the fine grave words of poetry.
There is a recurrence in this verse, but it is not the recurrence of the foot.

I am not quoting to back up a thesis, I can not hope to give all of MacDonagh's argument. It is, however, interesting to find Dolmetsch "justifying *vers libre*" in his book on the history of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music, and MacDonagh at the same time analyzing the breaking from false shackles in a quite different manner. Perhaps all metric has grown in a lengthening of the bar or foot or unit. At any rate there has been in our time a general and wide-spread perception that the conventions and artificialities of the horse-hair period are not the eternal unchanging law.

Of course the rules of rimes and the rest were never arbitrary. They were discovered. They are "nature methodised".

The book contains sane remarks on assonance and its riches. Its author has a shot at that old dotard, Palgrave, who has done considerable harm and is only kept on because his name is romantic, and because there is a certain amount of capital sunk in the plates of his inefficient production.

MacDonagh makes very intelligent pleas for fair translation of Gaelic, and gives Stokes' translation of a strophe in contrast with certain bad translations in verse. Stokes says:

A hedge of trees surrounds me, a blackbird's lay sings to me—praise which I will not hide. Above my booklet, the lined one, the trilling of the birds sings to me. In a gray mantle the cuckoo sings to me from the top of the bushes. May the Lord protect me! I write well under the greenwood.

This is excellently concrete. The other examples from old Irish are also convincing. In the *Tryst After Death* we find the trail of the monk spoiling an otherwise fine poem, as happens in the Saxon texts also. Christianity was a handicap to all early writers in either island.

Early Irish poems we might have found elsewhere. I do not know where else we should be likely to hear much of contemporary writers in Gaelic, of whom there seem to be several worthy of note. Padraic Mac Piarais is made interesting by MacDonagh's translation.

> The poet once again is his own first audience. His poetry is a matter between himself and himself. If others afterward come and share his joy, the gain is theirs.

MacDonagh's book is well larded with common sense. He was one of the few people who could write intelligibly on matters of metric, and also readably. His loss is a loss both to Ireland and to literature, and it is a loss bound to be more felt as his work becomes more widely known. Though this last book of his is addressed in the main to the Gael, the subtlety and the sanity of the general criticism contained in it should win for it a wider audience. *Ezra Pound*

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

VI

CHARLES V AND ERASMUS

Erasmus. Be in no uncertainty, if there are ranks among the dead, I shall not cede you precedence.

Charles. A grammarian! A mere savant, or to push your claims to extremes, a man of wit, who would carry it off over a prince who has been master of the best half of Europe!

Erasmus. Add also America, and I am not the least more alarmed. Your greatness was a mere conglomeration of chances, as one who should sort out all its parts would make you see clearly. If your grandfather Ferdinand had been a man of his word, you would have had next to nothing in Italy; if other princes had had sense enough to believe in antipodes, Columbus would not have come to him, and America would not have been beneath your dominion; if, after the death of the last Duke of Burgundy, Louis XI had well considered his actions, the heiress of Burgundy would not have married Maximilian, or the Low Countries descended to you; if Henry of Castile, the brother of your grandmother Isabel, had not had a bad name among women, or if his wife had been of an unsuspectable virtue, Henry's daughter would have passed for his daughter and the kingdom of Castile have escaped you.

Charles. You alarm me. At this late hour I am to lose Castile, or the Low Lands, or America, or Italy, one or the other.

Erasmus. You need not laugh. There could not have been a little good sense in one place, or a little good faith in another without its costing you dearly. There was nothing—to your great-uncle's impotence; to the inconstancy of your great-aunt—that you could have done without. How delicate is that edifice whose foundation is such a collection of hazards.

Charles. There is no means of bearing so strict an examination as yours. I confess that you sweep away all my greatness and all my titles.

Erasmus. They were the adornments whereof you boasted, and I have swept them away without trouble. Do you remember having heard said that the Athenian Cimon, having taken prisoner a great number of Persians, put up their clothing and their naked bodies for sale, and since the clothes were greatly magnificent there was great concourse to buy them, but no one would bid for the men? Faith, I think what befell the Persians would happen to a good number of others if one detached their personal merit from that which fortune has given them.

Charles. What is personal merit?

Erasmus. Need one ask that? Everything that is in us, our mind, for example, our knowledge.

Charles. And can one reasonably boast of these things?

Erasmus. Certainly. These are not gifts of chance like high birth and riches.

Charles. You surprise me. Does not knowledge come to the savant as wealth comes to most who have it? Is it not by way of inheritance? You receive from the ancients, as we receive from our fathers. If we have been left all we possess, you have been left all that you know, and on this account many scholars regard what they have from the ancients with such respect as certain men regard their ancestral lands and houses, wherein they would hate to have anything changed.

Erasmus. The great are born heirs of their father's greatness, but the learned are not born inheritors of the ancient learning. Knowledge is not an entail received, it is an wholly new acquisition made by personal effort, or if it is an entail it is so difficult to receive as to be worthy of honour.

Charles. Very well. Set the trouble of acquiring mental possessions against that of preserving the goods of fortune, the two things are quite equal; for if difficulty is all that you prize, there is as much in worldly affairs as in the philosopher's study.

Erasmus. Then set knowledge aside and confine ourselves to the mind, that at least does not depend upon fortune.

Charles. Does not depend? The mind consists of a certain formation of cerebrum, is there less luck in being born with a respectable cerebrum than being born son to a king? You were a man of great genius; but ask all the philosophers why you weren't

C236

C235 Continued

C236 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. VI. Charles V and Erasmus. *Egoist*, III. 10 (Oct. 1916) 151.

stupid and log-headed; it depended on next to nothing, on a mere disposition of fibres so fine that the most delicate operation of anatomy cannot find it. And after knowing all this the fine wits still dare to tell us that they alone are free from the dominion of chance, and think themselves at liberty to despise the rest of mankind.

Erasmus. Your argument is that it is as creditable to be rich as to show fine intelligence.

Charles. To have fine intelligence is merely a luckier chance, but chance it all is at the bottom.

Erasmus. You mean that all is chance?

Charles. Yes, provided we give that name to an order we do not understand. I leave you to decide whether I have not plucked men cleaner than you have; you merely strip from them certain advantages of birth, I take even those of their understanding. If before being vain of a thing they should try to assure themselves that it really belonged to them, there would be little vanity left in the world.

DREISER PROTEST

AMERICA, the land of the free and the home of the non-interventionists, is having another fit of illustrative Americanism. As a result, I receive the following communication:

A PROTEST

"We, the undersigned, American writers, observe with deep regret the efforts now being made to destroy the work of Theodore Dreiser. Some of us may differ from Mr. Dreiser in our aims and methods, and some of us may be out of sympathy with his point of view, but we believe that an attack by irresponsible and arbitrary persons upon the writings of an author of such manifest sincerity and such high accomplishments must inevitably do great damage to the freedom of letters in the United States, and bring down upon the American people the ridicule and contempt of other nations. The method of the attack, with its attempt to ferret out blasphemy and indecency where they are not, and to condemn a serious artist under a law aimed at common rogues, is unjust and absurd. We join in this public protest against the proceedings in the belief that the art of letters, as carried on by men of serious purpose and with the co-operation of reputable publishers, should be free from interference by persons who, by their own statement, judge all books by narrow and impossible standards; and we advocate such amendments of the existing laws as will prevent such persecutions in future."

Dear reader, lest you be one born outside the sacred limits of "The States," and therefore unable to understand the foregoing document, let me explain that the land of Abraham Lincoln, the country that freed the negro some years after other countries had given up slavery, has taken to the suppression of serious letters.

No one acquainted with my native land will be surprised. Billy Sunday and Billie Ellis have been booming dark superstition, people have been starting magazines to advocate "Americanism in literature."

And as a corollary they have suppressed poor old Dreiser, who is, perhaps, the most serious and most solemn of contemporary American prosists. We believe he has been writing with a purpose, namely, the amelioration of human misery, but as the amelioration of human misery is unchristian, and as America, and particularly Mr. Comstock's friends, are so very Christian, this has naturally given rise to some friction.

Mr. Dreiser, contrary to the custom of serious American writers, has not yet left that country. Ultimately he will leave it. In the meantime such American writers as have not received this "Protest" by post may as well cut out this page of The EGOIST, sign it in the blank space beneath the "Protest," and forward the same to Mr. Hersey.

I have received the "Protest" just as the October number of THE EGOIST is going to press. There is little time to add further comment. The general *louche*ness and crapularity of the New York Sunday-school grafters is made rather more manifest by their attack upon Dreiser, beyond that it is about what might be expected by any careful student of American life.

America has ceased to matter and there is no particular use in elaborating the expression of one's disgust with her farcical attempts at what the organized Comstockian's call "morality." The place is the sort of sink where a Comstock is possible, where a worse than Comstock succedes to a dead Anthony. It is the business of the people who have to live in the country to decide whether the sinkiness is to remain and thicken, or whether the country is to retain any vestige of personal freedom. There are few signs that personal freedom, or the freedom of the Press, or of the arts, will survive West of the Atlantic. Let those who will shed their tears.

If the American people is the sort of people which likes to have Dreisers suppressed, that is all there is to be said. Our conclusion must be that that is the sort of people they are. It is not a nice sort of people.

If they cannot maintain the freedom of Dreiser they will be adjudged a nation of cowards, of very indolent cowards, of very "tacky" and cranky cowards; they will, as the protest indicates, receive the contempt of the civilized world, but they will not receive what the protest entitles, the "ridicule" of the world. The joke is already too stale.

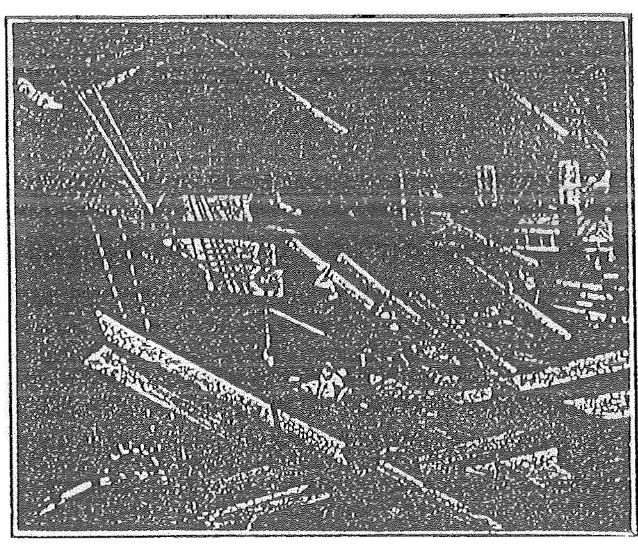
EZRA POUND

[We take no responsibility for the expression of the above personal views of Mr. Pound concerning America, but are glad to publish the "Protest" and hope that many signatures will be sent in to Mr. Hersey.—EDITOR.]

C237

C236 Continued

C237 Dreiser Protest. *Egoist*, III. 10 (Oct. 1916) 159.
Includes reprint of "A Protest."



"Southampton"

"Troops Resting" C 238

THE WAR AND DIVERSE IMPRESSIONS

Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson

Mr. Nevinson Thinks that the Public is More Interested in the War than it is in Art

MR. C. R. W. NEVINSON has seen the war. He has seen it, he tells us, "anywhere and everywhere between the coast and Ypres, along the French, British, and Belgian lines," as private in the R.A.M.C., as ambulance driver, as hospital orderly.

Philip Gibbs is telling us of the war day by day, very eloquently and quite vividly. The "Battle of the Somme" film told us much. Mr. Nevinson, being neither writer nor cinema expert, but a painter, has set out to tell us of the war as he saw it.

His exhibition at the Leicester Galleries should attract a wide public. Connoisseurs will speak with reserve, but then connoisseurs always do speak with reserve, and no one likes connoisseurs. Mr. Nevinson's show is really full of all sorts of interest.

Mr. Nevinson is the son of a distinguished war correspondent. Training must count for something, and Mr. Nevinson is full of exuberance. He is going to tell us about the war—"a fig for æsthethics and theories." At least, I construe his "Note by the Artist" to mean: "A fig for your theories, a fig for my friend Marinetti; I am going to paint about war." War is the thing.

WAR VERSUS ART

Or as the expositor told me. The expositor? Yes, all really modern picture-shows have an expositor to tell you what the artist is driving at, because a really modern artist always is driving at something; and if you are over forty you're quite sure to know what it isn't.

The expositor does not always expose what the artist would wish. I cannot guarantee the reader that the expositor in this case spoke from the heart and mind of the artist. I can only record his utterance. He said, "Mr. Nevinson thinks that the public is more interested in the war than it is in art."

This impression must be common to all of us. I, for instance, think the public is more interested in the war than in art.

Those who hate the art of the younger generation may complain, and those who care very intensely for *some* phase or phases of the most modern art will certainly complain, that Mr. Nevinson has been in such haste to paint about the war that he has not stopped to choose his idiom. That is to say, he has painted about the war in a half-dozen different styles, dating from any period during the last twenty years. We have impressionism pure and simple, and we have the well - known brand of futuristic kaleidoscope, and we have Mr. Nevinson in his rough lump-sugar surface, and Mr. Nevinson smooth, and the bewildered but fundamentally conscientious critic may search in vain for a unity or for any reason for all these changes.

IMPRESSIONISM RATHER "SQUARED UP"

Mr. Nevinson says, in his "Note," that the results represent "abstract, dynamic, mental" impressions. And we must conclude that some of the subjects struck or impressed the smooth, and some the lump-sugar, and some the futuristico-kaleidoscopic facets of his volatile mind.

But the result is interesting. You have here a hospital ward to compete with the best horrors in the Wiertz Gallery; you have a pretty fragment of face in the peaceful Piccadilly of the "Return to London." You have a really fine energy and brute force in the mass and angle of the heavy machine-gun.

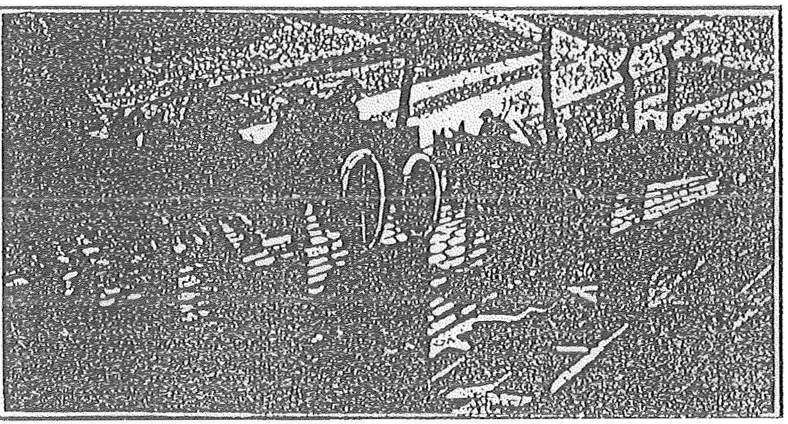
You have a very good picture in "Bravo"; it is impressionism "rather squared-up."

It is manifestly an exhibition for the wide public, and not for the connoisseur in new movements. There are troops on the march, rather than new discoveries in form and form-composition. There are "Sprucers" lolling on their bales in the bright sunlight, there are disconsolate refugees, and men resting massed up with cubistic tin pans. No one has yet achieved a calm and unified conception of the war. Is it any surprise that Mr. Nevinson, painting just after the heat of the thing, should not yet have hit on a simple single and masterly style which would render all his impressions?

IMPRESSIONS "DYNAMIC, ABSTRACT" AND OTHERWISE

The show has the confusion of war—of war striking on an impressionable painter, on a temperament which feels a hurrying necessity to record what it feels on the instant, or at the first opportunity. Troops diminishing into the distance, wounds, searchlights, aeroplanes passing through cloud, a flooded trench on the Yser. All of them real and insistent, bounding off the mind of the artist.

A motor-ambulance driver, "1914," and so on and so on. They tell me, "Oh, he sees the mechanical side of war!" I should not have thought so. I should have said he sees the war as human and horrible and very much sprawled over everything. And, on the whole, he sees it much better than that



"The Road to Ypres"

C238 The War and Diverse Impressions. Mr. [C. R. W.] Nevinson Thinks That the Public Is More Interested in the War than It Is in Art. *Vogue*, London, XLVIII. 7 (1 Oct. 1916) 74–75.
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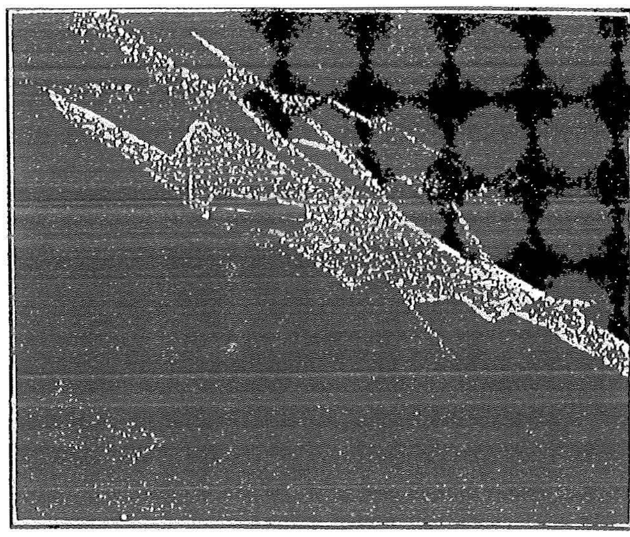
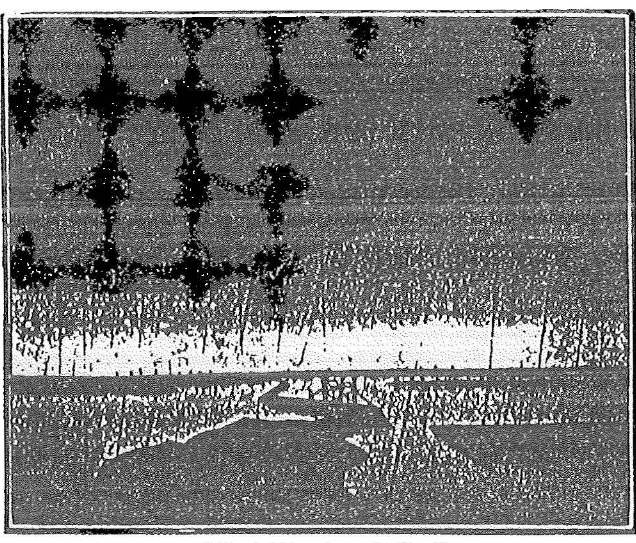


"Aeroplane"



"Flooded Trench on the Yser"

other painter who "did" the war, or at least one corner of it, as if it were a sort of stained-glass window occupied by a group of young men with Italian-primitive faces. If Mr. Nevinson went to, or returned from, the French lines with no particular artistic convictions, at least he took with him no prejudices as to what he would see there. He has seen timbers being loaded at Southampton in the manner, more or less, of a Wadsworth wood-cut before it is simplified. He has seen some things *pointilliste*, some romantic, and some horrible. And he has used whatever style of relatively modern painting has seemed to him fitting to convey his impression—his "dynamic, abstract" (not very abstract after all), "mental, as opposed to concrete, static, or optical" impression.

COMPARATIVE EXPRESSION

By sheer accident there was in the corner of the Leicester Gallery room a little nude figure cut in the real stone of the trenches. It bore the legend, "Cabaret Rouge, Souchez," and an added label stating that W. Reid Dick had made it during a heavy bombardment. It is exquisite; it shows a fine sense of form. It has no convention more new than Tanagra. It is the work of a man under fire, of one who is not an impressionist.

I am not going to draw any moral. Two kinds of temperament are impelled to artistic expression. One of these kinds is impressionist. One creates out of itself from the fruit of many impressions, of meditation, of analysis.

It is curious that the statuette should have been there. It hurls so many questions at Mr. Nevinson's show. Or rather it does not hurl any. Mr. Dick was expressing himself; Mr. Nevinson was conveying impressions.

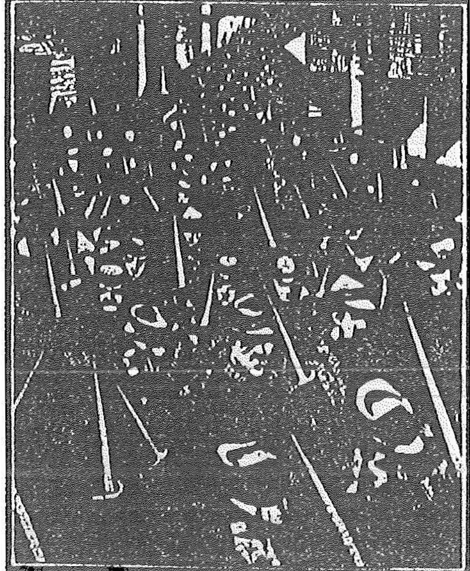
And yet how unstable words are! Mr. Nevinson is also expressing his personality. First, in the choice of his school; for of the various brands of really active new art—post-impressionism, cubism (assorted brands of cubism to the number of seven indistinguishable outside of Paris), expressionism, vorticism, Matisseism or rhythmism, futurism—Mr. Nevinson chose the latter; and futurism, alone of them all, insists on the present, on the "impression." The rest, rightly or wrongly, are all searching for some stable verity, or at least for some "principle," for something which makes art "good," "bad," or "indifferent." Mr. Nevinson might call this search "academic," or he might dismiss it as "obsolete symbolism." He is at present concerned with his subject. He has even "chucked" futurism, or at least there is no mention of the futurist sect in his "Note by the Artist." All this expresses his temperament. But the main expression is in the pictures—the vivid, roughly painted, various, confused, confusion-transmitting pictures. There are also dry-points, rather like other men's dry-points, and more pleasing than most of the pictures. I say "more pleasing" advisedly, for they are just that—"more pleasing"; BUT not more garish, more lurid, more war-like. And I must presume, as Mr. Nevinson makes the small drawings first, or the small designs and pastels first, and then the larger pictures, that it is his intention to represent the war as he sees it, and not to paint pleasing pictures.

THE CRITIC HAS TWO COURSES OPEN TO HIM

He has given up painting enlargements of wounds, possibly because the photographs in Crile's "Mechanistic View of War and Peace" have shown wounds more thoroughly.

The critic of the exhibition who would constitute himself an appraiser has two courses open to him. He may compare Mr. Nevinson with other modern and ultra-modern painters—Balla, Severini, Lewis, Picasso—or he may compare him with past painters of war like Vereschagin.

But the result is of interest only to a few buyers of pictures. The public should see, in the painting, Mr. Nevinson's record of the war, the war set down as he saw it, a personal record. And the pictures are certainly worth more than his note; for they are particular statements—statements of concrete facts, such as the pain of wounds, the movement of men, the brutality of the guns, the mechanical activity of men and machines loading timber. The note is full of vague generalities.



Reproduced from C. R. W. Nevinson's etching of his painting, "1914"

AN AMERICAN ON AMERICA.

THE AMERICAN CRISIS AND THE WAR. By WILLIAM MORTON FULLERTON. (Constable. 2s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Fullerton seems to have written this book very easily. Easy writing makes hard reading. His views are approximately those of the minority of Americans who are accustomed to think of the United States as an integral part of the world. He has embedded an arraignment of President Wilson in a meandering attempt to explain the United States of to-day. The impeachment is effective in so far as it is composed of known fact and of quotations from Mr. Wilson's own speeches; but it is regrettable that some of the aptest criticism is lost in such verbal morasses as:—

> The American people, as a whole, were blandly unconscious of the fact that the Great War might ever be for them a possible occasion of active participation.

or,

> None of the spasmodic, but widely separated, collisions of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere with the worlds of England and of Continental Europe had been of a sort to shatter the American pride in this rare privilege of a geographical isolation that warranted their enjoyment of an illusion as to the special character of their civilization.

Or, again:—

> Before the war it was already sufficiently obvious to any observer with inductive habits of mind, and prone to cross-stanchioning his general conclusions, that—quite apart from the fact of the passage annually through the Imperial American turnstiles at Ellis Island of a million, more or less, of immigrants—such questions as the attitude of California or of Arizona in recklessly thwarting the trading rights of aliens, admitted to the privilege of citizenship under the general Federal laws of the land, were significant chiefly because they raised the supremely interesting problem of Inter-State Constitutional Relations in a community which even the Civil War between North and South had not completely unified.

Mr. Fullerton's argument is, roughly, that in her beginnings America was managed by an oligarchy of intelligent men, governing for the people, recognizing the people as the source of power, but realizing their own executive responsibility for the people, realizing that they must inform the people, and not expecting a preoccupied people to advise them upon the details of executive action. Mr. Fullerton claims that these conditions no longer exist; that the Monroe doctrine, originally conceived as an agreement between England and America for securing the world's peace and for curtailing the expansion of tyrannous monarchical governments, has been effectively subverted and annulled by German immigration to America, by the organization of the German vote, by the action of German agents among other foreign populations in America, and by the recent law which permits a German to hold a double or hyphenated nationality, liable to military service under his Kaiser while enjoying the privileges of United States' citizenship.

Mr. Fullerton blames the President for not having sustained the spirit and tradition of the Monroe doctrine; but his main indictment is based upon the two clauses of The Hague Convention, as follows:—

Article I.—The territory of neutral Powers is inviolable.

Article II.—Belligerents are forbidden to move across the territory of a neutral Power troops or convoys, either of munitions of war or supplies.

The United States signed this agreement. The Constitution of the United States contains the clause:—"All treaties made or which shall be made under the authority of the United States shall be the supreme law of the land." The logical conclusion from these two documents and the violation of neutral soil by the Central Powers leaves Mr. Wilson no outlet. Mr. Fullerton's conclusion is that Mr. Wilson did violate the laws of his country as clearly as King Constantine violated the agreements made by Greece.

The next accusation is that Mr. Wilson refused to regard the United States as part of the world, that he persisted in considering it as a sort of *Ding an sich*, and that it required some years of office to teach him that he was a responsible executive of his country and not merely an irresponsible student of its phenomena and conditions. This is indicated by the apparent "conversion" of the President in the winter of 1915-1916, when Mr. Wilson admitted that there were "many things and many conditions which a year ago I did not realize."

The delineation of the Wilsonian mind proceeds by quotation of Mr. Wilson's demand for a "neutrality of opinion," that is, for a complete surrender by the citizen of his own right to think for himself, a "Pharaonic" demand, exceeding the demands of the Papacy for "subjection to authority" in religious matters, and "unworthy of an American President," or at least "un-American." Mr. Fullerton then quotes Mr. Wilson's speech to the effect that the American people are drawn from divers sources, a speech wherein the President seems entirely to forget that there are still in America blood-heirs of the men who founded the country, as well as new heterogeneous emigrants attracted by the "bon fromage." It is in this speech that Mr. Wilson expressed the fear that, if the Americans adopted diverse and partisan views about the war, "such diversions among us would be fatal to our peace of mind."

In explanation of America's inactivity, Mr. Fullerton insists that his country "is not a nation" but merely an "unfused agglomeration of diverse elements." He adds:—

> At the outbreak of the war the vast preoccupied American public, as ignorant of European things as a Central peasant is ignorant of Chilean politics, could not be expected to understand the nature of the vital interests at stake in the world-war; but the Washington Government had no excuse for ignorance.

Mr. Wilson's policy, he believes, has damaged his country internally. The President had a great opportunity to unite the varied elements in America but has failed. America has lost prestige through the President's tergiversations, even as Greece has through hers. Yet

> It is by no fault of the American people, but we have atrociously blundered, and we shall long pay dear for it. We have lost the respect of the nations, the same respect that Greece has lost, without being able to cite, as Greece can cite, any extenuating circumstance.

Mr. Fullerton's book perhaps demands closer attention than the average reader will be disposed to give it. The argument is clear only when followed very closely. There is a curious piece of rather inconsequential optimism at the end of the preface, doubtless sound enough as opinion, but not an integral part of the thesis. The writer displays, moreover, a curious and typically American tendency to think that "all may be for the best"; that although America is somewhat *déclassée*, though Mr. Wilson has lost a magnificent op-

C239 An American on America. *Times Literary Supplement*, London, 770 (19 Oct. 1916) 494.
A review, unsigned, of *The American Crisis and the War*, by William Morton Fullerton.

portunity, still the war will "wake up America," will teach her to "know herself more truly."

It is at least doubtful whether the war will have so beneficent an effect. Having escaped the rigours of war, Americans may, with exquisite optimism, regard themselves the more as the favoured of Providence. They may be more sensitive, more "touchy" about frank criticism of actual faults either by native or by foreign critics, and may still regard "breeziness" as an atonement for every shortcoming. But Mr. Fullerton probably knows that his countrymen do not like to read gloomy books. It is, however, difficult to say with certainty whether he has in reality written for them or for the European intellectual, who surely needs no argument to convince him that Mr. Wilson has not advanced American political prestige.

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

VII

AGNES SOREL—ROXELANE

AGNES. To tell you the truth, I don't understand your Turkish gallantry. The beauties of the seraglio have a lover who has only to say: I want it. They never enjoy the pleasures of resistance, and they cannot provide the pleasures of victory, all the delights of love are thus lost to sultans and sultanas.

Roxelane. How would you arrange it? The Turkish emperors being extremely jealous of their authority have set aside these refinements of dalliance. They are afraid that pretty women, not wholly dependent upon them, would usurp too great a sway over their minds, and meddle too greatly in public affairs.

Agnes. Very well! How do they know whether that would be a misfortune? Love has a number of uses, and I who speak to you, had I not been mistress to a French King, and if I had not had great power over him, I do not know where France would be at this hour. Have you heard tell how desperate were our affairs under Charles VII, to what state the kingdom was reduced, with the English masters of nearly the whole of it?

Roxelane. Yes, as the affair made a great stir, I know that a certain virgin saved France, and you were then this girl, La Pucelle? But how in that case were you at the same time the king's mistress?

Agnes. You are wrong. I have nothing in common with the virgin of whom you speak. The king by whom I was loved wished to abandon his kingdom to foreign usurpers, he went to hide in a mountainous region, where it would have been by no means too comfortable for me to have followed him. I contrived to upset this plan. I called an astrologer with whom I had a private agreement, and after he had pretended to scan my nativity, he told me one day in Charles's presence that if all the stars were not liars I should be a king's mistress, and loved with a long-lasting passion. I said at once: "You will not mind, Sire, if I leave for the English Court, for you do not wish to be king, and have not yet loved me long enough for my destiny to be fulfilled." The fear which he had of losing me made him resolve to be king, and he began from that time to strengthen his kingdom. You see what France owes to love, and how gallant she should be, if only from recognition.

Roxelane. It is true, but returning to La Pucelle. What was her part? Was history wrong in attributing to a young peasant girl what truly belonged to a court lady and a king's mistress?

Agnes. Were history wrong on this point, it were no great wonder. However, it is true that La Pucelle greatly stirred up the soldiers, but I before that had animated the king. She was a great aid to this monarch, whom she found armed against the English, but without me she would not have found him so armed. And you will no longer doubt my part in this great affair when you hear the witness which one of Charles VII's successors has borne to me in this quatrain:

> Agnes Sorel, more honour have you won in
> the good cause, our France, her restoration,
> than e'er was got by prayer and close cloistration
> of pious eremite or devout nun.

What do you say to it, Roxelane? Will you confess that if I had been a sultana like you, and had I not had the right to threaten Charles VII as I did, he would have lost his all?

Roxelane. I am surprised that you should be so vain of so slight an action. You had no difficulty in gaining great power over the mind of your lover, you who were free and mistress of yourself, but I, slave as I was, subjugated the sultan. You made Charles VII king, almost in spite of himself, but I made Soliman my husband despite his position.

Agnes. What! They say the sultans never marry.

Roxelane. I agree, and still I made up my mind to marry Soliman, although I could not lead him into marriage by the hope of anything he did not already possess. You shall hear a finer scheme than your own. I began to build temples, and to do many deeds of piety, then I appeared very sorrowful. The sultan asked me the reason over and over again, and after the necessary preliminaries and crochets, I told him that I was melancholy because my good deeds, as I heard from our learned men, would bring me no reward, seeing that I was merely a slave, and worked only for Soliman, my master. Soliman thereupon freed me, in order that I might reap the reward of my virtuous actions, then when he wished to cohabit with me and to treat me like a bride of the harem, I appeared greatly surprised. I told him with great gravity that he had no rights over the body of a free woman. Soliman had a delicate conscience: he went to consult a doctor of laws with whom I had a certain agreement. His reply was that the sultan should abstain, as I was no longer his slave, and that unless he espoused me, he could not rightly take me for his. He fell deeper in love than ever. He had only one course to follow, but it was a very extraordinary course, and even dangerous, because of its novelty; however, he took it and married me.

Agnes. I confess that it is fine to subject those who stand so on their guard 'gainst our empery.

Roxelane. Men strive in vain, when we lay hold of them by their passions, we lead them whither we will. If they would let me live again, and give me the most imperious man in the world, I would make of him whatever I chose, provided only that I had of wit much, of beauty sufficient, and of love only a little.

C240

C240 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. VII. Agnes Sorel—Roxelane. *Egoist*, III. 11 (Nov. 1916) 170.

Das Schone Papier Vergeudet

EZRA POUND

BEFORE you issue another number of your magazine half blank, I must again ask you seriously to consider the iniquity of the present "protective" tariff on books.

This tariff has contributed more than any other one cause, and perhaps more than all other causes, to the intellectual isolation of America, to her general ignorance, to her sodden parochialism.

I have expressed myself on this subject many times. Mr. George Haven Putnam has been fighting against the evil for years. It is one ground on which all intelligent Americans, whatever their disagreements as to literary canon may be, can come together.

I am too much buried in work to write you an article at present. There are hundreds of young men with more time than I have, to whom this is a matter not of mere general interest, but of vital and personal importance.

The simple fact is that it is very, *very* difficult to get foreign books in the United States. There is *no* facilitation of their sale. The 25% tariff serves as an excuse for an exorbitant elevation of the price of all foreign books, whether imported in sheets, or bound.

Result: Editors of sodden and moribund "better" magazines talking about De Regnier and De Gourmont as "these young men", in 1914.

Result: provincialism, isolation, lack of standards of comparison, and consequent inability to recognize good work when it appears. When it gets praise it is praised in company with rubbish.

American writers handicapped in competition with men living in civilized countries. Export of best, and even of moderately good, artists instead of export of art.

I can't go into the whole question of free trade. It has worked in England. It has, more than anything else, made the "Empire." I do not see why it should ruin the Republic.

But that is not my business. I mean, Free Trade in the widest sense is not my present affair. The prohibitive tariff on books is very much everybody's affair if they care a hang for the intellectual state of the country.

The state of the copyright laws is barbarous, but it is perhaps more the affair of the maltreated authors than of the country at large. It is evil only as other obstructory measures are evil. *But* this matter of excluding foreign books in the interest of a few artizans (who are better paid than authors and who seek nothing above immediate gain, and whose loss in the event of reform would be negligible) is immediate and vital.

The whole question of censorship, as to Dreiser, as to Hokusai prints destroyed by customs officials, etc., are all really minor issues, largely dependent on this matter of the exclusion of the words thought and knowledge.

If among the young writers gathered about *The Little Review* you can not find two or three to take up this question, to study it, to marshal the data (vide Putnam's "Books and Their Makers" to start with, re. the causes of the rise of Paris as the world's intellectual capital),—if you can not find such young authors, then your young literati are a set of rotters and the Great West is more of a mud-hole than I should have thought it.

C241 Das schone [*sic*] Papier vergeudet. *Little Review*, III. 7 (Nov. 1916) 16–17.
(In English.) On the tariff on books.

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

VIII

BRUTUS AND FAUSTINA

BRUTUS. What! Is it possible that you took pleasure in your thousand infidelities to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the most affable husband, and without doubt the best man in Roman dominions?

Faustina. And is it possible that you assassinated Julius Cæsar, that so mild and moderate emperor?

Brutus. I wished to terrify all usurpers by the example of Cæsar, whose very mildness and moderation were no guarantee of security.

Faustina. And if I should tell you that I wished to terrify likewise all husbands, so that no man should dare to be a husband after the example I made of Aurelius, whose indulgence was so ill requited?

Brutus. A fine scheme! We must, however, have husbands or who would govern the women? But Rome had no need to be governed by Cæsar.

Faustina. Who told you that? Rome had begun to have madcap crochets as humorous and fantastical as those which are laid to most women's credit, she could no longer dispense with a master, and yet she was ill-pleased to find one. Women are of the identical character, and we may equally agree that men are too jealous of their domination, they exercise it in marriage and that is a great beginning, but they wish to extend it to love. When they ask that a mistress be faithful, by faithful they mean submissive. The rule should be equally shared between lover and mistress, however it always shifts to one side or the other, almost always to that of the lover.

Brutus. You are in a strange revolt against men.

Faustina. I am a Roman, and I have a Roman feeling for liberty.

Brutus. The world is quite full of such Romans, but Romans of my type are, you will confess, much more rare.

Faustina. It is a very good thing that they are. I do not think that any honest man would behave as you did, or assassinate his benefactor.

Brutus. I think there are equally few honest women who would have copied your conduct, as for mine, you must admit it showed firmness. It needed a deal of courage not to be affected by Cæsar's feeling of friendship.

Faustina. Do you think it needed less vigour to hold out against the gentleness and patience of Marcus Aurelius? He looked on all my infidelities with indifference; he would not do me honour by jealousy, he took away from me the joys of deceiving him. I was so greatly enraged at it, that I sometimes wished to turn pious. However, I did not sink to that weakness, and after my death even, did not Marcus Aurelius do me the despite of building me temples, of giving me priests, and of setting up in my honour what is called the Faustinian festival? Would it not drive one to fury? To have given me a gorgeous apotheosis!—to have exalted me as a goddess!

Brutus. I confess I no longer understand women. These are the oddest complaints in the world.

Faustina. Would you not rather have plotted against Sylla than Cæsar? Sylla would have stirred your indignation and hate by his excess of cruelty. I should greatly have preferred to hoodwink a jealous man, even Cæsar, for example, of whom we are speaking. He had insupportable vanity, he wished to have the empire of the world all to himself, and his wife all to himself, and because he saw Clodius sharing one and Pompey the other, he could bear neither Pompey nor Clodius. I should have been happy with Cæsar!

Brutus. One moment and you wish to do away with all husbands, in the next you sigh for the worst.

Faustina. I could wish there were none in order that women might ever be free, but if there are to be husbands the most crabbed would please one most, for the sheer pleasure of gaining my liberty.

Brutus. I think for women of your temperament it is much better that there should be husbands. The more keen the desire for liberty, the more malignity there is in it.

C242

SWORD-DANCE AND SPEAR-DANCE

Texts of the Poems used with Michio Itow's Dances

By EZRA POUND from Notes by MASIRNI UTCHIYAMA

AMONG the finest things Michio Itow showed us, very different from the delicate women's dances and fox-dance, the finer movements of which were lost and almost invisible on the Coliseum stage; different equally from the splendid and stately dances of the Japanese classical plays which need so much knowledge of Japanese history and literature before they can be fully comprehended, were the sword and spear dances which were seen by only a few people when he performed almost privately in a Kensington studio-theatre.

Each dance was in itself a drama in miniature, having within the few lines of its text not only the crux of a play but almost the form and structure of full drama, Mr. Minami accompanying on a weird oriental flute and Mr. Utchiyama's voice booming ominous from behind the curtain. Itow himself, now rigid in some position of action impending, now in a jagged whirl of motions, slashing with the sword-blade, sweeping the air with the long samurai halberd.

Itow has taken his dancing to America, where one hopes it will not be vulgarized. We give the text of the dance poems for the first time, together with an explanation of their historical background.

SONG FOR A FOILED VENDETTA

With a faint chirring of whips,
At the ford,
In the darkness,
In the dawn I saw the foe
Like a fang
    (Like a tusk on the boar's lip:
    Their spear-points in the forest.)
Ten years of hate,
Ten to sharpen the sword,
    And now
He is gone like a shooting star,
Like a long snake in the dark.

C243

C242 Dialogues of Fontenelle, Translated by Ezra Pound. VIII. Brutus and Faustina. *Egoist*, III. 12 (Dec. 1916) 183.

C243 SWORD-DANCE AND SPEAR-DANCE: TEXTS OF THE POEMS USED WITH MICHIO ITOW'S DANCES. BY EZRA POUND, FROM NOTES OF MASIRNI UTCHIYAMA. *Future*, London, I. 2 (Dec. 1916) 54–55. Includes "Song for a Foiled Vendetta," "The Sole Survivor," "In Enemies' Country just after War," "Honogi," and "Yamadera," with introductory notes and explanation of historical background.

The poem refers to the vendetta between Usingi and Tagada. After ten years of preparation Usingi came upon him in the island of Kawana kajima. He leapt through the brush and struck at Tagada with his sword. Tagada parried the stroke with his iron war-fan and fled. The dance represents Usingi hunting for Tagada in the dawn, catching sight of the spear-points of Tagada's men, and then his tragic disappointment at Tagada's final escape.

THE SOLE SURVIVOR

(*Kogun funto*)

A force cut off,
Fighting hard,
Shut around.

I burst the bonds,
I alone,
I returned,

Fleeing by night
Through the crags of the border.

My sword is broken,
My horse is fallen.
The hero drags his corpse to his native mountain.

The last line of this poem is the only obscure one. It is, however, quite clear to a Japanese. The protagonist is the sole survivor of a force surrounded in the mountain passes. He has the right to die in his own country, but honour demands that he shall not survive his companions longer than that. He will kill himself as soon as his return journey is completed.

IN ENEMIES' COUNTRY JUST AFTER WAR

(*This poem might also be entitled "Nerves"*)

Beneath the pale crust of the moon
My sleeves are drenched with dew.
Wind rushes against my face. I am cold.
I start aside from the big snake on the pathway;
Startled I draw my sword,
And slash at the old-pine-tree's shadow.

The translation might be clearer if one supplied the words, unnecessary in Japanese, "start aside from what appears to be the snake, and slash at what is really the shadow," but the essence of Japanese consists in leaving out just this sort of long explanation.

SPEAR DANCE

This poem is about 400 years old, when Oda ruled in Honogi. He was a Daimyo, or feudal lord, who had seized the reins of power and stood in place of the Shogun, or Mayor of the Palace. Oda sent the Samurai Akechi against his enemy Mori Motonari. Akechi set forth at the head of the expedition; but an old grudge against Oda rankled within him, and at the last moment he diverts his troops from attacking Motonari, leads them back to Honogi and assassinates Oda.

The action of the dance represents him on the march at the moment when he points his whip to the clouds for augury and determines to return against Oda. The song is, roughly, as follows:—

HONOGI

Deep is the ditch of resentment and no man knows how deep,
To-night is my night for deeds.

The fodder is mixed in the nose-bag, ready to eat,
Rainy season, the sky is like charcoal with clouds.

Past the hill-slope of Osaka, I must traverse the west road to Bitchu (the province of Mori Motonari).

If I point to the sky with my whip, for augury,
The clouds scurry faster eastwards.

My enemy is in the temple at Honogi,
The enemy is in Bitchu.
O beware, thou Oda, at Honogi.

The reader may easily imagine the changes in the dance: gloom, reflection, the looking up to the clouds, hesitation, and the final climax of decision just before the last line.

YAMADERA

The Buddhist Priest of the Temple in the Mountain

This is a very popular comic song and dance. There is no complicated symbolism in "*nayon*" and "*pum,*" they represent the noises of the cat and the kicking.

The Buddhist Priest of the Mountain Temple
Wants to play foot ball, but he can not find a ball.

He puts a cat in a paper bag.
"*Pum,*" he kicks. "*Mayon,*" she yowls.
"*Nayon,*" she howls. "*Tum,*" he kicks.
Pa, pum, pum, and
Nya, nyan, nyan,
Nya, nyan, nyan,
Pa, pum, pong.

IN THE WORLD OF LETTERS

MR. T. S. ELIOT is beginning to be taken very seriously by the very serious. His poems form the beginning of that interesting but curiously neglected volume, the "Catholic Anthology, 1914-15," which contains poems good, bad, indifferent, and curious. A year after its appearance the *Nation* discovered Mr. Eliot's merit, and now Mr. Waugh in *The Quarterly* has selected him for anonymous denunciation. In his abuse of the moderns, Mr. Waugh has descended to the tone of the gutter press, but it will probably cheer the young authors to find themselves damned in the

C243a

C243 Continued

C243a In the World of Letters. *Future*, I. 2 (Dec. 1916) 55–56.
Notes on T. S. Eliot, Alan Seeger, Fritz Vanderpyl, Jean de Bosschère, and Dorothy Richardson. Unsigned, but a clipping in a scrapbook at Yale is marked by Ezra Pound as his.

same review that ages since "slaughtered" poor Keats. Mr. Eliot's work is elaborate and urbane, perhaps more akin to the French of Jules La Forgue than to the English of any of his contemporaries.

* * * *

Not least among the Americans who have died for France was Alan Seeger, a young poet in his twenties. Harvard students will remember him as a peculiar and moody young man, considering suicide at twenty-two as the suitable goal of man's ambition. He had, however, survived that year of his life and taken to more healthy ideas. His poems are in the old manner, rather in the school of Andrew Lang, if we may judge from a few of them. A volume of them is about to appear, with, we believe, a preface by William Archer. Seeger had many friends in Paris. He was in London in the summer of 1914, and might have been found at the perpetual Café Royal. The following poem of his, "Rendezvous," appears in the *North American Review* for October:—

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes round with rustling shade
And apple blossoms fill the air.
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath;
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

* * * *

Tribute to this type of American is already being paid in French fiction, to wit, in "Marsden Stanton à Paris," a novel by Fritz Vanderpyl, now running as a serial in the *Mercure de France*. Vanderpyl's name is obviously less French than his feelings, but the appearance of his work in the *Mercure* is full guarantee that there is no Boche blood in his veins.

The name of Jean de Bosschère is becoming familiar to the readers of the *Westminster* and other evening papers, but few people know how distinguished is the author of these quiet articles. M. de Bosschère was one of the first contributors to *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, he has published ten or a dozen books of original poems and sketches, among them "Dolorine et les Ombres," "Beale-Gyrne," and most notably "Métiers Divins." The *Bibliotèque de l'Occident* brings out his French work in sumptuous editions containing his own curious designs as illustration. He has even been translated into Russian.

Whether the fine tone of his writing is susceptible of a satisfactory English translation seems doubtful. An irony a little too fine for our senses and a tragedy perhaps too depressing to find great public approval, are the first difficulties which present themselves.

His drawings are said to show "a peculiar and individual perception of the mechanical nature of modern life," which means that he sees workmen, ant-like, perpetually and frantically busy at something which shall not be particularly to their profit. Hundreds of figures baling out boats in which they will not sail, making watches that will tell time for other people, building houses they will not live in, and so on through all the various rounds of modern complex activity. De Bosschère will never be greatly popular, but he has the distinction of being unique.

* * * *

Miss Dorothy Richardson's novel, "Backwater," shows an advance in method. There seems considerable chance that she will leave the general category of "women who write novels" and enter at least the next grade, "women novelists," beyond which lies the realm of "celebrities," beyond which the place of "real novelists." She has already achieved a personal style, sketchy, a little disjointed. Still it leaves one with the conviction that the life of a young lady who teaches in a suburban school must be rather as she presents it. That is about all the story there is. Plot: a young lady has to teach in a suburban school, but she hankers after London and a more *mondaine* atmosphere. The characters are admirably drawn, and despite the lack of sensational incident the book manages to hold the reader's attention.

* * * *

The Rt. Hon. G. W. E. Russell writes on the Rev. J. Stratton's book of poems, "Ethelfleda and other Poems," as follows:—

"Mr. Stratton is a melodious versifier. The bulk of his work is in the heroic couplet, which he manages with unusual skill. His lines are rich in—

"'Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
And float along like birds o'er summer seas.'

"And his rhymes are always true, not merely to the eye, but also to the ear.

"The couplet in his hands is a facile and flexible instrument, resembling that which George Crabbe employed so dexterously in 'The Borough,' and William Morris in 'The Earthly Paradise.'

"Mr. Stratton is a countryman and writes instinctively of the country. He is a Christian, and sees in the phenomena of Nature the revelation of religious truth. He is a warm-hearted and tender-hearted man who loves not only his fellow-men but all his fellow-creatures."

REVIEWS

MR. YEATS' NEW BOOK

Responsibilities and Other Poems, by W. B. Yeats. Macmillan Co.

Mr. Yeats' new volume contains the poems which have previously appeared in the Cuala editions of *Responsibilities* and *The Green Helmet.* Many of the short poems have appeared in POETRY and I have already written reviews of separate parts of the new volume. There is therefore little need of more than an announcement of the new and more convenient edition.

What strikes one on going through the larger book is the simple fact that Mr. Yeats has not "gone off". He is the only poet of his decade who has not gradually faded into mediocrity, who has not resigned himself to gradually weaker echoes of an earlier outburst.

The new poems, now that their bulk is equal to that of the two earlier volumes of poems, hold their own; they establish their own tonality. I do not mean that every poem is a masterpiece, or that every poem is important, or that every poem would start a new reputation for an author not yet known. But the collection as a whole is worthy of the collections that preceded it. There is a new robustness; there is the tooth of satire which is, in Mr. Yeats' case, too good a tooth to keep hidden. *The Coat,* the wild wolf-dog that will not praise his fleas, *The Scholars,* are all the sort of poem that we would gladly read more of. There are a lot of fools to be killed and Mr. Yeats is an excellent slaughter-master, when he will but turn from ladies with excessive chevelure appearing in pearl-pale nuances.

We have all been bewitched with the "glamour", and the glamour is still there in *The Wind Among the Reeds* for those who still want it. But the light in *The Magi* and *The Peacock* is a no less valuable light, and born of a no less powerful magic. The ragged hat in *Biscay Bay* is a sign of the poet's relationship to his brother Jack Yeats, and a far cry from the bridles of Findrinny. But, despite such occasional bits of realism, the tone of the new book is romantic. Mr. Yeats is a romanticist, symbolist, occultist, for better or worse, now and for always. That does not matter. What does matter is that he is the only one left who has sufficient intensity of temperament to turn these modes into art.

Reveries Over Childhood and Youth, appearing in a uniform Macmillan edition, is written in a clearer and harder prose than most of Mr. Yeats' earlier prose books. One might announce it here as an extended annotation or appendix to some of his earlier poems. *E. P.*

C244

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

IX

HELEN AND FULVIA

HELEN. I must hear your side of a story which Augustus told me a little while ago. Is it true, Fulvia, that you looked upon him with some favour, but that, when he did not respond, you stirred up your husband, Mark Antony, to make war upon him?

Fulvia. Very true, my dear Helen, and now that we are all ghosts there can be no harm in confessing it. Mark Antony was daft over the comedienne Citherida, I would have been glad to avenge myself by a love affair with Augustus; but Augustus was fussy about his mistresses, he found me neither young enough nor sufficiently pretty, and though I showed him quite clearly that he was undertaking a civil war through default of a few attentions to me, it was impossible to make him agreeable. I will even recite to you, if you like, some verses which he made of the matter, although they are not the least complimentary:

Because Mark Antony is charmed with the Glaphira,
[It was by that name that he called Citherida.]
Fulvia wants to break me with her eyes,
Her Antony is faithless, what? Who cries:
Augustus pays Mark's debts, or he must fear her.
Must I, Augustus, come when Fulvia calls
Merely because she wants me?
At that rate, I'd have on my back
A thousand wives unsatisfied.
Love me, she says, or fight. The fates declare:
She is too ugly. Let the trumpets blare.

Helen. You and I, then, between us have caused the two greatest wars on record?

Fulvia. With this difference: you caused the Trojan War by your beauty, I that of Antony and Augustus by the opposite quality.

Helen. But still you have an advantage, your war was much more enjoyable. My husband avenged himself for an insult done him by loving me, which is quite common, yours avenged himself because a certain man had not loved you, and this is not ordinary at all.

Fulvia. Yes, but Antony didn't know that he was making his war on my account, while Menelaus knew quite well that his was on your account. That is what no one can pardon him. For Menelaus with all the Greeks behind him besieged Troy for ten years to tear you from Paris's arms yet if Paris had insisted on giving you up, would not Menelaus, instead of all this, have had to stand ten years siege in Sparta to keep from taking you back? Frankly I think your Trojans and Greeks deficient in humour, half of them silly to want you returned, the other half still more silly to keep you. Why should so many honest folk be immolated to the pleasures of one young man who was ignorant of what he was

C245

C243a Continued

C244 Mr. Yeats' New Book. *Poetry*, IX. 3 (Dec. 1916) 150–1.
A review, signed: E. P., of *Responsibilities and Other Poems*, by W. B. Yeats.

C245 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. IX. Helen and Fulvia. *Egoist*, IV. 1 (Jan. 1917) 5.

doing? I cannot help smiling at that passage in Homer where after nine years of war wherein one had just lost so many people, he assembles a council before Priam's palace. Antenor thinks they should surrender you, I should have thought there was scant cause for hesitation, save that one might have regretted not having thought of this expedient long before. However, Paris bears witness that he dislikes the proposal, and Priam, who was, as Homer tells us, peer to the gods in wisdom, being embarrassed to see his Cabinet divided on such a delicate matter, not knowing which side to choose, orders every one to go home to supper.

Helen. The Trojan War has at least this in its favour, its ridiculous features are quite apparent, but the war between Augustus and Anthony did not show its reality. When one saw so great a number of Imperial eagles surging about the land, no one thought of supposing that the cause of their mutual animosity was Augustus's refusal to you of his favours.

Fulvia. So it goes, we see men in great commotions, but the sources and springs are for the most part quite trivial and ridiculous. It is important for glory of great events that their causes be hidden.

JAMES JOYCE

AT LAST THE NOVEL APPEARS*

IT is unlikely that I shall say anything new about Mr. Joyce's novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* I have already stated that it is a book worth reading and that it is written in good prose. In using these terms I do not employ the looseness of the half-crown reviewer.

I am very glad that it is now possible for a few hundred people to read Mr. Joyce comfortably from a bound book, instead of from a much-handled file of EGOISTS or from a slippery bundle of type-script. After much difficulty THE EGOIST itself turns publisher and produces *A Portrait of the Artist* as a volume, for the hatred of ordinary English publishers for good prose is, like the hatred of the *Quarterly Review* for good poetry, deep-rooted, traditional.

Since Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* were bandied from pillar to post, I doubt if any manuscript has met with so much opposition, and no manuscript has been more worth supporting.

Landor is still an unpopular author. He is still a terror to fools. He is still concealed from the young (not for any alleged indecency, but simply because he did not acquiesce in certain popular follies). He, Landor, still plays an inconspicuous rôle in university courses. The amount of light which he would shed on the undergraduate mind would make students inconvenient to the average run of professors. But Landor is permanent.

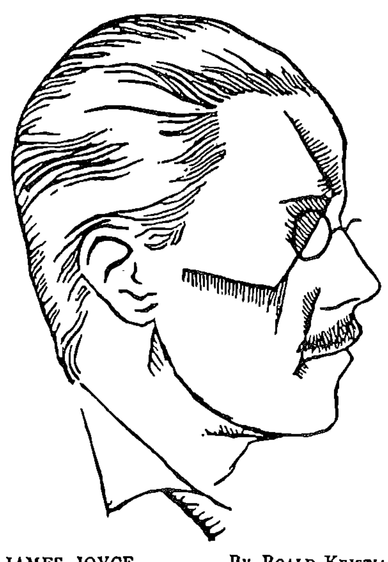
Members of the "Fly-Fishers" and "Royal Automobile" clubs, and of the "Isthmian," may not read him. They will not read Mr. Joyce. *E pur si muove.* Despite the printers and publishers the British Government has recognized Mr. Joyce's literary merit. That is a definite gain for the party of intelligence. A number of qualified judges have acquiesced in my statement of two years ago, that Mr. Joyce was an excellent and important writer of prose.

The last few years have seen the gradual shaping of a party of intelligence, a party not bound by any central doctrine or theory. We cannot accurately define new writers by applying to them tag-names from old authors, but as there is no adequate means of conveying the general impression of their characteristics one may at times employ such terminology, carefully stating that the terms are nothing more than approximation.

With that qualification, I would say that James Joyce produces the nearest thing to Flaubertian prose that we have now in English, just as Wyndham Lewis has written a novel which is more like, and more fitly compared with, Dostoievsky than is the work of any of his contemporaries. In like manner Mr. T. S. Eliot comes nearer to filling the place of Jules La Forgue in our generation. (Doing the "nearest thing" need not imply an approach to a standard, from a position inferior.)

Two of these writers have met with all sorts of opposition. If Mr. Eliot probably has not yet encountered very much opposition, it is only because his work is not yet very widely known.

My own income was considerably docked because I dared to say that Gaudier-Brzeska was a good sculptor and that Wyndham Lewis was a great master of design. It has, however, reached an almost irreducible minimum, and I am, perhaps, fairly safe in reasserting Joyce's ability as a writer. It will cost me no more than a few violent attacks from several sheltered, and therefore courageous, anonymities.



JAMES JOYCE By ROALD KRISTIAN

When you tell the Irish that they are slow in recognizing their own men of genius they reply with street riots and politics.

Now, despite the jobbing of bigots and of their sectarian publishing houses, and despite the "Fly-Fishers" and the types which they represent, and despite the unwillingness of the print-packers (a word derived from pork-packers) and the initial objections of the Dublin publishers and the later unwillingness of the English publishers, Mr. Joyce's novel appears in book form, and intelligent readers gathering few by few will read it, and it will remain a permanent part of English literature—written by an Irishman in Trieste and first published in New York City. I doubt if a comparison of Mr. Joyce to other English writers or Irish writers would much help to define him. One can only say that he is rather unlike them. *The Portrait* is very different from *L'Education Sentimentale*, but it would be easier to compare it with that novel of Flaubert's than with anything else. Flaubert pointed out that if France had studied his work they might have been saved a good deal in 1870. If more people had read *The Portrait* and certain stories in Mr. Joyce's *Dubliners* there might have been less recent trouble in Ireland. A clear diagnosis is never without its value.

Apart from Mr. Joyce's realism—the school-life, the life in the University, the family dinner with

* *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, by James Joyce. THE EGOIST LTD. Ready now, price 6s.

C246

C245 Continued

C246 James Joyce: at Last the Novel Appears. *Egoist*, IV. 2 (Feb. 1917) 21–22.
A review of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* (A quotation from this review, in nine lines, was printed on page [1] of *Extract from Press Notices of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce* ([Zürich? The Author? 1917?]), a four-page leaflet, measuring 19.1 x 12.4 cm., and, shortened to four lines, on page [1] of *Extracts from Some Press Notices of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. By James Joyce* ([London, The Egoist, Ltd., 1917]), also a leaflet of four pages, measuring 22 x 14 cm., both issued in connexion with the publication of the novel. Pages [1] and [4] of the second leaflet were reproduced in facsimile as back end-paper in Jane Lidderdale and Mary Nicholson's *Dear Miss Weaver* ([1970])— B101.)

the discussion of Parnell depicted in his novel—apart from, or of a piece with, all this is the style, the actual writing: hard, clear-cut, with no waste of words, no bundling up of useless phrases, no filling in with pages of slosh.

It is very important that there should be clear, unexaggerated, realistic literature. It is very important that there should be good prose. The hell of contemporary Europe is caused by the lack of representative government in Germany, *and* by the nonexistence of decent prose in the German language. Clear thought and sanity depend on clear prose. They cannot live apart. The former produces the latter. The latter conserves and transmits the former.

The mush of the German sentence, the straddling of the verb out to the end, are just as much a part of the befoozlement of Kultur and the consequent hell, as was the rhetoric of later Rome the seed and the symptom of the Roman Empire's decadence and extinction. A nation that cannot write clearly cannot be trusted to govern, nor yet to think.

Germany has had two decent prose-writers, Frederick the Great and Heine—the one taught by Voltaire, and the other saturated with French and with Paris. Only a nation accustomed to muzzy writing could have been led by the nose and bamboozled as the Germans have been by their controllers.

The terror of clarity is not confined to any one people. The obstructionist and the provincial are everywhere, and in them alone is the permanent danger to civilization. Clear, hard prose is the safeguard and should be valued as such. The mind accustomed to it will not be cheated or stampeded by national phrases and public emotionalities.

These facts are true, even for the detesters of literature. For those who love good writing there is no need of argument. In the present instance it is enough to say to those who will believe one that Mr. Joyce's book is now procurable.

EZRA POUND

CORRESPONDENCE

DREISER PROTEST

To the Editor of THE EGOIST

MADAM,—In your December number " A Member of the Authors' League of America " attacked me for my outspoken criticism of my own disgraced and unfortunate country. I have not replied until now, as I wished to learn something of this " Authors' League." I am now able to supply from their own official stationery a list of their " Council," " Executive Board," etc.

I beg the reader to witness the number of professional " red-bloods," and of writers of the sentimental-suggestive, boudoir-and-delicious-caresses type of novel, who have NOT supported the Dreiser protest. These leading lights of American Democracy are banded together presumably for the protection of the rights of authors and of literature. Many of them have not only failed to support Dreiser's fearless and unexaggerated realism, but cowering before the successor to Anthony Comstock of foul and ridiculous memory, the majority of them have combined together and DISMISSED the former secretary of their society BECAUSE he showed himself too active in organizing the protest against the suppression of Dreiser's book.

O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi as usual, and the cowardice of a servile democracy, also as usual, and the pusillanimity of America's popular writers, also as usual, and the inactive timidity of America's " elder generation of *literati*," also as usual, and my contempt for these national characteristics remains unaltered —as usual.

I append the list of officials and have starred those who have signed the protest: seventeen out of a council of sixty.

EZRA POUND

January 22, 1917.

C247

C246 Continued

C247 ✉ Dreiser Protest. *Egoist*, IV. 2 (Feb. 1917) 30.

THE REV. G. CRABBE, LL.B.

IT is not long since a distinguished editor announced that he was going to attack me. He was going to attack me for a phrase in one of my Articles entitled the "American Chaos." I had said that "since the death of Laurence Sterne or thereabouts, there has been neither in England nor America any sufficient sense of the value of realism in literature, of the value of writing words that conform precisely with fact, of free speech without evasions and circumlocutions."

I had no intention of insulting anyone in particular. I did not say that we could not find harassed and isolated individuals with a sufficient comprehension of the value of precise writing. It is the function and duty of every man with any trace of intelligence from time to time to insult the circumjacent stupidity. I hold that to be axiomatic. Also I said "thereabouts." I had forgotten, or at least for the moment I was not thinking of, the Rev. Crabbe, LL.B.

When we find a man of his date who can write "*There smiles your Bride, there sprawls your new-born Son,*" we can begin to take comfort in at least some of the phenomena of "Albion's" past. Think of the slobber that Wordsworth would have made over that illegitimate infant.

And in recording the life of the author of "The Borough," it must be recorded that Byron liked him, but that the British Public did not. The British public liked, has liked, likes and always will like all art, music, poetry, literature, glass engraving, sculpture, etc. in just such measure as it approaches the Tennysonian tone. It likes Shakespear, or at least accepts him in just so far as he is "Tennysonian." It has published the bard of Avon expurgated and even emended. There has never been an edition of "Purified Tennyson."

"It is incredible that his whole mind should be made up of fine sentiments," says our editor's "Bagehot." Of course it wasn't. It was that lady-like attitude toward the printed page that did it—that something, that ineffable "something," which kept Tennyson out of his works. I mean when he began to write for Viccy's ignorant ear, he immediately ceased to be the "Tennyson so muzzy that he tried to go out through the fireplace," the Tennyson with the broad North accent, the old man with the worst manners in England (except Carlyle's), the Tennyson whom "it kept the whole combined efforts of his family and his publishers to keep respectable." He became the Tate Gallery among poets.

The afflatus which has driven great artists to blurt out the facts of life with directness or with cold irony, or with passion, and with always precision; which impels Villon to write—

"Necessity makes men run wry,
And hunger drives the wolf from wood";

which impels Homer to show Hermes replying to Calypso—

"You, a goddess, ask of me who am a god,
Nevertheless I will tell you the truth";

which in contact with Turgenev builds a whole novel into the enforcement of some one or two speeches, so that we have, as the gaunt culmination, some phrase about the "heart of another" or the wide pardon in Maria Timofevna's "Nothing but death is irrevocable;" this urge, this impulse (or perhaps it is a different urge and impulse) leads Tennyson into pretty embroideries.

He refines the metric of England, at least he improves on some of Shelley's and does not quite reach the Elizabethans. Whereas Shakespear has never been refined enough for his compatriots. The eighteenth century set itself to mending his metres and the nineteenth to mending his morals.

The cult of the innocuous has debouched into the adoration of Wordsworth. He was a silly old sheep with a genius, an unquestionable genius, for imagisme, for a presentation of natural detail, wild-fowl bathing in a hole in the ice, etc., etc., and this talent, or the fruits of this talent, he buried in a desert of bleatings.

I know that he has been denounced as an atheist, but for all that he has been deemed so innocuous that he has become, if not the backbone, at least one of the ribs of your culture. And Crabbe?

The worst that should really be said of him is that he still clings to a few of Pope's tricks, and that he is not utterly free from the habit of moralizing. What is, in actuality, usually said of him is that he is "unpoetic," or, patronizingly, "that you can't call this really great poetry."

Let me admit at once that he is never absolute slush, nonsense or bombast. That admission should satisfy the multitudinous reader, but it will not.

If the nineteenth century had built itself on Crabbe? Ah, if! But no; they wanted confections.

Crabbe has no variety of metric, but he shows no inconsiderable skill in the use of his one habitual metre, to save the same from monotony.

I admit that he makes vague generalities about "Vice," "Villainy and Crime," etc., but these paragraphs are hardly more than short cuts between one passage of poetry and another.

He does not bore you, he does not disgust you, he does not bring on that feeling of nausea which we have when we realize that we are listening to an idiot who occasionally makes beautiful (or ornamental) verses.

Browning at his best went on with Crabbe's method. He expressed an adoration of Shelley, and he might have learned more from Crabbe, but he was still the soundest of all the Victorians. Crabbe will perhaps keep better than Browning, he will have a savour of freshness; of course he is *not* "the greater poet" of the two, but then he gives us such sound satisfaction—in his best moments. And those moments are precisely the moments when he draws his "Borough" with greatest exactness, and when

C248 The Rev. G. Crabbe, LL. B. *Future*, I. 4 (Feb. 1917) 110–11.

he refrains from commenting. Which are the moments "when he lets himself go," when he is neither "The Rev." nor the "LL.B." but just good, sensible Crabbe—at the end of "Inns," or reporting conversations in "Amusements," "Blaney," "Clelia," the people remembered by "Benbow"? If Englishmen had known how to select the best out of Crabbe they would have less need of consulting French stylists. Et pourtant—

"Then liv'd the good Squire Asgill—what a change
Has Death and Fashion shown us at the Grange?
He bravely thought it best became his rank,
That all his Tenants and his Tradesmen drank;
He was delighted from his favorite Room
To see them 'cross the Park go daily home,
Praising aloud the Liquor and the Host,
And striving who should venerate him most.

Along his valleys in the Evening-Hours
The Borough-Damse's stray'd to gather Flowers,
Or by the Brakes and Brushwood of the Park
To take their pleasant rambles in the dark.
Some Prudes, of rigid kind, forebore to call
On the kind Females—Favorites at the Hall;
But better natures saw, with much delight,
The different orders of mankind unite;
'Twas schooling Pride to see the Footman wait,
Smile on his sister and receive her plate.

Or Sir Denys admitting Clelia to the alms-house—

"With all her faults," he said, "the woman knew
How to distinguish—had a manner too;
And, as they say, she is allied to some
In decent station—let the creature come."

Oh, well! Byron enjoyed him. And the people liked Byron. They liked him for being "romantic." They adored Mrs. Hemans. And some day when Arthur's tomb is no longer an object for metrical research, and when the Albert Memorial is no longer regilded, Crabbe's people will still remain vivid. People will read Miss Austen because of her knowledge of the human heart, and not solely for her refinement.

His, Crabbe's, realism is not the hurried realism of ignorance, he has not the smirk of some novelists. His cantos are preceded by quotations from Tibullus and Hudibras *et cum aliis* beautifully chosen.

And with one more snatch I will close. It is at an inn called "The Boar"—

"There dwells a kind old aunt, and there you'll see
Some kind young nieces in her company:
What though it may some cool observers strike,
That such fair sisters should be so unlike;
And still another and another comes,
And at the Matron's table smiles and blooms;
A pious friend who with the ancient Dame
At sober cribbage takes an Evening-Game;
His cup beside him, through their play he quaffs
Or growing serious to the Text resorts,
And from the Sunday-Sermon makes reports, . ."

EZRA POUND.

ÉMILE VERHAEREN

May 21st, 1855—Nov. 29th, 1916

The death of Verhaeren is one more note in the tragedy.

Il est ainsi de pauvres coeurs,
Avec, en eux, des lacs de pleurs,
Qui sont pâles, commes les pierres
D'un cimetière.

Il est ainsi de pauvres dos,
Plus lourds de peine et de fardeaux
Que les toits des cassines brunes
Parmi les dunes.

Il est ainsi de pauvres mains,
Comme feuilles sur les chemins
Comme feuilles jaunes et mortes
Devant la porte.

Il est ainsi de pauvres yeux,
Humbles et bons et soucieux,
Et plus tristes que ceux des bêtes
Sous la tempête.

Il est ainsi de pauvres gens,
Aux gestes las et indulgents,
Sur qui s'acharne la misère
Au long des plaines de la terre.

The man should have no epitaph save his own best verses, poems of the Flamand country, of the dull sorrow of peasants, of the oppression of labor.

It is time to forget his rhetorical period, to forget that he pleased Gilbert Murray, and time to remember only his great sincerity, his great pity and the simplicity of his heart. He was excited by current generalities, in his worst moments he wrote such lines as:

Le bondissant tocsin des vérités vivantes,

In his reality he wrote such poems as the one I have quoted. Toward the end he wrote of the new sorrows of warfare, of men who had sat at his fireside and who in future would sit there no more.

Depuis la guerre
Ma chambre est close et solitaire;
. . . .
Car je n'ai plus pour compagnon
Que mon foyer à qui je parle.

It is extremely difficult to write of Verhaeren at this moment and for the public of a country not at war. He was recognized as the greatest poet of Belgium, though heretical voices have also been heard acclaiming Max Elskamp. There is always danger of overestimating a man, and of senitmentalizing over him, at the moment of his death, especially if it be sudden and violent. And such overestimation invariably leads to an equally undue reaction, both equitable minds and those tainted with jealousy adding their weight to this latter.

I think I am right in saying that Verhaeren carried more weight with the better young poets of Paris, five years ago, than did most, or perhaps any, of his contemporaries. Fort was also at that time in vogue. And Bazalgette had stirred up a fresh flurry of Whitmanism by his very excellent French translation. Verhaeren's faults were not those which irritated most during that season. He and Whitman were the saints of one temple.

I can not feel that he is so great a loss as Remy de Gourmont, but this is a personal and not a detached judicial opinion. Besides, DeGourmont's position was based in great part on his prose.

I doubt if there is as much good poetry in Verhaeren as in the earlier books of poems by Francis Jammes. I do not know that Verhaeren's pictures of Flemish country are bet-

C249

C248 Continued

C249 Émile Verhaeren, May 21st, 1855–Nov. 29th, 1916. *Poetry*, IX. 5 (Feb. 1917) 256–9.

ter than Viélé-Griffin's *"Lâche comme le froid et la pluie"*. I am fairly certain that his death leaves Laurent Tailhade the most important of the elder poets in France, or at least the only one of the elder men from whom we can still expect enjoyable poems. Tailhade must not be considered as satirist only, though his satires make swiftest appeal.

This whole French generation of men born in the late fifties and early sixties has presented the curious phenomenon of a dozen or two poets all "running even", all producing notable poems, none of them notably surpassing or dominating the rest. At no time would a company of a dozen intelligent literati have agreed on an order of prominence. This state of affairs might easily exist in a time of nonentities. It was in this case a sign of France's opulence, and though Verhaeren was not French he used the French language and his death must be held a loss to that literature. However much one may associate him with his own country, one must reckon his gifts in comparison with those of his French contemporaries. He was counted peer with the best of them. *Ezra Pound*

THINGS TO BE DONE

Transportation is civilization.—Rudyard Kipling

First, *we should get the tariff off books.* The work of the American Free Trade League may be purely "economic and political"; it is outside the scope of our activities. But a protective tariff on books is an obstacle to the free circulation of thought and *must* be done away with. "Transportation is civilization": that phrase is the most profound that Mr. Kipling has ever written. But the free circulation of thought is the very core and pulse of the matter.

The United States has a new law which permits and even fosters the importation of contemporary painting and sculpture. Is it anything but sloth and ignorance that leaves literature in worse condition than these other arts?

Second, *we should get a good copyright law.* The present law, framed in the interest of a few local mechanics, is also an obstacle to the free circulation of thought. Is there any reason why the United States should lag behind other countries in a matter of this sort?

Third, *let us learn more languages—let more people learn more languages.* The man who reads only one language is, intellectually, only half a man in comparison with the man of equal mental energy who can read two with comfort. All things are not written in one tongue.

C250

C249 Continued

C250 Things to Be Done. *Poetry*, IX. 6 (Mar. 1917) 312-14.
Signed: E. P.

Fourth, *we should multiply translations.* It is not everyone who has time to learn ten languages, or even two. Competition is of value even in matters of art and intelligence. The better the stock in the store, the more chance of finding what you need. We need more translations of French authors, not only contemporary but eighteenth-century authors. We need translations of German and Russian authors, many more than we get.

We need standards of comparison. All excellence has not risen out of one ant-hill. America is full of provincial people, who do not know that they are provincial, who are insulted if one calls them provincial; even though they have never stopped to inquire whether there are peculiar functions appertaining to provincials, and particular opportunities afforded by the very fact of provincialism, or whether it is a flaw to be, perhaps in part, overcome.

Fifth, *we must try to think, at least a little, about civilization, centralization* and its possible functions, the differentiation of individuals, and the function, advantage or disadvantage of such differentiation.

We should read De Gourmont, De Goncourt. We should not assume that Christ knew more than Confucius *until we have read Confucius.* We should mistrust the local parson and the local professor, remembering that lots of people, not so long ago, were brought up to believe in Carlyle and Macaulay. Nor should we assume that Darwin said the last word, or that Christianity is the religion of all the world, or that what we call Christianity would have been recognized as such by most of our ancestors. Codes, etiquettes and moralities have wavered and varied. Irony is still set down as a "sin" in manuals of devotion. The last heretic was burnt at the stake in 1758. We are not yet out of the forest.

It is necessary that the art of poetry should retain *all* its liberties. The poet must be free to recognize the existence of ideas, whatever they are and wherever he finds them.

Questions for Meditation

Is America still a colony? intellectually? in all ways save in her political organization?

Is she self-sufficient?

What is the value of a metropolis? of several?

Is America importing art? and exporting artists?

Does she export "artists", or merely promising embryos which hatch into artists elsewhere?

Does America want foreign books?

Does she originate? or does she merely multiply and dilute?

Is she bigoted? Is her bigotry a danger to the arts?

To what extent does she fear discovery and discoveries?

Is she mistrustful of invention simply because she has no critical sense? no standards whereby to measure achievement? Is this the reason for "booms" and for so many people of "promise" "petering out"?

How many of her authors consider quantity preferable to intensity? *E. P.*

C250 Continued

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

X

SENECA AND SCARRON

SENECA. You fill full my cup of joy, telling me that the stoics endure to this day and that in these latter ages you professedly held their doctrine.

Scarron. I was, without vanity, more of a stoic than you were, or than was Chrysippus, or Zeno, your founder. You were all in a position to philosophize at your ease. You yourself had immense possessions. The rest were either men of property or endowed with excellent health, or at least they had all their limbs. They came and went in the ordinary manner of men. But I was the shuttle of ill-fortune; misshapen, in a form scarcely human, immobile, bound in one spot like a tree, I suffered continually, and I showed that these evils are bounded by the body but can never reach the soul of a sage. Grief suffered always the shame of not being able to enter my house save by a limited number of doors.

Seneca. I am delighted to hear you speak thus. By your words alone I recognize you for a great stoic. Were you not your age's admiration?

Scarron. I was. I was not content to suffer my pangs with patience, I insulted them by my mockery. Steadiness would have honoured another, but I attained gaiety.

Seneca. O stoic wisdom! You are, then, no chimera, as is the common opinion! You are in truth among men, and here is a wise man whom you have made no less happy than Zeus. Come, sir, I must lead you to Zeno and the rest of our stoics; I want them to see the fruit of their admirable lessons to men.

Scarron. You will greatly oblige me by introducing me to such illustrious shades.

Seneca. By what name must they know you?

Scarron. Scarron is the name.

Seneca. Scarron? The name is known to me. Have I not heard several moderns, who are here, speak of you?

Scarron. Possibly.

Seneca. Did you not write a great mass of humorous and ridiculous verses?

Scarron. Yes. I even invented a sort of poetry which they call the burlesque. It goes to the limit in merriment.

Seneca. But you were not then a philosopher?

Scarron. Why not?

Seneca. It is not a stoic's business to write ludicrous books and to try to be mirth-provoking.

Scarron. Oh! I see that you do not understand the perfections of humour. All wisdom is in it. One can draw ridicule out of anything; I could even get it out of your books, if I wished to, and without any trouble at all: yet all things will not give birth to the serious, and I defy you to put my works to any purpose save that for which they were made. Would not this tend to show that mirth rules over all things, and that the world's affairs are not made for serious treatment? I have turned your Virgil's sacred *Æneid* into burlesque, and there is no better way to show that the magnificent and the ludicrous are near neighbours, with hardly a fence between them. All things are like these *tours de force* of perspective where a number of separate faces make, for example, an emperor if viewed from a particular angle; change the view-point and the figure formed is a scoundrel's.

Seneca. I am sorry that people did not understand that your frivolous verses were made to induce such profound reflections. Men would have respected you more than they did had they known you for so great a philosopher; but it was impossible to guess this from the plays you gave to the public.

Scarron. If I had written fat books to prove that poverty and sickness should have no effect on the gaiety of the sage, they would have been perhaps worthy of a stoic?

Seneca. Most assuredly.

Scarron. And I wrote heaven knows how many books which prove that in spite of poverty, in spite of infirmity, I was possessed of this gaiety; is not this better? Your treatises upon morals are but speculations on wisdom, my verses a continual practice.

Seneca. I am sure that your pretended wisdom was not a result of your reason, but merely of temperament.

Scarron. That is the best sort of wisdom in the world.

Seneca. They are droll wiseacres indeed who are temperamentally wise. Is it the least to their credit that they are not stark raving? The happiness of being virtuous may come sometimes from nature, but the merit of being wise can never come but from reason.

Scarron. People scarcely pay any attention to what you call a merit, for if we see that some man has a virtue, and we can make out that it is not his by nature, we rate it at next to nothing. It would seem, however, that being acquired by so much trouble, we should the more esteem it: no matter, it is a mere result of the reason and inspires no confidence.

Seneca. One should rely even less on the inequality of temperament in your wise men, who are wise only as their blood pleases. One must know how the interiors of their bodies are disposed ere one can gauge the reach of their virtue. Is it not incomparably finer to be led only by reason; to make oneself independent of nature, so that one need fear no surprises?

Scarron. That were better if it were possible; but, unfortunately, Nature keeps perpetual guard on her rights. Her rights are initial movements, and no one can wrest them from her. Men are often well under way ere reason is warned or awakened, and when she is ready to act she finds things in great disorder, and it is even then doubtful if she can do aught to help matters. No, I am by no means surprised to see so many folk resting but incomplete faith upon reason.

Seneca. Hers alone is the government of men and the ruling of all this universe.

Scarron. Yet she seldom manages to maintain her authority. I have heard that some hundred years after your death a platonic philosopher asked the reigning emperor for a little town in Calabria. It was wholly ruined. He wished to rebuild it and to police it according to the rules of Plato's *Republic* and to rename it Platonopolis. But the emperor refused the philosopher, having so little trust in divine Plato's reason that he was unwilling to risk to it the rule of a dump-heap. You see thereby how Reason has ruined her credit. If she were in any way estimable, men would be the only creatures who could esteem her, and men do not esteem her at all.

C251 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. X. Seneca and Scarron. *Egoist*, IV. 3 (Apr. 1917) 38–39.

A FLOCK FROM OXFORD

Wheels, An Anthology of Verse. Blackwell, Oxford; Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

This book presents itself in a pleasingly satiric cover, bright yellow, displaying a scraggy nursemaid and a makeshift perambulator. It is the proper sort of ink-pot to hurl itself in the face of senile pomposity. Here, however, the gaiety ends and the contents of the book have none of the lightness of Miss Sitwell's earlier couplet:

> With children our primeval curse
> We overrun the universe.

Of the nine contributors Wyndham Tennant has already been claimed by the war. One can not read his *Home Thoughts in Levantie* without being convinced that his loss is a loss to poetry as well as to those who knew him. It strikes me that real artists who have been plunged into the present inferno have written simply and without rhetoric, without any glorification of war. Gaudier-Brzeska wrote back from the front that the nightingales were still singing despite the bombardment. Tennant writes in similar vein:

> Green gardens in Levantie!
> Soldiers only know the street
> Where the mud is churned and splashed about
> By battle-wending feet.
> . . . .
> Two roofless ruins stand
> And here among the wreckage where the back wall should have been
> The grass was trodden on.
> . . . .
> . . . among the vivid blades
> Of soft and tender grass
> We lay, nor heard the limber wheels
> That pass and ever pass.
> . . . .
> Hungry for spring I bent my head,
> The perfume fanned my face,
> And all my soul was dancing
> In that little lovely place,
> Dancing with measured step from the wrecked and shattered towns
> Away . . . . . upon the Downs.
>
> I saw green banks of daffodil,
> Slim poplars in the breeze,
> Great tan-brown hares in gusty March
> A-courting on the leas;
> And meadows with their glittering streams and silver scurrying dace,
> Home . . . . . what a perfect place.

The poem is written with prose simplicity; with the possible exception of "battle-wending" there is no over-decorative word. These properties are of more importance than the very much over-emphasized present question of free or regular verse.

Most of the anthology is in the older forms. Miss Cunard shows at times surprising closeness of thought, and a talent for epithets with her dwarfs "with slyly-pointed steps" and her aged abstractions, Love, Joy, Sin, "in solemn stage-learnt ecstasy." She uses the sonnet, like most poets at the beginning of their course, without recognizing that the sonnet is a peculiar costume. Like duck trousers or a scarlet hunting-coat, it is suitable on some occasions and not quite fitting on others. Few forms, save the classic quantitive measures, are a better drill-ground for one's early effort, but a sense of form is not shown by trying to fit matter which is not essen-

C252 A Flock from Oxford. *Poetry*, X. 1 (Apr. 1917) 41–44.
A review, signed: E. P., of *Wheels, An Anthology of Verse.*

tially a sonnet into the sonnet-shell. Miss Cunard manages best in the sonnet *Uneasiness.* She abandons the form in *From the Train:*

> Smoke-stacks, coal-stacks, hay-stacks, slack,
> Colorless, scentless, pointless, dull;
> Railways, highways, roadways, black,
> Grantham, Birmingham, Leeds and Hull.
>
> Steamers, passengers, convoys, trains,
> Merchandise travelling over the sea;
> Smut-filled streets and factory lanes,
> What can these ever mean to me?

Both Sacheverell and Edith Sitwell show promise, the latter using alternate ten- and six syllable lines with excellent rhythmic and tonal effect but with an inexcusable carelessness as to meaning and to the fitness of expression. The anthology closes with some excellent prose translations from Rimbaud by H. Rootham. We would welcome a complete translation in the same manner. *E. P.*

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

XI

STRATO, RAPHAEL OF URBINO

STRATO. I did not expect that the advice I gave to my slave would have such happy effects, yet in the world above it saved me my life and my kingdom altogether, and here it has won me the admiration of all the sages.

Raphael. What advice did you give?

Strato. I was at Tyre. All the slaves revolted and butchered their masters, yet one of mine was humane enough to spare me, and to hide me from the fury of the rest. They agreed to choose for their king the man who, upon a set day, should see the sun rise before any one else. They gathered in the plain, the whole multitude gluing their eyes to the eastern heaven, where the sun is wont to arise; my slave alone, in accordance with my instructions, kept his eyes toward the west. You may well believe that the others thought him a fool. However, by turning his back on them he saw the first rays of the sun which caught on a lofty tower, while his fellows still sought the sun's body in the east. They admired the subtlety of his mind, but he confessed that it was my due and that I was still among the living. They elected me king as a man descended of gods.

Raphael. I see that your advice was quite useful yet do not find it a subject for wonder.

Strato. All our philosophers here will explain to you that I taught my slave that the wise should ever turn their backs on the mob, and that the general opinion is usually sound if you take it to mean its own opposite.

Raphael. These philosophers talk like philosophers. It is their business to scoff at common opinion and prejudice; yet there is nothing more convenient or useful than are these latter.

Strato. From the manner in which you speak, one sees that you had no difficulty in complying with them.

Raphael. I assure you that my defence of prejudice is disinterested, and that by taking prejudice's part I laid myself open to no small ridicule. They were searching the Roman ruins for statues and as I was a good sculptor and painter they chose me to judge which were antique. Michael Angelo, my competitor, made in secret a perfect statue of Bacchus. He broke off one of the fingers, then hid the statue in a place where he knew we would dig. I declared it antique when we found it. He said it was modern. I based my opinion chiefly on the beauty of the work which, according to our rules, was well worthy of Grecian carvers. Irritated at contradiction I carried the matter further, and said it had been done in the time of Polycletus or Phidias. Then Michael Angelo brought out the broken irrefutable finger. I was greatly mocked for my prejudice, but what would I have done without prejudice? I was judge, and as judge one must make decisions.

Strato. You would have decided according to reason.

Raphael. Does reason ever decide? I should never have known by any process of reason to what age the statue belonged, I should have seen only its excellent beauty, then prejudice came to my aid, saying that a beautiful statue was ancient, or should be. With such a decision I judged.

Strato. It may well be that reason has no incontestable formulæ for things of such slight importance; but upon all questions of human conduct she has decisions quite sure. Unfortunately men do not consult them.

Raphael. Let us then consult her on some point and see if she will decide it. Ask her if we should weep or laugh at the death of our friends and relations. On one side she will say, "they are lost to you, therefore weep." On the other, "they are delivered from the miseries of this life, you should therefore be joyful." In the face of such answers from reason, we act as local custom decrees. We weep at her bidding, and we weep so thoroughly that we cannot conceive laughter as possible; or we laugh so thoroughly that tears seem out of the question.

Strato. Reason is not always so undecided. She allows custom to decide such matters as are not worth her attention, but think how many very considerable things there are upon which she has clear-cut ideas, and from which she draws consequences equally clear.

Raphael. Unless I am much mistaken there are very few of these clear ideas.

Strato. No matter, they alone are worthy of absolute trust.

Raphael. That cannot be, for reason offers us a very small number of set maxims, and our mind is so made as to believe in many more. The overplus of

C253

C252 Continued
C253 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. XI. Strato, [and] Raphael of Urbino. *Egoist,* IV. 4 (May 1917) 57–58.

one's inclination to believe in something or other all counts on the side of prejudice, and false opinions fill up the void.

Strato. But what need to cast oneself into error? Cannot one keep one's judgment suspended, in these unprovable matters? Reason stops when she knows not which way to turn.

Raphael. Very true, she has no other secret means of keeping herself from mistakes, save that of standing stock-still; but such a condition does violence to man's mind, the human mind is in movement, and it must continue to move. It is not every man who can doubt; we have need of illumination to attain this faculty, we have need of strength to continue it. Moreover doubt is without action and among mankind we must act.

Strato. Thus one should preserve the prejudices of custom in order to act like the next man but destroy the habits of thought in order to think like the sage.

Raphael. Better preserve them all. You seem to forget the old Samnite's answer when his compatriots sent to ask him what should be done with the Roman army which they had caught in the Caudine forks. The old man replied that they should put them all to the sword. The Samnites thought this too cruel; he then said they should let them go free and unscathed, and in the end they did neither, and reaped the evil result. It is the same with prejudices, we must either keep the whole lot or crush them out altogether, otherwise those you have eliminated will make you mistrust those which remain. The unhappiness of being deceived in many things will not be balanced by the pleasure of its being an unconscious deceit, and you will have neither the illumination of truth nor yet the comfort of error.

Strato. If there were no means of escaping your alternative, one should not long hesitate about taking a side. We should root out all prejudice.

Raphael. But reason would hunt out all our old notions and leave nothing else in their place. She would create a species of vacuum. And how could one bear this? No, no, considering how slight an amount of reason inheres in all men, we must leave them the prejudices to which they are so well acclimatized. These prejudices are reason's supplement. All that is lacking on one side can be got out of the other.

The Little Review

VOL. IV. MAY 1917 NO. I

Editorial

Ezra Pound

I HAVE accepted the post of Foreign Editor of *The Little Review:* chiefly because:

I.

I wished a place where the current prose writings of James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, and myself might appear regularly, promptly, and together, rather than irregularly, sporadically, and after useless delays.

My connection with *The Little Review* does not imply a severance of my relations with *Poetry* for which I still remain Foreign Correspondent, and in which my poems will continue to appear until its guarantors revolt.

I would say, however, in justification both of *Poetry* and myself, that *Poetry* has never been "the instrument" of my "radicalism". I respect Miss Monroe for all that she has done for the support of American poetry, but in the conduct of her magazine my voice and vote have always been the vote and voice of a minority.

I recognize that she, being "on the ground", may be much better fitted to understand the exigencies of magazine publishing in America, but *Poetry* has done numerous things to which I could never have given my personal sanction, and which could not have occurred in any magazine which had constituted itself my "instrument". *Poetry* has shown an unflagging courtesy to a lot of old fools and fogies whom I should have told to go to hell tout pleinement and bonnement. It has refrained from attacking a number of public nuisances; from implying that the personal charm of the late Mr. Gilder need not have been,

C254

C253 Continued

C254 Editorial. *Little Review*, New York, IV. 1 (May 1917) [3]–6.
Accepting the post of Foreign Editor.

of necessity, the sign manifest of a tremendous intellect; from heaping upon the high-school critics of America the contempt which they deserve.

There would have been a little of this contempt to spare for that elder generation of American magazines, founded by mediocrities with good intentions, continued by mediocrities without any intentions, and now "flourishing" under the command and empery of the relicts, private-secretaries and ex-typists of the second regime.

Had *Poetry* been in any sense my "instrument" I should years ago have pointed out certain defects of the elder American writers. Had *Poetry* been my instrument I should never have permitted the deletion of certain fine English words from poems where they rang well and soundly. Neither would I have felt it necessary tacitly to comply with the superstition that the Christian Religion is indispensable, or that it has always existed, or that its existence is ubiquitous, or irrevocable and eternal.

I don't mind the Christian Religion, but I can not blind myself to the fact that Confucius was extremely intelligent. Organized religions have nearly always done more harm than good, and they have always constituted a danger. At any rate, respect to one or another of them has nothing to do with good letters. If any human activity is sacred it is the formulation of thought in clear speech for the use of humanity; any falsification or evasion is evil. The codes of propriety are all local, parochial, transient; a consideration of them, other than as subject matter, has no place in the arts.

I can say these things quite distinctly and without in the least detracting from my praise of the spirited manner in which Miss Monroe has conducted her paper. She is faced with the practical problem of circulating a magazine in a certain peculiar milieu, which thing being so I have nothing but praise for the way she has done it. But that magazine does not express my convictions. Attacks on it, grounded in such belief, and undertaken in the magnanimous hope of depriving me of part of my sustenance, can not be expected to have more than a temporary success and that among ill-informed people.

Blast, founded chiefly in the interest of the visual arts, is of necessity suspended. With Gaudier-Brzeska dead on the field of battle, with Mr. William Roberts, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Etchells, and Mr. Wyndham Lewis all occupied in various branches of the service, there is no new vorticist painting to write about. Such manuscript as Mr. Lewis has left with me, and such things as he is able to write in the brief leisure allowed an artillery officer, will appear in these pages.

It is quite impossible that *Blast* should again appear until Mr. Lewis is free to give his full energy to it.

In so far as it is possible, I should like *The Little Review* to aid and abet *The Egoist* in its work. I do not think it can be too often pointed out that during the last four years *The Egoist* has published serially, in the face of no inconsiderable difficulties, the only translation of Remy de Gourmont's *Chevaux de Diomedes;* the best translation of Le Comte de Gabalis, Mr. Joyce's masterpiece *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* and is now publishing Mr. Lewis's novel *Tarr.* Even if they had published nothing else there would be no other current periodical which could challenge this record, but *The Egoist* has

not stopped there; they have in a most spirited manner carried out the publication in book form of the *Portrait of the Artist*, and are in the act of publishing Mr. Eliot's poems, under the title *Mr. Prufrock and Observations*.

I see no reason for concealing my belief that the two novels, by Joyce and Lewis, and Mr. Eliot's poems are not only the most important contributions to English literature of the past three years, but that they are practically the only works of the time in which the creative element is present, which in any way show invention, or a progress beyond precedent work. The mass of our contemporaries, to say nothing of our debilitated elders, have gone on repeating themselves and each other.

II.

Secondly, there are certain prevalent ideas to which I can not subscribe. I can not believe that the mere height of the Rocky Mountains will produce lofty poetry; we have had little from Chimborazo, the Alps or the Andes. I can not believe that the mere geographical expanse of America will produce of itself excellent writing. The desert of Sahara is almost equally vast. Neither can I look forward with longing to a time when each village shall rejoice in a bad local poetaster making bad verse in the humdrum habitual way that the local architect puts up bad buildings. The arts are not the mediocre habit of mankind. There is no common denominator between the little that is good and the waste that is dull, mediocre. It may be pleasing to know that a cook is president of the local poetry society in Perigord,—there is no reason why a cook should not write as well as a plowman,—but the combination of several activities is really irrelevant. The fact remains that no good poetry has come out of Perigord since the Albigensian crusade, anno domini twelve hundred and nine. There being a local poetry society has not helped to prevent this.

The shell-fish grows its own shell, the genius creates its own milieu. You, the public, can kill genius by actual physical starvation, you may perhaps thwart or distort it, but you can in no way create it.

Because of this simple fact the patron is absolutely at the mercy of the artist, and the artist at the cost of some discomfort—personal, transient discomfort—is almost wholly free of the patron, whether this latter be an individual, or the hydra-headed detestable vulgus.

There is no misanthropy in a thorough contempt for the mob. There is no respect for mankind save in respect for detached individuals.

C254 Continued

Pierrots

Scene courte mais typique

(*After the "Pierrots" of Jules Laforgue.*)

John Hall

Your eyes! Since I lost their incandescence
Flat calm engulphs my jibs,
The shudder of *Vae soli* gurgles beneath my ribs.

You should have seen me after the affray,
I rushed about in the most agitated way
Crying: My God, My God, what will she say?

My soul's antennae are prey to such perturbations,
Wounded by your indirectness in these situations
And your bundle of mundane complications.

Your eyes put me up to it.
I thought: Yes, divine, these yes, but what exists
Behind them? What's there? Her soul's an affair for oculists.

And I am sliced with loyal æsthetics.
Hate tremolos and national frenetics.
In brief, violet is the ground tone of my phonetics.

I am not "that chap there" nor yet "The Superb."
But my soul, the sort which harsh sounds disturb,
Is, at bottom, distinguished and fresh as a March herb.

My nerves still register the sounds of contra-bass',
I can walk about without fidgeting when people pass,
Without smirking into a pocket-looking-glass.

Yes, I have rubbed shoulders and knocked off my chips
Outside your set but, having kept faith in your eyes,
You might pardon such slips.

Eh, make it up?—
Soothings, confessions;
These new concessions
Hurl me into such a mass of divergent impressions.
(*Exit.*)

C255 PIERROTS: SCENE COURTE MAIS TYPIQUE (AFTER THE "PIERROTS" OF JULES LAFORGUE). *Little Review*, IV. 1 (May 1917) 11–12.
By "John Hall."

Jodindranath Mawhwor's Occupation

Ezra Pound

THE soul of Jodindranath Mawhwor clove to the god of this universe and he meditated the law of the Shastras.

He was a man of moderate income inherited for the most part from his fathers, of whom there were sevevral, slightly augmented by his own rather desultory operations of commerce. He had never made money by conquest and was inclined to regard this method of acquisition as antiquated; as belonging rather to the days of his favorite author than to our own.

He had followed the advice of the Sutras, had become the head of an house in the not unprosperous city of Migdalb, in a quarter where dwelt a reasonable proportion of fairly honest and honourable people not unaverse to gossip and visits. His house was situated by a watercourse, in lieu of new fangled plumbing, and in this his custom was at one with that of the earliest Celts. It was divided in various chambers for various occupations, surrounded by a commodious garden, and possessed of the two chief chambers, the "exterior" and the "interior" (*butt* and *ben*). The interior was the place for his women, the exterior enhanced with rich perfumes, contained a bed, soft, luscious, and agreeable to the action of vision, covered with a cloth of unrivalled whiteness. It was a little humped in the middle, and surmounted with garlands and bundles of flowers, which were sometimes renewed in the morning. Upon it were also a coverlet brightly embroidered and two cylindrical pillows, one at the head and the other placed at the foot. There was also a sort of sofa or bed for repose, at the head of which stood a case for unguents, and perfumes to be used during the night, and a stand for flowers and pots of cosmetic and other odoriferous substances, essences for perfuming the breath, new cut slices of lemon peel and such things as were fitting. On the floor near the sofa rested a metal spittoon, and a toilet case, and above it was a luth suspended from an elephant's tusk, uncut but banded with silver. There was also a drawing table, a bowl of perfume, a few books, and a garland of amaranths. Further off was a sort of round chair or tabouret, a chest containing a chess board, and a low table for dicing. In the outer apartment were cages for Jodindranath's birds. He had a great many too many. There were separate small rooms for spinning, and one for carving in wood and such like dilettantismes. In the garden was a sort of merry-

C256 Jodindranath Mawhwor's Occupation. *Little Review*, IV. 1 (May 1917) 12–18.
Reprinted in *Much Ado*, St. Louis, Mo. (1920?) as "Pavannes, by Ezra Poun [*sic*]: Jodindranath Mawhwor's Occupation."

go-round of good rope, looking more or less like a May-pole. There was likewise a common see-saw or teeter, a green house, a sort of rock garden, and two not too comfortable benches.

2.

Jodindranath rose in the morning and brushed his teeth, after having performed other unavoidable duties as prescribed in the sutra, and he applied to his body a not excessive, as he considered it, amount of unguents and perfumes. He then blackened his eyebrows, drew faint lines under his eyes, put a fair deal of rouge on his lips, and regarded himself in a mirror. Then having chewed a few betel leaves to perfume his breath, and munched another bonne-bouche of perfume, he set about his day's business. He was a creature of habit. That is to say, he bathed, daily. And upon alternate days he anointed his person with oil, and on the third day he lamented that the mossy substance employed by the earliest orthodox hindoos was no longer obtainable. He had never been brought to regard soap with complaisance. His conscience was troubled, both as to the religious and social bearing of this solidified grease. He suspected the presence of beef-suet, it was at best a parvenu and Mohametan substance. Every four days he shaved, that is to say, he shaved his head and his visage, every five or ten days he shaved all the rest of his body. He meticulously removed the sweat from his arm-pits. He ate three meals daily; in the morning, afternoon and at evening as is prescribed in the Charayana.

Immediately after breakfast he spent some time instructing his parrots in language. He then proceeded to cock-fights, quail-fights and ram-fights; from them to the classical plays, though their representations have sadly diminished. He slept some hours at mid-day. Then, as is befitting to the head of an house, he had himself arrayed in his ornaments and habiliment and passed the afternoon in talk with his friends and acquaintance. The evening was given over to singing. Toward the end of it Jodindranath, as the head of his house, retaining only one friend

in his company, sat waiting in the aforementioned perfumed and well arranged chamber. As the lady with whom he was at that time connected did no arrive on the instant, he considered sending a messenger to reproach her. The atmosphere grew uneasy. His friend Mohon fidgeted slightly.

Then the lady arrived. Mohon, his friend, rose graciously bidding her welcome, spoke a few pleasant words and retired. Jodinranath remained. And for that day, the twenty fifth of August, 1916, this was his last occupation. In this respect the day resembled all others.

This sort of thing has gone on for thirty five hundred years and there have been no disastrous consequences.

3.

As to Jodindranath's thoughts and acts after Mohon had left him, I can speak with no definite certainty. I know that my friend was deeply religious; that he modeled his life on the Shatras and somewhat on the Sutra. To the Kama Sutra he had given minute attention. He was firmly convinced that one should not take one's pleasure with a woman who was a lunatic, or leperous, or too white, or too black, or who gave forth an unpleasant odor, or who lived an ascetic life, or whose husband was a man given to wrath and possessed of inordinate power. These points were to him a matter of grave religion.

He considered that his friends should be constant and that they should assist his designs.

He considered it fitting that a citizen should enter into relations with laundrymen, barbers, cowmen, florists, druggists, merchants of betel leaves, cab-drivers, and with the wives of all these.

He had carefully considered the sizes and shapes and ancient categories of women; to wit, those which should be classified as she-dog, she-horse, and she-elephant, according to their cubic volume. He agreed with the classic author who recommends men to choose women about their own size.

The doctrine that love results either from continuous habit,

from imagination, from faith, or from the perception of exterior objects, or from a mixture of some or all of these causes, gave him no difficulty. He accepted the old authors freely.

We have left him with Lalunmokish seated upon the bed humped in the middle. I can but add that he had carefully considered the definitions laid down in the Sutra; kiss nominal, kiss palpitant, kiss contactic, the kiss of one lip and of two lips (preferring the latter), the kiss transferred, the kiss showing intention. Beyond this he had studied the various methods of scratching and tickling, and the nail pressures as follows: sonorous, half moon and circle, peacock-claw, and blue-lotus.

He considered that the Sutra was too vague when it described the Bengali women, saying that they have large nails, and that the southern women have small nails, which may serve in divers manners for giving pleasure but give less grace to the hand. Biting he did not much approve. Nor was he very greatly impressed with the literary tastes of the public women in Paraliputra. He read books, but not a great many. He preferred conversation which did not leave the main groove. He did not mind its being familiar.

(For myself I can only profess the deepest respect for the women of Paraliputra, who have ever been the friends of brahmins and of students and who have greatly supported the arts.)

4.

Upon the day following, as Jodindranath was retiring for his mid-day repose, his son entered the perfumed apartment. Jodindra closed the book he had been reading. The boy was about twelve years of age. Jodindra began to instruct him, but without indicating what remarks were his own and what derived from ancient authority. He said:—

"Flower of my life, lotus bud of the parent stem, you must preserve our line and keep fat our ancestral spirits lest they be found withered like bats, as is said in the Mahabharata. And for this purpose you will doubtless marry a virgin of your own caste and acquire a legal posterity and a good reputation. Still

the usage of women is not for one purpose only, for what purpose is the usage of women?"

"The use of women," answered the boy, "is for generation and pleasure."

"There is also a third use," said his father, "yet with certain women you must not mingle. Who are the prohibited women?"

The boy answered, "We should not practise dalliance with the women of higher caste, or with those whom another has had for his pleasure, even though they are of our own caste. But the practise of dalliance with women of lower caste, and with women expelled from their own caste, and with public women, and with women who have been twice married is neither commanded us nor forbidden."

"With such women," said Jodindranath, "dalliance has no object save pleasure. But there are seasons in life when one should think broadly. There are circumstances when you should not merely parrot a text or think only as you have been told by your tutor. As in dalliance itself there is no text to be followed verbatim, for a man should trust in part to the whim of the moment and not govern himself wholly by rules, so in making your career and position, you should think of more things than generation and pleasure.

"You need not say merely: 'The woman is willing' or 'She has been two times married, what harm can there be in this business?' These are mere thoughts of the senses, impractical fancies. But you have your life before you, and perchance a time will come when you may say, 'This woman has gained the heart of a very great husband, and rules him, and he is a friend of my enemy, if I can gain favor with her, she will persuade him to give up my enemy.' My son, you must manage your rudder. And again, if her husband have some evil design against you, she may divert him, or again you may say, 'If I gain her favor I may then make an end of her husband and we shall have all his great riches'. Or if you should fall into misfortune and say, 'A liaison with this woman is in no way

beset with danger, she will bring me a very large treasure, of which I am greatly in need considering my pestilent poverty and my inability to make a good living.'

"Or again: 'This woman knows my weak points, and if I refuse her she will blab them abroad and tarnish my reputation. And she will set her husband against me.'

"Or again: 'This woman's husband has violated my women, I will give him his own with good interest.'

"Or again: 'With this woman's aid I may kill the enemy of Raja, whom I have been ordered to kill, and she hides him.'

"Or again: 'The woman I love is under this female's influence, I will use one as the road to the other.'

"Or: 'This woman will get me a rich wife whom I cannot get at without her.' No, my Blue Lotus, life is a serious matter. You will not always have me to guide you. You must think of practical matters. Under such circumstances you should ally yourself with such women."

Thus spoke Jodindra; but the council is very ancient and is mostly to be found in the Sutras. These books have been thought very holy. They contain chapters on pillules and philtres.

When Jodindranath had finished this speech he sank back upon one of the cylindrical cushions. In a few moments his head bowed in slumber. This was the day for oil. The next day he shaved his whole body. His life is not unduly ruffled.

Upon another day Jodindranath said to his son, "There are certain low women, people of ill repute, addicted to avarice. You should not converse with them at the street corners, lest your creditors see you."

His son's life was not unduly ruffled.

DIALOGUES OF FONTENELLE

TRANSLATED BY EZRA POUND

XII

BOMBASTES PARACELSUS AND MOLIÈRE

MOLIÈRE. I should be delighted with you, if only because of your name, Paracelsus. One would have thought you some Greek or Roman, and never have suspected that Paracelsus was an Helvetian philosopher.

Paracelsus. I have made my name as illustrious as it is lovely. My works are a great aid to those who would pierce nature's secrets, and more especially to those who launch out into the knowledge of genii and elementals.

Molière. I can readily believe that such is the true realm of science. To know men, whom one sees every day, is nothing; but to know the invisible genii is quite another affair.

Paracelsus. Doubtless. I have given precise information as to their nature, employments, and inclinations, as to their different orders, and their potencies throughout the cosmos.

Molière. How happy you were to be possessed of this knowledge, for before this you must have known man so precisely, yet many men have not attained even this.

Paracelsus. Oh, there is no philosopher so inconsiderable as not to have done so.

Molière. I suppose so. And you yourself have no indecisions regarding the nature of the soul, or its functions, or the nature of its bonds with the body?

Paracelsus. Frankly, it's impossible that there should not always remain some uncertainties on these subjects, but we know as much of them as philosophy is able to learn.

Molière. And you yourself know no more?

Paracelsus. No. Isn't that quite enough?

Molière. Enough? It is nothing at all. You mean that you have leapt over men whom you do not understand, in order to come upon genii?

Paracelsus. Genii are much more stimulatory to our natural curiosity.

Molière. Yes, but it is unpardonable to speculate about them before one has completed one's knowledge of men. One would think the human mind wholly exhausted, when one sees men taking as objects of knowledge things which have perhaps no reality, and when one sees how gaily they do this. However, it is certain that there are enough very real objects to keep one wholly employed.

Paracelsus. The human mind naturally neglects the sciences which are too simple, and runs after those more mysterious. It is only upon these last that it can expend all its activity.

Molière. So much the worse for the mind; what you say is not at all to its credit. The truth presents itself, but being too simple it passes unrecognized, and ridiculous mysteries are received only because of their mystery. I believe that if most men saw the universe as it is, seeing there neither *virtues* nor numbers, nor properties of the planets, nor fatalaties tied to certain times and revolutions, they could not help saying of its admirable arrangement: "What, is that all there is to it?"

Paracelsus. You call these mysteries ridiculous, because you have not been able to reach into them, they are truly reserved for the great.

Molière. I esteem those who do not understand these mysteries quite as much as those who do understand; unfortunately nature has not made every one incapable of such understanding.

Paracelsus. But you who seem so didactic, what profession did you follow on earth?

Molière. A profession quite different from yours. You studied the powers of genii, I studied the follies of men.

Paracelsus. A fine subject. Do we not know well enough that men are subject to plenty of follies?

Molière. We know it in the gross, and confusedly; but we must come to details, and then we can understand the scope and extent of this science.

Paracelsus. Well, what use did you make of it?

Molière. I gathered in a particular place the greatest possible number of people and then showed them that they were all fools.

Paracelsus. It must have needed a terrible speech to get that plain fact into their heads.

Molière. Nothing is easier. One proves them their silliness without using much eloquence, or much premeditated reasoning. Their acts are so ludicrous that if you but show like acts before them, you overwhelm them with their own laughter.

Paracelsus. I understand you, you were a comedian. For myself I cannot conceive how one can get any pleasure from comedy; one goes to laugh at a representation of customs, why should one not laugh at the customs themselves?

Molière. In order to laugh at the world's affairs one must in some fashion stand apart, or outside them. Comedy takes you outside them, she shows them to you as a pageant in which you yourself have no part.

Paracelsus. But does not a man go straight back to that which he has so recently mocked, and take his wonted place in it?

Molière. No doubt. The other day, to amuse myself, I made a fable on this same subject. A young gosling flew with the usual clumsiness of his species, and during his momentary flight, which scarcely lifted him from the earth, he insulted the rest of the barnyard: "Unfortunate animals, I see you beneath me, you cannot thus cleave the æther." It was a very short mockery, the gosling fell with the words.

Paracelsus. What use then are the reflections of comedy, since they are like the flight of your gosling, and since one falls back at once into the communal silliness?

Molière. It is much to have laughed at oneself; nature has given us that marvellous faculty lest we make dupes of ourselves. How often, when half of our being is doing something with enthusiasm, does the other half stand aside laughing? And if need were we might find a third part to make mock of both of the others. You might say that man was made of inlays.

Paracelsus. I cannot see that there is much in all this to occupy one's attention. A few banal reflections, a few jests of scanty foundation deserve but little esteem, but what efforts of meditation may we not need to treat of more lofty matters?

Molière. You are coming back to your genii, but I recognize only fools. However, although I have never worked upon subjects save those which lie before all men's eyes, I can predict that my comedies will outlast your exalted productions. Everything is subject to the changes of fashion, the labours of the mind are not exempt from this destiny of doublets and breeches. I have seen, lord knows how many books and fashions of writing interred with their authors, very much in the manner that certain races bury a man with his most valued belongings. I know perfectly well that there may be revolutions in the kingdom of letters, and with all that I guarantee that my writings will endure. And I know why, for he who would paint for immortality must paint fools.

C257 Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. XII. Bombastes Paracelsus and Molière. *Egoist*, IV. 5 (June 1917) 70–71.

DRUNKEN HELOTS AND MR. ELIOT*

GENIUS has I know not what peculiar property, its manifestations are various, but however diverse and dissimilar they may be, they have at least one property in common. It makes no difference in what art, in what mode, whether the most conservative, or the most ribbald-revolutionary, or the most diffident; if in any land, or upon any floating deck over the ocean, or upon some newly contrapted craft in the æther, genius manifests itself, at once some elderly gentleman has a flux of bile from his liver; at once from the throne or the easy Cowperian sofa, or from the gutter, or from the œconomical press room there bursts a torrent of elderly words, splenetic, irrelevant, they form themselves instinctively into large phrases denouncing the inordinate product.

This peculiar kind of *rabbia* might almost be taken as the test of a work of art, mere talent seems incapable of exciting it. "You can't fool me, sir, you're a scoundrel," bawls the testy old gentlemen.

Fortunately the days when "that very fiery particle" could be crushed out by the *Quarterly* are over, but it interests me, as an archæologist, to note that the firm which no longer produces Byron, but rather memoirs, letters of the late Queen, etc., is still running a review; and that this review is still where it was in 1812, or whatever the year was; and that, not having an uneducated Keats to condemn, a certain Mr. Waugh is scolding about Mr. Eliot.

All I can find out, by asking questions concerning Mr. Waugh, is that he is "a very old chap," "a reviewer." From internal evidence we deduce that he is, like the rest of his generation of English *gensdelettres*, ignorant of Laforgue; of De Regnier's *Odelettes*; of his French contemporaries generally, of De Gourmont's *Litanies*, of Tristan Corbière, Laurent Tailhade. This is by no means surprising. We are used to it from his "b'ilin'."

However, he outdoes himself, he calls Mr. Eliot a "drunken helot." So called they Anacreon in the days of his predecessors, but from the context in the *Quarterly* article I judge that Mr. Waugh does not intend the phrase as a compliment, he is trying to be abusive, and moreover, he in his limited way has succeeded.

Let us sample the works of the last "Drunken Helot." I shall call my next anthology "Drunken Helots" if I can find a dozen poems written half so well as the following:

CONVERSATION GALANTE

I observe: "Our sentimental friend the moon!
Or possibly (fantastic, I confess)
It may be Prester John's balloon
Or an old battered lantern hung aloft
To light poor travellers to their distress."
  She then: "How you digress!"

And I then: "Some one frames upon the keys
That exquisite nocturne, with which we explain
The night and moonshine; music which we seize
To body forth our own vacuity."
  She then: "Does this refer to me?"
  'Oh no, it is I who am inane.'

"You, madam, are the eternal humorist,
The eternal enemy of the absolute,
Giving our vagrant moods the slightest twist!
With your air indifferent and imperious
At a stroke our mad poetics to confute—"
  And—"Are we then so serious?"

Our helot has a marvellous neatness. There is a comparable finesse in Laforgue's "Votre âme est affaire d'oculiste," but hardly in English verse.

* *Prufrock and other Observations*, by T. S. Eliot. The Egoist, Ltd. 1s. net; postage 2d.

Let us reconsider this drunkenness:

LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—
Lean on a garden urn—
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—
Fling them to the ground and turn
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,
So I would have had her stand and grieve,
So he would have left
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,
As the mind deserts the body it has used.
I should find
Some way incomparably light and deft,
Some way we both should understand,
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather
Compelled my imagination many days,
Many days and many hours:
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers.
And I wonder how they should have been together!
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

And since when have helots taken to reading Dante and Marlowe? Since when have helots made a new music, a new refinement, a new method of turning old phrases into new by their aptness? However the *Quarterly*, the century old, the venerable, the præclarus, the voice of Gehova and Co., Sinai and 51A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, has pronounced this author a helot. They are all for an aristocracy made up of, possibly, Tennyson, Southey and Wordsworth, the flunkey, the dull and the duller. Let us sup with the helots. Or perhaps the good Waugh is a wag, perhaps he hears with the haspirate and wishes to pun on Mr. Heliot's name: a bright bit of syzogy.

I confess his type of mind puzzles me, there is no telling what he is up to.

I do not wish to misjudge him, this theory may be the correct one. You never can tell when old gentlemen grow facetious. He does not mention Mr. Eliot's name; he merely takes his lines and abuses them. The artful dodger, he didn't (*sotto voce* "he didn't want 'people' to know that Mr. Eliot was a poet").

The poem he chooses for malediction is the title poem, "Prufrock." It is too long to quote entire.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons.
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
  So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
  And how should I presume?

* * * *

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets,
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

Let us leave the silly old Waugh. Mr. Eliot has made an advance on Browning. He has also made his dramatis personæ contemporary and convincing. He has been an individual in his poems. I have read the contents of this book over and over, and with

C258 Drunken Helots and Mr. Eliot. *Egoist*, IV. 5 (June 1917) 72–74.
A review of *Prufrock and Other Observations*, by T. S. Eliot.

continued joy in the freshness, the humanity, the deep quiet culture. "I have tried to write of a few things that really have moved me" is so far as I know, the sum of Mr. Eliot's "poetic theory." His practice has been a distinctive cadence, a personal modus of arrangement, remote origins in Elizabethan English and in the modern French masters, neither origin being sufficiently apparent to affect the personal quality. It is writing without pretence. Mr. Eliot at once takes rank with the five or six living poets whose English one can read with enjoyment.

THE EGOIST has published the best prose writer of my generation. It follows its publication of Joyce by the publication of a "new" poet who is at least unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries, either of his own age or his elders.

It is perhaps "unenglish" to praise a poet whom one can read with enjoyment. Carlyle's generation wanted "improving" literature, Smile's *Self-Help* and the rest of it. Mr. Waugh dates back to that generation, the virus is in his blood, he can't help it. The exactitude of the younger generation gets on his nerves, and so on and so on. He will "fall into line in time" like the rest of the bread-and-butter reviewers. Intelligent people will read "J. Alfred Prufrock"; they will wait with some eagerness for Mr. Eliot's further inspirations. It is 7.30 p.m. I have had nothing alcoholic to-day, nor yet yesterday. I said the same sort of thing about James Joyce's prose over two years ago. I am now basking in the echoes. Only a half-caste rag for the propagation of garden suburbs, and a local gazette in Rochester, N.Y., U.S.A., are left whining in opposition.

(I pay my compliments to Ernest Rhys, that he associates with a certain Sarolea, writer of prefaces to cheap editions and editor of *Everyman*. They had better look after their office boys. I like Ernest Rhys personally, I am sorry to think of him in such slums, but it is time that he apologized for the antics of that paper with which he is, at least in the minds of some, still associated. His alternative is to write a disclaimer. Mr. Dent, the publisher, would also have known better had the passage been submitted to his judgment.)

However, let us leave these bickerings, this stench of the printing-press, weekly and quarterly, let us return to the gardens of the Muses,

> Till human voices wake us and we drown,

as Eliot has written in conclusion to the poem which the *Quarterly* calls the *reductio ad absurdum* :

> I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
> Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
> When the wind blows the water white and black.
>
> We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
> By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
> Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

The poetic mind leaps the gulf from the exterior world, the trivialities of Mr. Prufrock, diffident, ridiculous, in the drawing-room, Mr. Appolinax' laughter "submarine and profound" transports him from the desiccated new-statesmanly atmosphere of Professor Canning-Cheetah's. Mr. Eliot's melody rushes out like the thought of Fragilion "among the birch-trees." Mr. Waugh is my bitten macaroon at this festival.

EZRA POUND

JAMES JOYCE AND HIS CRITICS

SOME CLASSIFIED COMMENTS

CAUTION : It is very difficult to know quite what to say about this new book by Mr. Joyce—*Literary World.*

DRAINS : Mr. Joyce is a clever novelist, but we feel he would be really at his best in a treatise on drains.—*Everyman.*

CLEANMINDEDNESS : This pseudo-autobiography of Stephen Dedalus, a weakling and a dreamer, makes fascinating reading. . . . No clean-minded person could possibly allow it to remain within reach of his wife, his sons or daughters.—*Irish Book Lover.*

OPPORTUNITIES OF DUBLIN : If one must accuse Mr. Joyce of anything, it is that he too wilfully ignores the opportunities which Dublin offers even to a Stephen Dedalus. . . . He has undoubtedly failed to bring out the undeniable superiority of many features of life in the capital. . . . He is as blind to the charm of its situation as to the stirrings of literary and civic consciousness which give an interest and zest to social and political intercourse.—*New Ireland.*

BEAUTY : There is much in the book to offend a good many varieties of readers, and little compensating beauty.—*New York Globe.*

The most obvious thing about the book is its beauty.—*New Witness.*

STYLE : It is possible that the author intends to write a sequel to the story. If so, he might acquire a firmer, more coherent and more lucid style by a study of Flaubert, Daudet, Thackeray and Thomas Hardy.—*Rochester (New York) Post-Express.*

The occasional lucid intervals in which one glimpses imminent setting forth of social elements and forces in Dublin, only to be disappointed, are similar to the eye or ear which appears in futurist portraits, but proves the more bewildering because no other recognizable feature is to be discerned among the chaos.—*Bellman* (U.S.A.). [*Editor's Note :* In the sentence quoted above, "lucid intervals" is to be parsed with "are similar" and "eye or ear" with "proves." The adjective "recognizable" is apparently pleonastic.]

REALISM : It is a ruthless, relentless essay in realism.—*Southport Guardian.*

To put the literary form of rude language in a book makes some authors feel realistic.—*Manchester Weekly Times.*

Mr. Joyce aims at being realistic, but his method is too chaotic to produce the effect of realism.—*Rochester (New York) Post-Express.*

Its realism will displease many.—*Birmingham Post.*

Mr. Joyce is unsparing in his realism, and his violent contrasts—the brothel, the confessional—jar on one's finer feelings.—*Irish Book Lover.*

The description of life in a Jesuit school, and later in a Dublin college, strikes one as being absolutely true to life—but what a life !—*Everyman.*

WISDOM : Is it even wise, from a worldly point of view—mercenary, if you will—to dissipate one's talents on a book which can only attain a limited circulation ?—*Irish Book Lover.*

ADVANTAGES OF IRISH EDUCATION : One boy from Clongowes School is not a replica of all the other boys. I will reintroduce Mr. Wells to half a dozen Irish "old boys" of whom five—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is one—were educated at Roman Catholic schools and have nevertheless become most conventional citizens of the Empire.—*Sphere.*

COMPARISON WITH OTHER IRISH AUTHORS : The book is not within a hundred miles of being as fine a work of art as "Limehouse Nights," the work of another young Irishman.—*Sphere.*

C258a

C258 Continued

C258a James Joyce and His Critics: Some Classified Comments. *Egoist*, IV. 5 (June 1917) 74.
Quotations from reviews of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* compiled, according to Patricia Hutchins, by Ezra Pound, and reprinted with minor omissions in her *James Joyce's World* (London [1957]), pp. 112–13. A letter from Pound to John Quinn, 17 May [1917] (NYPL), indicates that the quotations may have been compiled by T. S. Eliot and not by Pound; however, a clipping of C258a is present among the manuscripts collected by Pound himself for his projected "Collected Prose" (Yale).

There are a good many talented young Irish writers to-day, and it will take a fellow of exceptional literary stature to tower above Lord Dunsany, for example, or James Stephens.—*New York Globe.*

IMAGINATION: He shows an astonishingly un-Celtic absence of imagination and humour.—*Bellman* (U.S.A.).

RELIGION: The irreverent treatment of religion in the story must be condemned.—*Rochester (New York) Post-Express.*

TRUTH: It is an accident that Mr. Joyce's book should have Dublin as its background.—*Freeman's Journal* (Dublin).

He is justified, in so far as too many Dubliners are of the calibre described in this and the preceding volume.—*New Ireland.*

An Anachronism at Chinon

Ezra Pound

BEHIND them rose the hill with its grey octagonal castle, to the west a street with good houses, gardens occasionally enclosed and well to do, before them the slightly crooked lane, old worm-eaten fronts low and uneven, booths with their glass front-frames open, slid aside or hung back, the flaccid bottle-green of the panes reflecting odd lights from the provender and cheap crockery; a few peasant women with baskets of eggs and of fowls, while just before them an old peasant with one hen in his basket alternately stroked its head and then smacked it to make it go down under the strings.

The couple leaned upon one of the tin tables in the moderately clear space by the inn, the elder, grey, with thick hair, square of forehead, square bearded, yet with a face showing curiously long and oval in spite of this quadrature; in the eyes a sort of friendly, companionable melancholy, now intent, now with a certain blankness, like that of a child cruelly interrupted, or of an old man, surprised and self-conscious in some act too young for his years, the head from the neck to the crown in almost brutal contrast with the girth and great belly: the head of Don Quixote, and the corpus of Sancho Panza, animality mounting into the lines of the throat and lending energy to the intellect.

His companion obviously an American student.

Student: I came here in hopes of this meeting yet, since you are here at all, you must have changed many opinions.
The Elder: Some. Which do you mean?
Student: Since you are here, personal and persisting?
Rabelais: All that I believed or believe you will find in *De Senectute*: "....that being so active, so swift in thought; that treasures up in memory such multitudes and varieties of things past, and comes likewise upon new things .... can be of no mortal nature."
Student: And yet I do not quite understand. Your outline is not always distinct. Your voice however is deep, clear and not squeaky.
Rabelais: I was more interested in words than in my exterior aspect, I am therefore vocal rather than spatial.

C259

C258a Continued
C259 An Anachronism at Chinon. *Little Review*, IV. 2 (June 1917) 14–21.

Student: I came here in hopes of this meeting, yet I confess I can scarcely read you. I admire and close the book, as not infrequently happens with "classics."
Rabelais: I am the last person to censure you, and your admiration is perhaps due to a fault in your taste. I should have paid more heed to DeBellay, young Joachim.
Student: You do not find him a prig?
Rabelais: I find no man a prig who takes serious thought for the language.
Student: And your own? Even Voltaire called it an amassment of ordure.
Rabelais: And later changed his opinion.
Student: Others have blamed your age, saying you had to half-bury your wisdom in filth to make it acceptable.
Rabelais: And you would put this blame on my age? And take the full blame for your writing?
Student: My writing?
Rabelais: Yes, a quatrain, without which I should scarcely have come here.

Sweet C.... in h... spew up some....

(pardon me for intruding my own name at this point, but even Dante has done the like, with a remark that he found it unfitting) —to proceed then:

......some Rabelais

To ..... and ..... and to define today
In fitting fashion, and her monument
Heap up to her in fadeless ex .....

Student: My license in those lines is exceptional.
Rabelais: And you have written on journalists, or rather an imaginary plaint of the journalists: Where s......, s.... and p..... on jews conspire, and editorial maggots .... about, we gather .... smeared bread, or drive a snout still deeper in the swim-brown of the mire.

Where s....., s..... and p..... on jews conspire,
And editorial maggots .... about,
We gather .... -smeared bread, or drive a snout
Still deeper in the swim-brown of the mire.
O .... O ..... O b...... b...... b....
O c..., ... O .... O ......'s attire
Smeared with ....

C259 Continued

Really I can not continue, no printer would pass it.
Student: Quite out of my usual ......
Rabelais: There is still another on publishers, or rather on *la vie litteraire,* a sestina almost wholly in asterisks, and a short strophe on the American president.
Student: Can you blame ...
Rabelais: I am scarcely .... eh.....
Student: Beside, these are but a few scattered outbursts, you kept up your flow through whole volumes.
Rabelais: You have spent six years in your college and university, and a few more in struggles with editors; I had had thirty years in that sink of a cloister, is it likely that your disgusts would need such voluminous purging? Consider, when I was nine years of age they put me in that louse-breeding abomination. I was forty before I broke loose.
Student: Why at that particular moment?
Rabelais: They had taken away my books. Brother Amy got hold of a Virgil. We opened it, *sortes,* the first line:

Heu, fuge crudeles terras, fuge litus avarum

We read that line and departed. You may thank God your age is different. You may thank God your life has been different. Thirty years mewed up with monks! After that can you blame me my style? Have oyu any accurate gauge of stupidities?
Student: I have, as you admit, passed some years in my university. I have seen some opposition to learning.
Rabelais: No one in your day has sworn to annihilate the cult of greek letters; they have not separated you from your books; they have not rung bells expressly to keep you from reading.
Student: Bells! later. There is a pasty-faced vicar in Kensington who had his dam'd bells rung over my head for four consecutive winters, L'lle Sonnante transferred to the middle of London! They have tried to smother the good ones with bad ones. Books I mean, God knows the chime was a musicless abominaoion. They have smothered good books with bad ones.
Rabelais: This will never fool a true poet; for the rest, it does not matter whether they drone masses or lectures. They observe their fasts with the intellect. Have they actually sequestered your books?
Student: No. But I have a friend, of your order, a monk. They took away his book for two years. I admit they set him to hearing confessions; to going about in the world. It may

have broadened his outlook, or benefited his eyesight. I do not think it wholly irrational, though it must have been extremely annoying.
Rabelais: Where was it?
Student: In Spain.
Rabelais: You are driven south of the Pyrenees to find your confuting example. Would you find the like in this country?
Student: I doubt it. The Orders are banished.
Rabelais: Or in your own?
Student: Never.
Rabelais: And you were enraged with your university?
Student: I thought some of the customs quite stupid.
Rabelais: Can you conceive a life so infernally and abysmally stupid that the air of an university was wine and excitement beside it?
Student: You speak of a time when scholarship was new, when humanism had not given way to philology. We have no one like Henry Stephen, no one comparable to Helia Andrea. The role of your monastery is now assumed by the "institutions of learning," the spirit of your class-room is found among a few scattered enthusiasts, men half ignorant in the present "scholarly" sense, but alive with the spirit of learning, avid of truth, avid of beauty, avid of strange and out of the way bits of knowledge. Do you like this scrap of Pratinas?
Rabelais (*reads*)

> 'Εμὸς ἐμὸς ὁ Βρομίος Εμὲ δεῖ χελαδεῖν
> Εμὶ δεῖ παταγεῖν 'Αν ὀρεα εσσάμενον
> Μετὰ Ναΐδων Οἶα τε κύχνον ἄγοντα
> Ποικιλόπτερον μέλος Τᾶν ἀοιδᾶν...

Student: The movement is interesting. I am "educated," I am considerably more than a "graduate." I confess that I can not translate it.
Rabelais: What in God's name have they taught you?!!
Student: I hope they have taught me nothing. I managed to read many books despite their attempts at suppression, or rather perversion.
Rabelais: I think you speak in a passion; that you magnify petty annoyances. Since then, you have been in the world for some years, you have been able to move at your freedom.
Student: I speak in no passion when I say that the whole aim, or at least the drive, of modern philology is to make a man

C259 Continued

stupid; to turn his mind from the fire of genius and smother him with things unessential. Germany has so stultified her savants that they have had no present perception, the men who should have perceived were all imbedded in "scholarship." And as for freedom, no man is free who has not the modicum of an income. If I had but fifty francs weekly ......

Rabelais: Weekly? C..... J.... !

Student: You forget that the value of money has very considerably altered.

Rabelais: Admitted.

Student: Well?

Rabelais: Well, who has constrained you? The press in your day is free.

Student: C..... J.... !

Rabelais: But the press in your day is free.

Student: There is not a book goes to the press in my country, or in England, but a society of .... in one, or in the other a pie-headed ignorant printer paws over it to decide how much is indecent.

Rabelais: But they print my works in translation.

Student: Your work is a classic. They also print Trimalcio's *Supper*, and the tales of Suetonius, and red-headed virgins annotate the writings of Martial, but let a novelist mention a privvy, or a poet the rear side of a woman, and the whole town reeks with an uproar. In England a scientific work was recently censored. A great discovery was kept secret three years. For the rest, I do not speak of obscenity. Obscene books are sold in the rubber shops, they are doled out with quack medicines, societies for the Suppression of Vice go into all details, and thereby attain circulation. Masterpieces are decked out with lewd covers to entoil one part of the public, but let an unknown man write clear and clean realism; let a poet use the speech of his predecessors, either being as antiseptic as the instruments of a surgeon, and out of the most debased and ignorant classes they choose him his sieve and his censor.

Rabelais: But surely these things are avoidable?

Student: The popular novelist, the teaser and tickler, casts what they call a veil, or caul, over his language. He pimps with suggestion. The printer sees only one word at a time, and tons of such books are passed yearly, the members of the Royal Automobile Club and of the Isthmian and Fly Fishers are not concerned with the question of morals.

*Rabelais*s You mistake me, I did not mean this sort of evasion, I did not mean that a man should ruin his writing or join the ranks of procurers.
Student: Well?
Rabelais: Other means. There is what is called private printing.
Student: I have had a printer refuse to print lines "in any form" private or public, perfectly innocent lines, lines refused thus in London, which appeared and caused no blush in Chicago; and vice-versa, lines refused in Chicago and printed by a fat-headed prude—Oh, most fat-headed—in London, a man who will have no ruffling of anyone's skirts, and who will not let you say that some children do not enjoy the proximity of their parents.
Rabelais: At least you are free from theology.
Student: If you pinch the old whore by the toes you will find a press clique against you; you will come up against "boycott"; people will rush into your publisher's office with threats. Have you ever heard of "the libraries?"
Rabelais: I have heard the name, but not associated with strange forms of blackmail.
Student: I admit they do not affect serious writers.
Rabelais: But you think your age as stupid as mine.
Student: Humanity is a herd, eaten by perpetual follies. A few in each age escape, the rest remain savages, "That deyed the Arbia crimson." Were the shores of Gallipoli paler, that showed red to the airmen flying thousands of feet above them?
Rabelais: Airmen. Intercommunication is civilization. Your life is full of convenience.
Student: And men as stupid as ever. We have no one like Henry Stephen. Have you ever read Galdos' *Dona Perfecta?* In every country you will find such nests of provincials. Change but a few names and customs. Each Klein-Stadt has its local gods and will kill those who offend them. In one place it is religion, in another some crank theory of hygiene or morals, or even of prudery which takes no moral concern.
Rabelais: Yet all peoples act the same way. The same so-called "vices" are everywhere present, unless your nation has invented some new ones.
Student: Greed and hypocrisy, there is little novelty to be got out of either. At present there is a new tone, a new *timbre* of lying, a sort of habit, almost a faculty for refraining from con-

C259 Continued

necting words with a fact. An inconception of their interrelations.
Rabelais: Let us keep out of politics.
Student: Damn it, have you ever met presbyterians?
Rabelais: You forget that I lived in the time of John Calvin.
Student: Let us leave this and talk of your books.
Rabelais: My book has the fault of most books, there are too many words in it. I was tainted with monkish habits, with the marasmus of allegory, of putting one thing for another: the clumsiest method of satire. I doubt if any modern will read me.
Student: I knew a man read you for joy of the words, for the opulence of your vocabulary.
Rabelais: Which would do him no good unless he could keep all the words on his tongue. Tell me, can you read them, they are often merely piled up in heaps.
Student: I confess that I can not. I take a page and then stop.
Rabelais: Allegory, all damnable allegory! And can you read Brantôme?
Student: I can read a fair chunk of Brantôme. The repetition is wearing.
Rabelais: And you think your age is as stupid as mine? Even letters are better, a critical sense is developed.
Student: We lack the old vigour.
Rabelais: A phrase you have got from professors! Vigour was not lacking in Stendhal, I doubt if it is lacking in your day. And as for the world being as stupid, are your friends tied to the stake, as was Etienne Dolet, with an "Ave" wrung out of him to get him strangled instead of roasted. Do you have to stand making professions like Budé?!!

> Vivens vidensque gloria mea frui
> Volo: nihil juvat mortuum
> Quod vel diserte scripserit vel fecerit
> Animose.

Student: What is that?
Rabelais: Some verses of Dolet's. And are you starved like Desperiers, Bonaventura, and driven to suicide?
Student: The last auto-da-fe was in 1759. The inquisition reestablished in 1824.
Rabelais: Spain again! I was speaking of ...
Student: We are not yet out of the wood. There is no end to this warfare. You talk of freedom. Have you heard of the

Hammersmith borough council, or the society to suppress all brothels in "Rangoon and other stations in Burmah?" If it is not creed it is morals. Your life and works would not be possible nowadays. To put it mildly, you would be docked your professorship.
Rabelais: I should find other forms of freedom. As for personal morals: There are certain so-called "sins" of which no man ever repented. There are certain contraventions of hygiene which always prove inconvenient. None but superstitious and ignorant people can ever confuse these two issues. And as hygiene is always changing; as it alters with our knowledge of physick, intelligent men will keep pace with it. There can be no permanent boundaries to morals.
Student: The droits du seigneur were doubtless, at one time, religious. When ecclesiastics enjoyed them, they did so, in order to take the vengeance of the spirit-world upon their own shoulders, thereby shielding and sparing the husband.
Rabelais: Indeed you are far past these things. Your age no longer accepts them.
Student: My age is beset with cranks of all forms and sizes. They will not allow a man wine. They will not allow him changes of women. This glass ......
Rabelais: There is still some in the last bottle. DeThou has paid it a compliment:" Aussi Bacchus ....

> Jusqu'en l'autre monde m'envoye Dequoi dissiper mon chagrin,
> Car de ma Maison paternelle Il vient de faire un Cabaret
> Où le plaisir se renouvelle Entre le blanc et el clairet...
> On n'y porte plus sa pensée Qu'aux douceurs d'un Vin frais et net.
> Que si Pluton, que rien ne tente, Vouloit se payer de raison,
> Et permetre à mon Ombre errante De faire un tour à ma Maison;
> Quelque prix que j'eu püsse attendre, Ce seroit mon premier souhait
> De la louer ou de la vendre, Pour l'usage que l'on en fait.

Student: There are states where a man's tobacco is not safe from invasion. Bishops, novelists, decrepit and aged generals, purveyors of tales of detectives ......
Rabelais: Have they ever interfered with your pleasures?
Student: Damn well let them try it !!!
Rabelais: I am afraid you would have been burned in my century.

END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE

C259 Continued

JUNE, 1917

THREE CANTOS

I

ANG it all, there can be but one *Sordello!*
But say I want to, say I take your whole bag
of tricks,
Let in your quirks and tweeks, and say the
thing's an art-form,
Your *Sordello,* and that the modern world
Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thought in;
Say that I dump my catch, shiny and silvery
As fresh sardines flapping and slipping on the marginal
cobbles?
(I stand before the booth, the speech; but the truth
Is inside this discourse—this booth is full of the marrow of
wisdom.)
Give up th' intaglio method.

Tower by tower
Red-brown the rounded bases, and the plan
Follows the builder's whim. Beaucaire's slim gray
Leaps from the stubby base of Altaforte—
Mohammed's windows, for the Alcazar
Has such a garden, split by a tame small stream.
The moat is ten yards wide, the inner court-yard
Half a-swim with mire.
Trunk hose?
There are not. The rough men swarm out
In robes that are half Roman, half like the Knave of Hearts;
And I discern your story:
Peire Cardinal
Was half forerunner of Dante. Arnaut's that trick
Of the unfinished address,
And half your dates are out, you mix your eras;
For that great font Sordello sat beside—
'Tis an immortal passage, but the font?—
Is some two centuries outside the picture.
Does it matter?
Not in the least. Ghosts move about me
Patched with histories. You had your business:
To set out so much thought, so much emotion;
To paint, more real than any dead Sordello,
The half or third of your intensest life
And call that third *Sordello;*
And you'll say, "No, not your life,

C260 THREE CANTOS. I. *Poetry*, X. 3 (June 1917) 113–21.
A letter from Ezra Pound concerning the Cantos is quoted under "Notes," p. 167. Two sections of this first Canto (which differs completely from the version eventually published in the series) were reprinted as "Passages from the Opening Address in a Long Poem" in *Future*, London, II. 3 (Feb. 1918) 63.

He never showed himself."
Is't worth the evasion, what were the use
Of setting figures up and breathing life upon them,
Were 't not *our* life, your life, my life, extended?
I walk Verona. (I am here in England.)
I see Can Grande. (Can see whom you will.)
You had one whole man?
And I have many fragments, less worth? Less worth?
Ah, had you quite my age, quite such a beastly and cantankerous age?
You had some basis, had some set belief.
Am I let preach? Has it a place in music?

I walk the airy street,
See the small cobbles flare with the poppy spoil.
'Tis your "great day," the Corpus Domini,
And all my chosen and peninsular village
Has made one glorious blaze of all its lanes—
Oh, before I was up—with poppy flowers.
Mid-June: some old god eats the smoke, 'tis not the saints;
And up and out to the half-ruined chapel—
Not the old place at the height of the rocks,
But that splay, barn-like church the Renaissance
Had never quite got into trim again.
As well begin here. Began our Catullus:
"Home to sweet rest, and to the waves' deep laughter,"
The laugh they wake amid the border rushes.

This is our home, the trees are full of laughter,
And the storms laugh loud, breaking the riven waves
On "north-most rocks"; and here the sunlight
Glints on the shaken waters, and the rain
Comes forth with delicate tread, walking from Isola Garda—
Lo soleils plovil,
As Arnaut had it in th' inextricable song.
The very sun rains and a spatter of fire
Darts from the "Lydian" ripples; *"locus undae,"* as Catullus, *"Lydiae,"*
And the place is full of spirits.
Not *lemures,* not dark and shadowy ghosts,
But the ancient living, wood-white,
Smooth as the inner bark, and firm of aspect,
And all agleam with colors—no, not agleam,
But colored like the lake and like the olive leaves,
Glaukopos, clothed like the poppies, wearing golden greaves,
Light on the air.
Are they Etruscan gods?
The air is solid sunlight, *apricus,*
Sun-fed we dwell there (we in England now);
It's your way of talk, we can be where we will be,
Sirmio serves my will better than your Asolo
Which I have never seen.
Your "palace step"?
My stone seat was the Dogana's curb,
And there were not "those girls," there was one flare, one face.

C260 Continued

'Twas all I ever saw, but it was real. . . .
And I can no more say what shape it was . . .
But she was young, too young.
True, it was Venice,
And at Florian's and under the north arcade.
I have seen other faces, and had my rolls for breakfast, for that matter;
So, for what it's worth, I have the background.
And you had a background,
Watched "the soul," Sordello's soul,
And saw it lap up life, and swell and burst—
"Into the empyrean?"
So you worked out new form, the meditative,
Semi-dramatic, semi-epic story,
And we will say: What's left for me to do?
Whom shall I conjure up; who's my Sordello,
My pre-Daun Chaucer, pre-Boccacio,
As you have done pre-Dante?
Whom shall I hang my shimmering garment on;
Who wear my feathery mantle, *hagoromo;*
Whom set to dazzle the serious future ages?
Not Arnaut, not De Born, not Uc St. Circ who has writ out the stories.
Or shall I do your trick, the showman's booth, Bob Browning,
Turned at my will into the Agora,
Or into the old theatre at Arles,

And set the lot, my visions, to confounding
The wits that have survived your damn'd *Sordello?*
(Or sulk and leave the word to novelists?)
What a hodge-podge you have made there!—
Zanze and *swanzig,* of all opprobrious rhymes!
And you turn off whenever it suits your fancy,
Now at Verona, now with the early Christians,
Or now a-gabbling of the "Tyrrhene whelk."
"The lyre should animate but not mislead the pen"—
That's Wordsworth, Mr. Browning. (What a phrase!—
That lyre, that pen, that bleating sheep, Will Wordsworth!)
That should have taught you avoid speech figurative
And set out your matter
As I do, in straight simple phrases:
Gods float in the azure air,
Bright gods, and Tuscan, back before dew was shed,
It is a world like Puvis'?
Never so pale, my friend,
'Tis the first light—not half light—Panisks
And oak-girls and the Maenads
Have all the wood. Our olive Sirmio
Lies in its burnished mirror, and the Mounts Balde and Riva
Are alive with song, and all the leaves are full of voices.
"Non è fuggito."
"It is not gone." Metastasio
Is right—we have that world about us,
And the clouds bow above the lake, and there are folk upon them

Going their windy ways, moving by Riva,
By the western shore, far as Lonato,
And the water is full of silvery almond-white swimmers,
The silvery water glazes the up-turned nipple.
How shall we start hence, how begin the progress?
Pace naif Ficinus, say when Hotep-Hotep
Was a king in Egypt—
When Atlas sat down with his astrolabe,
He, brother to Prometheus, physicist—
Say it was Moses' birth-year?
Exult with Shang in squatness? The sea-monster
Bulges the squarish bronzes.
(Confucius later taught the world good manners,
Started with himself, built out perfection.)
With Egypt!
Daub out in blue of scarabs, and with that greeny turquoise?
Or with China, *O Virgilio mio,* and gray gradual steps
Lead up beneath flat sprays of heavy cedars,
Temple of teak wood, and the gilt-brown arches
Triple in tier, banners woven by wall,
Fine screens depicted, sea waves curled high,
Small boats with gods upon them,
Bright flame above the river! Kwannon
Footing a boat that's but one lotus petal,
With some proud four-spread genius
Leading along, one hand upraised for gladness,
Saying, "Tis she, his friend, the mighty goddess! Paean!

Sing hymns ye reeds,
and all ye roots and herons and swans be glad,
Ye gardens of the nymphs put forth your flowers."
What have I of this life,
Or even of Guido?
Sweet lie!—Was I there truly?
Did I knew Or San Michele?
Let's believe it.
Believe the tomb he leapt was Julia Laeta's?
Friend, I do not even—when he led that street charge—
I do not even know which sword he'd with him.
Sweet lie, "I lived!" Sweet lie, "I lived beside him."
And now it's all but truth and memory,
Dimmed only by the attritions of long time.

"But we forget not."
No, take it all for lies.
I have but smelt this life, a whiff of it—
The box of scented wood
Recalls cathedrals. And shall I claim;
Confuse my own phantastikon,
Or say the filmy shell that circumscribes me
Contains the actual sun;
confuse the thing I see
With actual gods behind me?
Are they gods behind me?
How many worlds we have! If Botticelli

Brings her ashore on that great cockle-shell—
His Venus (Simonetta?),
And Spring and Aufidus fill all the air
With their clear-outlined blossoms?
World enough. Behold, I say, she comes
"Apparelled like the spring, Graces her subjects,"
(That's from *Pericles*).
Oh, we have worlds enough, and brave *décors*,
And from these like we guess a soul for man
And build him full of aery populations.
Mantegna a sterner line, and the new world about us:
Barred lights, great flares, new form, Picasso or Lewis.
If for a year man write to paint, and not to music—
O Casella!

Ezra Pound

(To be continued)

NOTES

We present in this number the first of Mr. Pound's *Three Cantos;* the second and third will follow in the July and August numbers. The author writes:

"As POETRY circulates among people definitely interested in the art, I do not feel apologetic about presenting the opening cantos of an exceeding long poem. Most of the long poems that one can read were written before printing was invented, and circulated in fragments. More recent precedent may be found in the publication of separate cantos of *Don Juan*.

"It has been one of POETRY'S chief services to make possible the current publication of work that otherwise would have been available only upon the issue of a complete volume of an individual's work. The harm which other magazines have done to poetry is largely in that they have fostered a habit among poets of setting forth only so much of their work as may be intelligible and acceptable in bits, only a page or so at a time."

Passages from the Opening Address in a Long Poem

Ghosts move about me patched with histories.
You had your business: to set out so much thought,
So much emotion, and call the lot "Sordello."
Worth the evasion, the setting figures up
And breathing life upon them.
Has it a place in music? And your: "Appear Verona!"?
I walk the airy street,
See the small cobbles flare with the poppy spoil.
'Tis your "Great Day," the Corpus Domini,
And all my chosen and peninsular village
Has spread this scarlet blaze upon its lane,
Oh, before I was up,—with poppy-flowers.
Mid-June, and up and out to the half ruined chapel,
Not the old place at the height of the rocks
But that splay barn-like church, the Renaissance
Had never quite got into trim again.
As well begin here, here began Catullus:
"Home to sweet rest, and to the waves deep laughter,"
The laugh they wake amid the border rushes.
This is our home, the trees are full of laughter,
And the storms laugh loud, breaking the riven waves
On square-shaled rocks, and here the sunlight
Glints on the shaken waters, and the rain
Comes forth with delicate tread, walking from Isola Garda,

Lo Soleils plovil.

It is the sun rains, and a spatter of fire
Darts from the "Lydian" ripples, *lacus undae,*
And the place is full of spirits, not *lemures,*
Not dark and shadow-wet ghosts, but ancient living,
Wood-white, smooth as the inner-bark, and firm of aspect
And all a-gleam with colour?
Not a-gleam
But coloured like the lake and olive leaves,
GLAUKOPOS, clothed like the poppies, wearing golden greaves,
Light on the air. Are they Etruscan gods?
The air is solid sunlight, *apricus.*
Sun-fed we dwell there (we in England now)

For Sirmio serves my whim, better than Asolo,
Yours and unseen. Your palace step?
My stone seat was the Dogana's vulgarest curb,
And there were not "those girls," there was one flare,
One face, 'twas all I ever saw, but it was real . . .
And I can no more say what shape it was . . .
But she was young, too young.
True, it was Venice,
And at Florian's under the North arcade
I have seen other faces, and had my rolls for breakfast,
Drifted at night and seen the lit, gilt cross-beams
Glare from the Morosini.
And for what it's worth
I have my background; and you had your background,
Watched "the soul," Sordello's soul, flare up
And lap up life, and leap "to th' Empyrean";

* * * * *

Gods float in the azure air,
Bright gods and Tuscan, back before dew was shed;
It is a world like Puvis'?
Never so pale, my friend,
'Tis the first light—not half-light—Panisks
And oak-girls and the Maelids have all the wood;
Our olive Sirmio
Lies in its burnished mirror. and the Mounts Balde and Riva
Are alive with song, and all the leaves are full of voices.
"*Non è fuggi.*"
"It is not gone." Metastasio
Is right, we have that world about us.
And the clouds bowe above the lake, and there are folk upon them
Going their windy ways, moving by Riva,
By the western shore, far as Lonato,
And the water is full of silvery almond-white swimmers,
The silvery water glazes the upturned nipple.

WAX TABLETS

Tablettes de Cire, par A. de Brimont. Calmann-Levy, Paris.

Frail things are proverbially long lived: "The bust outlasts the throne." Time and again we are assured that Greek mythology is played out. Neither the crowns of the French Academy nor the classical titles of the poems could attract one to the book before me.

For five hundred years a part of the population of Europe has been engaged in retelling these tales. They are shown time after time in what have been called, I think with shortsightedness, the "waxen" idylls of Amaltheus. It is rare that in the retelling one comes upon fresh imagination, as in John Baptist Pigna's *Nymphae* in their flight from the satyrs:

> Osculaque arboribus lachrymis madefacta tenellis
> Figere: sed Nymphas cum iam sat saepe vocassent.

People given up wholly to rhetoric will wonder how a book with no unusual phrase, no original thought, no violence of expression, can yet manage to hold one's interest, and to establish the personality of its author. The poems in *Tablettes de Cire* are worthy of their title.

> Échos, légers échos, en passant par mes lèvres
> Soyez frères de l'ombre et des reflets sur l'eau,
> Les reflets d'un reflet—les échos d'un écho!

Carvings in ivory so white that at first glance one fears perhaps it is celluloid. Many things contrary to my own particular canons of art. Rhymed couplets, which are not contrary to my canons, but everywhere a purity of tone, sustained, permeating every expression. Nowhere does the reach exceed the grasp. That is perhaps the secret, the sign in this case of the curious sincerity of an artist who will pretend to no emotion beyond what she has felt, and who has the wisdom to know that emotion as felt has been enough for the poem. It is a book that could have come only from France; that could have been written, or published, only where an author was conscious of a finally civilized audience, an audience capable of receiving such poems.

In *La Pêche Merveilleuse* I think the old legend is refilled with magic, as also in *Syrinx* with touches of whimsicality:

> Il trouble les flots purs pour voiler son image!
> Être un dieu lourd et laid quand tous les dieux sont beaux.

There is a felicitous rendering from the Arabic beginning:

> Ta robe avait glissé dans la rivière verte,
> Et toi, les bras tendus, le visage pâli,
> Les sourcils remontés et la bouche entr'ouverte,
> Tu la regardais fuir, fille de Bâkili.
> Je suivais des sentiers déjà suivis la veille,
> Car je crains les détours du sentier different:
> "Salut" dis-je, "salut! Ta jeunesse est pareille
> A la robe de lin qu'entraine le courant;
> Pareille, elle s'enfuit au fil du temps qui presse."

E. P.

C261

AN IMAGIST.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

13 June 1917.

"Steeped in the works of Maeterlinck." Imagism the same thing as symbolism (under correction).

Sell it! Stow it!

Too bad, after all these years, you old fogies, terrorised; terrorised by the great name of Macmillan into reviewing a book with which I am connected.

I pity you—from the depths I pity you.

Yours, etc.,
EZRA POUND.

C261a

C260 Continued

C261 Wax Tablets. *Poetry*, X. 3 (June 1917) 160–1.
A review, signed: E. P., of *Tablettes de cire*, by A. de Brimont.

C261a ✉ An Imagist. *Saturday Review*, London, CXXIII. 3216 (16 June 1917) 550.
On the review of *'Noh,' or Accomplishment*—A13—in the issue for 9 June.

VERS LIBRE AND ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

By Ezra Pound

POETRY is a composition of words set to music. Most other definitions of it are indefensible, or, worse, metaphysical. The amount or quality of the music may, and does, vary; but poetry withers and "dries out" when it leaves music, or at least an imagined music, too far behind it. The horrors of modern "readings of poetry" are due to oratorical recitation. Poetry must be read as music and not as oratory. I do not mean that the words should be jumbled together and made indistinct and unrecognizable in a sort of onomatopœic paste. I have found few save musicians who pay the least attention to the poet's own music. They are often, I admit, uncritical of his verbal excellence or deficit, ignorant of his "literary" value or bathos. But the literary qualities are not the whole of our art.

Poets who are not interested in music are, or become, bad poets. I would almost say that poets should never be too long out of touch with musicians. Poets who will not study music are defective. I do not mean that they need become virtuosi, or that they need necessarily undergo the musical curriculum of their time. It is perhaps their value that they can be a little refractory and heretical, for all arts tend to decline into the stereotype; and at all times the mediocre tend or try, semiconsciously or unconsciously, to obscure the fact that the day's fashion is not the immutable.

Music and poetry, melody and versification, alike fall under the marasmus.

Vers libre has become a pest, as painting and regular verse had become pests before it, as rabbits are a pest in Australia. One does not, however, wish to exterminate sonnets merely because sonnets have appeared in the *Century*. Bad as the versi libristi may be, the anti-versilibristi are worse. If I counsel the versilibristi to study music, I can also counsel the anti-versilibristi to study Arnold Dolmetsch's book. Bad as they may be (either the free or the tight), little as they may be able to do after the study of music, they would do less and worse, lacking it.

It is too late to prevent vers libre. It is here. There is too much of it. One might, conceivably, improve it, at least there appears room for improvement, and one might stop at least a little of the idiotic and narrow discussion based on an ignorance of music. Bigoted attack, born of this ignorance of the tradition of music, was what we had to live through.

The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries, by ARNOLD DOLMETSCH (Novello, London, 10s. 6d.; H. W. Gray and Co., New York).

I

Arnold Dolmetsch's book is full of what we may call either "ripe wisdom" or "common sense," or "those things which all good artists at all times have tried (perhaps vainly) to hammer into insensitive heads." Some of his dicta are, by their nature, applicable only to instrumental music or melody, others are susceptible of a sort of transposition into terms of the sister arts, still others have a direct bearing on poetry, or at least on versification. It is with these last that I shall concern myself. Dolmetsch's style is so clear and his citations of old authors so apt that I had perhaps better quote with small comment.

Mace, *Musick's Monument* (1613):

(1)

. . . you must Know, That, although in our First Undertakings, we ought to *strive*, for the most Exact Habit of *Time-keeping* that possibly we can attain unto, (and for several good Reasons) yet, when we come to be *Masters*, so that we can *command all manner* of Time, at our own Pleasures; we Then *take Liberty*, (and very often, for Humour, and good Adornment-sake, in certain Places) to *Break Time*; sometimes Faster, and sometimes Slower, as we perceive the *Nature of the Thing* Requires, which often adds, much *Grace*, and *Luster*, to the Performance."

(2)

. . . the thing to be done, is but only to make a kind of *Cessation*, or *standing still* . . . in due place an excellent grace.

Again, from Mace, p. 130: "*If you find it uniform, and retortive* either in its bars or strains" you are told to get variety by the quality of loud and soft, etc., and "if it expresseth short sentences" this applies. And you are to make pauses on long notes at the end of sentences.

Rousseau, 1687, in *Maître de Musique et de Viole*:

(1)

. . . At this word "movement" there are people who imagine that to give the movement is to follow and keep time; but there is much difference between the one and the other, for one may keep time without entering into the movement.

(2)

. . . You must avoid a profusion of divisions, which only disturb the tune, and obscure its beauty.

(3)

. . . Mark not the beat too much.

The accompanist is told to imitate the irregularities of the beautiful voice.

François Couperin, 1717, *L'Art de toucher le Clavecin*:

(1)

. . . We write differently from what we play.

(2)

. . . I find that we confuse Time, or Measure, with what is called Cadence or Movement. Measure defines the quantity and equality of beats; Cadence is properly the spirit, the soul that must be added.

(3)

. . . Although these Preludes are written in measured time, there is however a customary style which should be followed. . . . Those who will use these set Preludes must play them in an easy manner, WITHOUT BINDING THEMSELVES TO STRICT TIME, unless I should have expressly marked it by the word *mesuré*.

No one but an imbecile can require much further proof for the recognition of vers libre in music—and this during the "classical period."

I have pointed out elsewhere that the even bar measure was certainly NOT the one and important thing, or even the first important thing, and that European musicians, at least, did not begin to record it until comparatively late in the history of notation. Couperin later notes the barring as a convenience:

. . . One of the reasons why I have measured these Preludes is the facility one will find to teach them or learn them.

That is to say, musical bars are a sort of scaffold to be kicked away when no longer needed.

Disregard of bars is not to be confused with *tempo rubato*, affecting the notes inside a single bar.

II

Dolmetsch's wisdom is not confined to the demonstration of a single point of topical interest to the poet. I have not space to quote two whole chapters, or even to elaborate brief quotations like: "You must bind perfectly all that you play." The serious writer of verse will not rest content until he has gone to the source. I do not wish to give the erroneous impression that old music was all vers libre. I state simply that vers libre exists in old music. Quantzens, 1752, in so far as he is quoted by Dolmetsch, only cautions the player to give the shorter notes "in-

C262 Vers libre and Arnold Dolmetsch. *Egoist*, IV. 6 (July 1917) 90–91.
A review of *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, by Arnold Dolmetsch.

equality." Christopher Simpson, 1655, is much concerned with physical means of getting a regular beat. His date is interesting. The movement toward regularity in verse during the seventeenth century seems condemnable if one compare only Dryden and Shakespeare, but read a little bad Elizabethan poetry and the reason for it appears. (I shall try to show this in later essays.) On the other hand, Couperin's feeling for irregularity underlying "classical" forms may give us the clue to a wider unexpressed feeling for a fundamental irregularity which would have made eighteenth-century classicism, classicism of surface, tolerable to those who felt the underlying variety *as strongly as the first regularizers* may have felt it.

These are historical speculations. If I were writing merely a controversial article I should have stopped with the first quotations from Couperin, concerning vers libre. (I have never claimed that vers libre was the only path of salvation. I felt that it was right and that it had its place with the other modes. It seems that my instinct was not wholly heretical and that the opposition was rather badly informed.) Old gentlemen who talk about "red riot and anarchy," "treachery to the imperium of poesy," etc. etc. would do well to "get up their history" and peruse the codices of their laws.

Aux Etuves de Weisbaden

A. D. 1451

Ezra Pound

THEY entered between two fir trees. A path of irregular flat pentagonal stones led along between shrubbery. Halting by the central court in a sort of narrow gallery, the large tank was below them, and in it some thirty or forty blond nereïds for the most part well-muscled, with smooth flaxen hair and smooth faces—a generic resemblance. A slender brown wench sat at one end listlessly dabbling her feet from the spring-board. Here the water was deeper.

The rest of them, all being clothed in white linen shifts held up by one strap over the shoulder and reaching half way to the knees,—the rest of them waded waist- and breast-deep in the shallower end of the pool, their shifts bellied up by the air, spread out like huge bobbing cauliflowers.

The whole tank was sunken beneath the level of the gardens, and paved and pannelled with marble, a rather cheap marble. To the left of the little gallery, where the strangers had halted, an ample dowager sat in a perfectly circular tub formed rather like the third of an hogshead, behind her a small hemicycle of yew trees kept off any chance draught from the North. She likewise wore a shift of white linen. On a plank before her, reaching from the left to the right side of her tank-hogshead, were a salver with a large piece of raw smoked ham, a few leeks, a tankard of darkish beer, a back-scratcher, the ham-knife.

Before them, from some sheds, there arose a faint steam, the sound of grunts and squeals and an aroma of elderly bodies. From the opposite gallery a white-beared town-councillor began to throw grapes to the nerïds.

Le Sieur de Maunsier: They have closed these places in Marseilles, causa flegitii, they were thought to be bad for our morals.
Poggio: And are your morals improved?
Maunsier: Nein, bin nicht verbessert.
Poggio: And are the morals of Marseilles any better?
Maunsier: Not that I know of. Assignations are equally frequent; the assignors less cleanly; their health, I presume, none

C263

C262 Continued
C263 Aux étuves de Weisbaden [*sic*], A. D. 1451. *Little Review*, IV. 3 (July 1917) 12–16. (In English.)

the better. The Church has always been dead set against washing. St. Clement of Alexandria forbade all bathing by women. He made no exception. Baptism and the last oiling were enough, to his thinking. St. Augustine, more genial and human, took a bath to console himself for the death of his mother. I suspect that it was a hot one. Being clean is a pagan virtue, and no part of the light from Judaea. . .

Poggio: Say rather a Roman, the Greek philosophers died, for the most part, of lice. Only the system of empire, plus a dilettantism in luxuries, could have brought mankind to the wash-tub. The christians have made dirt a matter of morals: a son of God can have no need to be cleansed; a worm begotten in sin and foredoomed to eternal damnation in a bottle of the seven great stenches, would do ill to refine his nostrils and unfit himself for his future. For the elect and the rejected alike, washing is either noxious or useless—they must be transcendent at all costs. The rest of the world must be like them; they therefore look after our morals. Yet this last term is wholly elastic. There is no system which has not been tried, wedlock or unwedlock, a breeding on one mare or on many; all with equal success, with equal flaws, crimes, and discomforts.

Maunsier: I have heard there was no adultery found in Sparta.

Poggio: There was no adultery among the Lacedaemonians because they held all women in common. A rumour of Troy had reached the ears of Lycurgus: "So Lycurgus thought also there were many foolish vain joys and fancies, in the laws and orders of other nations, touching marriage: seeing they caused their bitches and mares to be lined and covered with the fairest dogs and goodliest stallions that might be gotten, praying and paying the maisters and owners of the same: and kept their wives notwithstanding shut up safe under lock and key, for fear lest other than themselves might get them with child, although themselves were sickly, feeble-brained, extreme old." I think I quote rightly from Plutarch. The girls of Lacedaemon played naked before the young men, that their defects should be remedied rather than hidden. A man first went by stealth to his mistress, and this for a long space of time; thus learning address and silence. For better breeding Lycurgus would not have children the property of any one man, but sought only that they should be born of the lustiest women, begotten of the most vigorous seed.

Maunsier: Christianity would put an end to all that, yet I think there was some trace left in the *lex Germanica,* and in some of

our Provençal love customs; for under the first a woman kept whatever man she liked, so long as she fancied: the children being brought up by her brothers, being a part of the female family, *cognati*. The chivaleric system is smothered with mysticism, and is focussed all upon pleasure, but the habit of older folk-custom is at the base of its freedoms, its debates were on matters of modus.

These girls look very well in their shifts. They confound the precepts of temperance.

Poggio: I have walked and ridden through Europe, annoting, observing. I am interested in food and the animal.

There was, before I left Rome, a black woman for sale in the market. Her breasts stuck out like great funnels, her shoulders were rounded like basins, her biceps was that of a wheel-wright; these upper portions of her, to say nothing of her flattened-in face, were disgusting and hideous but, she had a belly like Venus. from below the breasts to the crotch she was like a splendid Greek fragment. She came of a tropical meat-eating tribe. I observe that gramenivorous and fruit-eating races have shrunken arms and shoulders, narrow backs and weakly distended stomachs. Much beer enlarges the girth in old age, at a time when the form in any case, might have ceased to give pleasure. The men of this nubian tribe were not lovely; they were shaped rather like almonds: the curious roundness in the front aspect, a gradual sloping-in toward the feet, a very great muscular power, a silhouette not unlike that of an egg, or perhaps more like that of a tadpole.

Civilized man grows more frog-like, his members become departmental.

Maunsier: But fixed. Man falls into a set gamut of types. His thoughts also. The informed and the uninformed, the clodhopper and the civilian are equally incapable of trusting an unwonted appearance. Last week I met an exception, and for that cause the matter is now in my mind, and I am, as they say "forming conclusions." The exception, an Englishman, had found a parochial beauty in Savoia, in the inn of a mountain town, a "local character" as he called her. He could not describe her features with any minute precision, but she wore, he remembered, a dress tied up with innumerable small bits of ribbon in long narrow bowknots, limp, hanging like grass-blades caught in the middle. She came in to him as a sort of exhibit. He kissed her hand. She

sat by his bedside and conversed with him pleasantly. They were quite alone for some time. Nothing more happened. From something in his manner, I am inclined to believe him. He was convinced that nothing more ever did happen.

Poggio: Men have a curious desire for uniformity. Bawdry and religion are all one before it.

Maunsiers: They call it the road to salvation.

Poggio: They ruin the shape of life for a dogmatic exterior. What dignity have we over the beasts, save to be once, and to be irreplaceable!

I myself am a rag-bag, a mass of sights and citations, but I will not beat down life for the sake of a model.

Maunsier: Would you be "without an ideal?"

Poggio: Is beauty an ideal like the rest? I confess I see the need of no other. When I read that from the breast of the Princess Hellene there was cast a cup of "white gold," the sculptor finding no better model; and that this cup was long shown in the temple at Lyndos, which is in the island of Rhodes; or when I read, as I think is the textual order, first of the cup and then of its origin, there comes upon me a discontent with human imperfection. I am no longer left in the "slough of the senses," but am full of heroic life, for the instant. The sap mounts in the twigs of my being.

The visions of the mystics give them like courage, it may be.

Maunsier: My poor uncle, he will talk of the slough of the senses and the "loathsome pit of contentment." His "ideas" are with other men's conduct. He seeks to set bounds to their actions.

I cannot make out the mystics; nor how far we may trust to our senses, and how far to sudden sights that come from within us, or at least seem to spring up within us: a mirage, an elf-music; and how far we are prey to the written word.

Poggio: I have seen many women in dreams, surpassing most mortal women, but I doubt if I have on their account been stirred to more thoughts of beauty, than I have had meditating upon that passage in latin, concerning the temple of Pallas at Lyndos and its memorial cup of white gold. I do not count myself among Plato's disciples.

Maunsier: And yet it is forced upon us that all these things breed their fanatics; that even a style might become a religion and breed bigots as many, and pestilent.

Poggio: Our blessing is to live in an age when some can hold a fair balance. It can not last; many are half-drunk with freedom; a greed for taxes at Rome will raise up envy, a cultivated court will disappear in the ensuing reaction. We are fortunate to live in the wink, the eye of mankind is open; for an instant, hardly more than an instant. Men are prized for being unique. I do not mean merely fantastic. That is to say there are a few of us who can prize a man for thinking, in himself, rather than for a passion to make others think with him.

Perhaps you are right about style; an established style could be as much a nuisance as any other establishment. Yet there must be a reputable normal. Tacitus is too crabbed. The rhetoricians ruined the empire. Let us go on to our baths.

Finis

THREE CANTOS

II

Leave Casella.
Send out your thought upon the Mantuan palace—
Drear waste, great halls,
Silk tatters still in the frame, Gonzaga's splendor
Alight with phantoms! What have we of them,
Or much or little?
Where do we come upon the ancient people?
"All that I know is that a certain star"—
All that I know of one, Joios, Tolosan,
Is that in middle May, going along
A scarce discerned path, turning aside,
In level poplar lands, he found a flower, and wept.
"Y a la primera flor," he wrote,
"Qu'ieu trobei, tornei em plor."
There's the one stave, and all the rest forgotten.
I've lost the copy I had of it in Paris,
Out of the blue and gilded manuscript
Decked out with Couci's rabbits,
And the pictures, twined with the capitals,
Purporting to be Arnaut and the authors.
Joios we have. By such a margent stream,
He strayed in the field, wept for a flare of color,
When Coeur de Lion was before Chalus.
Or there's En Arnaut's score of songs, two tunes;
The rose-leaf casts her dew on the ringing glass,
Quenched senses, for when I look upon thee, Lesbia,
There is nothing above me
And my tongue is heavy, and along my veins
Runs the slow fire, and resonant
Thunders surge in behind my ears,
And the night is thrust down upon me."

That was the way of love, *flamma dimanat.*
And in a year, "I love her as a father";
And scarce a year, "Your words are written in water";
And in ten moons, *"Caelius, Lesbia illa—*
That Lesbia, Caelius, our Lesbia, that Lesbia
Whom Catullus once loved more
Than his own soul and all his friends,
Is now the drab of every lousy Roman."
So much for him who puts his trust in woman.
So the murk opens.
Dordoigne! When I was there,
There came a centaur, spying the land,
And there were nymphs behind him.
Or going on the road by Salisbury
Procession on procession—
For that road was full of peoples,
Ancient in various days, long years between them.
Ply over ply of life still wraps the earth here.
Catch at Dordoigne.
Viscount St. Antoni
In the warm damp of spring,

Dolmetsch will build our age in witching music.
Viols da Gamba, tabors, tympanons:

"Yin-yo laps in the reeds, my guest departs,
The maple leaves blot up their shadows,
The sky is full of autumn,
We drink our parting in saki.
Out of the night comes troubling lute music,
And we cry out, asking the singer's name,
And get this answer:
" 'Many a one
Brought me rich presents; my hair was full of jade,
And my slashed skirts, drenched in expensive dyes,
Were dipped in crimson, sprinkled with rare wines.
I was well taught my arts at Ga-ma-rio,
And then one year I faded out and married.'
The lute-bowl hid her face.
"We heard her weeping."

Society, her sparrows, Venus' sparrows, and Catullus
Hung on the phrase (played with it as Mallarmé
Played for a fan, *"Rêveuse pour que je plonge,"*);
Wrote out his crib from Sappho:
"God's peer that man is in my sight—
Yea, and the very gods are under him,
Who sits opposite thee, facing thee, near thee,
Gazing his fill and hearing thee,
And thou smilest. Woe to me, with
Feeling the night air full of subtle hands,
Plucks at a viol, singing:
"As the rose—
Si com, si com"—they all begin *"si com."*
"For as the rose in trellis
Winds in and through and over,
So is your beauty in my heart, that is bound through and over.
So lay Queen Venus in her house of glass,
The pool of worth thou art,
Flood-land of pleasure."
But the Viscount Pena
Went making war into an hostile country
Where he was wounded:
"The news held him dead."
St. Antoni in favor, and the lady
Ready to hold his hands—
This last report upset the whole convention.
She rushes off to church, sets up a gross of candles,
Pays masses for the soul of Viscount Pena.

Thus St. Circ has the story:
"That sire Raimon Jordans, of land near Caortz,
Lord of St. Antoni, loved this Viscountess of Pena
'Gentle' and 'highly prized.'
And he was good at arms and *bos trobaire,*
And they were taken with love beyond all measure,"
And then her husband was reported dead,
"And at this news she had great grief and sorrow,"

C264 THREE CANTOS. II. *Poetry*, X. 4 (July 1917) 180–8.
(Differs radically from final version.) About 80 lines were reprinted as "Images from the Second Canto of a Long Poem" in *Future*, London, II. 4 (Mar. 1918) 96.

And gave the church such wax for his recovery,
That he recovered, and
"At this news she had great grief and teen,"
And fell to moping, dismissed St. Antoni;
"Thus was there more than one in deep distress."

So ends that novel. And the blue Dordoigne
Stretches between white cliffs,
Pale as the background of a Leonardo.
"As rose in trellis, that is bound over and over,"
A wasted song?
No Elis, Lady of Montfort,
Wife of William à Gordon, heard of the song,
Sent him her mild advances.
Gordon? Or Gourdon
Juts into the sky
Like a thin spire,
Blue night's pulled down around it
Like tent flaps, or sails close hauled. When I was there,
La noche de San Juan, a score of players
Were walking about the streets in masquerade,
With pikes and paper helmets, and the booths,
Were scattered align, the rag ends of the fair.
False arms! True arms? You think a tale of lances . . .
A flood of people storming about Spain!
My cid rode up to Burgos,
Up to the studded gate between two towers,
Beat with his lance butt.

Another gate.
The kernelled walls of Toro, *las almenas;*
Afield, a king come in an unjust cause.
Atween the chinks aloft flashes the armored figure,
Muy linda, a woman, Helen, a star,
Lights the king's features . . .
"No use, my liege—
She is your highness' sister," breaks in Ancures;
"Mal fuego s'enciende!"
Such are the gestes of war "told over and over."
And Ignez?
Was a queen's tire-woman,
Court sinecure, the court of Portugal;
And the young prince loved her—Pedro,
Later called the cruel. And other courtiers were jealous.
Two of them stabbed her with the king's connivance,
And he, the prince, kept quiet a space of years—
Uncommon the quiet.
And he came to reign, and had his will upon the dagger-players,
And held his court, a wedding ceremonial—
He and her dug-up corpse in cerements
Crowned with the crown and splendor of Portugal.
A quiet evening and a decorous procession;
Who winked at murder kisses the dead hand,
Does leal homage,
"Que depois de ser morta foy Rainha."
Dig up Camoens, hear out his resonant bombast:

A girl child of nine,
Comes to a little shrine-like platform in the wall,
Lisps out the words, a-whisper, the King's writ:
"Let no man speak to Diaz or give him help or food
On pain of death, his eyes torn out,
His heart upon a pike, his goods sequestered."
He from Bivar, cleaned out,
From empty perches of dispersed hawks,
From empty presses,
Came riding with his company up the great hill—
"Afe Minaya!"—
to Burgos in the spring,
And thence to fighting, to down-throw of Moors,
And to Valencia rode he, by the beard!—
Muy velida.
Of onrush of lances,
Of splintered staves, riven and broken casques,
Dismantled castles, of painted shields split up,
Blazons hacked off, piled men and bloody rivers;
Then "sombre light upon reflecting armor"
And portents in the wind when De las Nieblas
Set out to sea-fight,
Y dar neuva lumbre las armas y hierros."
Full many a fathomed sea-change in the eyes
That sought with him the salt sea victories.
Another gate?
And Kumasaka's ghost come back to tell
The honor of the youth who'd slain him.

"That among the flowers,
As once was Proserpine,
Gatheredst thy soul's light fruit and every blindness,
Thy Enna the flary mead-land of Mondego,
Long art thou sung by maidens in Mondego."
What have we now of her, his *"linda Ignez"?*
Houtmans in jail for debt in Lisbon—how long after?—
Contrives a company, the Dutch eat Portugal,
Follow her ship's tracks, Roemer Vischer's daughters,
Talking some Greek, dally with glass engraving;
Vondel, the Eglantine, Dutch Renaissance—
The old tale out of fashion, daggers gone;
And Gaby wears Braganza on her throat—
Commuted, say, another public pearl
Tied to a public gullet. Ah, *mon rêve,*
It happened; and now go think—
Another crown, thrown to another dancer, brings you to modern times?

I knew a man, but where 'twas is no matter:
Born on a farm, he hankered after painting;
His father kept him at work;
No luck—he married and got four sons;
Three died, the fourth he sent to Paris—
Ten years of Julian's and the ateliers,
Ten years of life, his pictures in the salons,
Name coming in the press.

And when I knew him,
Back once again, in middle Indiana,
Acting as usher in the theatre,
Painting the local drug-shop and soda bars,
The local doctor's fancy for the mantel-piece;
Sheep—jabbing the wool upon their flea-bit backs—
The local doctor's ewe-ish pastoral;
Adoring Puvis, giving his family back
What they had spent for him, talking Italian cities,
Local excellence at Perugia,
dreaming his renaissance,
Take my Sordello!

Ezra Pound

(*To be concluded*)

Images from the Second Canto of a Long Poem

Send out your thought upon the Mantuan palace,
Drear waste, great halls; pigment flakes from the stone;
Forlorner quarter:
Silk tatters still in the frame, Gonzaga's splendour,
Where do we come upon the ancient people,
Or much or little,
Where do we come upon the ancient people?
"All that I know is that a certain star"—
All that I know of one, Joios, Tolosan,
Is that in middle May, going along
A scarce discerned path, turning aside
In "level poplar lands," he found a flower, and wept;
"Y a la primera flor," he wrote,
"Qu'ieu trobei, tornei em plor."
One stave of it, I've lost the copy I had of it in Paris,
Out of a blue and gilded manuscript:
Couci's rabbits, a slim fellow throwing dice,
Purported portraits serving in capitals.
Joios we have, by such a margent stream,
He strayed in the field, wept for a flare of colour
When Coeur de Lion was before Chalus;
Arnaut's a score of songs, a wry sestina;
The rose-leaf casts her dew on the ringing glass,
Dolmetsch will build our age in witching music,
Viols da Gamba, tabors, tympanons.
Yin-yo laps in the reeds, my guest departs,
The maple leaves blot up their shadows,
The sky is full of Autumn,
We drink our parting in saki.
Out of the night comes troubling lute music,
And we cry out, asking the singer's name,
And get this answer:
"Many a one
Brought me rich presents, my hair was full of jade,
And my slashed skirts were drenched in the secret dyes,
Well dipped in crimson, and sprinkled with rare wines;
I was well taught my arts at Ga-ma-rio
And then one year I faded out and married."
The lute-bowl hid her face. We heard her weeping.
Society, her sparrows, Venus' sparrows.
Catullus hung on the phrase (played with it as Mallarmé
Played for a fan: "Rêveuse pour que je plonge");
Wrote out his crib from Sappho:
God's peer, yea and the very gods are under him
Facing thee, near thee; and my tongue is heavy,
And along my veins the fire; and the night is
Thrust down upon me.
That was one way of love, *flamma demanat,*
And in a year: "I love her as a father,"
And scarce a year, "Your words are written in water,"
And in ten moons: "O Caelius, Lesbia illa,
Caelius, Lesbia, our Lesbia, that Lesbia
Whom Catullus once loved more
Than his own soul and all his friends,
Is now the drab of every lousy Roman";
So much for him who puts his trust in woman.

Dordoigne! When I was there
There came a centaur, spying the land
And there were nymphs behind him;
Or procession on procession by Salisbury,
Ancient in various days, long years between them;
Ply over ply of life still wraps the earth here.
Catch at Dordoigne!
Vicount St. Antoni—
"D'amor tug miei cossir"—hight Raimon Jordans
Of land near Caortz. The Lady of Pena
"Gentle and highly prized."
And he was good at arms and *bos trobaire,*
"Thou art the pool of worth, flood-land of pleasure,
And all my heart is bound about with love,
As rose in trellis that is bound over and over";
Thus were they taken in love beyond all measure.
But the Vicount Pena
Went making war into an hostile country,

And was sore wounded. The news held him dead,
"And at this news she had great grief and teen,"
And gave the church much wax for his recovery,
And he recovered,
"And at this news she had great grief and teen"
And fell a-moping, dismissed St. Antoni,
"Thus was there more than one in deep distress,"
So ends that novel. Here the blue Dordoigne
Placid between white cliffs, pale
As the background of a Leonardo. Elis of Montfort
Then sent him her invitations.

Impressions of François-Marie Arouet (de Voltaire)

By Ezra Pound

I. PHYLLIDULA AND THE SPOILS OF GOUVERNET

Where, Lady, are the days
When you could go out in a hired hansom
Without footmen and equipments
And dine in a soggy, cheap restaurant?

Phyllidula now, with your powdered Swiss footman
Clanking the door shut,
and lying;
And carpets from Savonnier, and from Persia,
And your new service at dinner,
And plates from Germain,
And cabinets and chests from Martin (almost lacquer),
And your white vases from Japan,
And the lustre of diamonds,
Etcetera, etcetera *and* etcetera?

II. TO MADAME DU CHÂTELET

If you'd have me go on loving you
Give me back the time of the thing.

Will you give me dawn light at evening?
Time has driven me out of the fine plaisaunces,
The parks with the swards all over dew,
And grass going glassy with the light on it,
The green stretches where love is and the grapes
Hang in yellow-white and dark clusters ready for pressing.
And if now we can't fit with our time of life
There is not much but its evil left us.

C265

C264 Continued

C265 IMPRESSIONS OF FRANÇOIS-MARIE AROUET (DE VOLTAIRE). *To-day*, London, I. 5 (July 1917) 185–6. Reprinted from *Poetry* for Sept. 1916—C234.

Life gives us two minutes, two seasons—
One to be dull in ;
Two deaths—and to stop loving and being lovable,
That is the real death,
The other is little beside it.

Crying after the follies gone by me,
Quiet talking is all that is left us—
Gentle talking, not like the first talking, less lively ;
And to follow after friendship, as they call it,
Lamenting that we can follow naught else.

III. TO MADAME LULLIN

You'll wonder that an old man of eighty
Can go on writing you verses . . .

Grass showing under the snow,
Birds singing late in the year !

And Tibullus could say of his death, in his Latin ;
" Delia, I would look on you, dying."

And Delia herself fading out,
Forgetting even her beauty.

Provincialism the Enemy.

I.

If they had read my " Education Sentimentale " these things would not have happened.—GUSTAVE FLAUBERT.

PROVINCIALISM consists in :—

(a) An ignorance of the manners, customs and nature of people living outside one's own village, parish, or nation.

(b) A desire to coerce others into uniformity.

Galdos, Turgenev, Flaubert, Henry James, the whole fight of modern enlightenment is against this. It is not of any one country. I name four great modern novelists because, perhaps, the best of their work has been an analysis, a diagnosis of this disease. In Galdos it is almost diagrammatic : a young civil engineer from Madrid is ultimately done to death by the bigots of "Orbajosa," solely because he is from the Capital, and possessed of an education. His own relatives lead in the intrigue for his suppression. Turgenev in "Fumée" and in the "Nichée de Gentilshommes" digging out the stupidity of the Russian. Flaubert in his treatment of last century France. Henry James in his unending endeavour to provide a common language, an idiom of manners and meanings for the three nations, England, America, France. Henry James was, despite any literary detachments, the crusader, both in this internationalism, and in his constant propaganda against personal tyranny, against the hundred subtle forms of personal oppressions and coercions.

Idiots said he was untouched by emotion.

This in the face, or probably in their ignorance, of the outbursts in "The Tragic Muse," or the meaning of the "Turn of the Screw." Human liberty, personal liberty, underlay all of his work, a life-long, unchangeable passion ; and with it the sense of national differences, the small and the large misunderstanding, the slight difference in tone, and the greater national "trend." For example, this from "A Bundle of Letters." His Dr. Rudolph Staub writes from Paris :

"You will, I think, hold me warranted in believing that between precipitate decay and internecine enmities the English-speaking family is destined to consume itself, and that with its decline the prospect of general pervasiveness, to which I alluded above, will brighten for the deep-lunged children of the fatherland."

"Universal pervasiveness." We have heard a lot of this sort of thing during the last three years. My edition of the "Bundle of Letters" was, however, printed in '83, thirty-one years before Armageddon. It had been written before that. However, the lords of the temporal world never will take an artist with any seriousness. Flaubert and Henry James had their previsions almost in vain.

Provincialism is more than an ignorance, it is ignorance plus a lust after uniformity. It is a latent malevolence, often an active malevolence. The odium theologicum is only one phase of it. It is very insidious, even with eyes open one can scarcely keep free of it. (Example, I have been delighted with the detection of Gerlach. All the morning I have been muttering, a priest and a burglar ; Italy has scored by setting two burglars to deal with one clerical.)

Religious dogma is a set of arbitrary, unprovable statements about the unknown.

A clergy, any clergy, is an organised set of men using these arbitrary statements to further their own designs. There is no room for such among people of any enlightenment.

England and France are civilisation. They are civilisation because they have not given way to the yelp of "nationality." That, of course, is a debatable state-

C266

C265 Continued

C266 Provincialism the Enemy. I. *New Age*, XXI. 11 (12 July 1917) 244–5. The first of four instalments.

ment. All the same, they have not, at bottom, given way to the yelp of "nationality," for all their "Little England," "La France," "Imperialism," etc.

More profoundly they have not given way to the yelp of "race." France is so many races that she has had to settle things by appeal to reason. England is so many races, even "Little England," that she has kept some real respect for personality, for the outline of the individual.

This is modern civilisation. Neither nation has been coercible into a Kultur; into a damnable holy Roman Empire, holy Roman Church orthodoxy, obedience, Deutschland über Alles, infallibility, mouse-trap.

There has been no single bait that the whole of either nation would swallow. It has been possible to cook up for "the German" so tempting a stew of anæsthetics that the whole nation was "fetched." A certain uniform lurability could be counted on.

America has been hauled out by the scruff of her neck. She had imbibed a good deal of the poison. Her universities were tainted. Race, her original ideas, i.e., those taken over from France, and her customs, imported from England, won out in the end. Until they had done so it was very difficult to get any American periodical to print an attack on Kultur, Kultur which will still be found lurking by the grave of Munsterburg in the cemetery of the American universities.

I still find among educated people an ignorance of "kultur," that is, of all save its overt manifestations, the bombing of infant schools, etc., etc., etc.

Distress over a system of education and of "higher education" remains as much a mystery to people with whom I converse as was my disgust with the system, to my professors, fifteen years ago. People see no connection betwwen "philology" and the Junker.

Now, apart from intensive national propaganda, quite apart from German national propaganda, the "university system" of Germany is evil. It is evil wherever it penetrates. Its "universal pervasiveness" is a poisonous and most pestilent sort of pervasiveness. The drug is insidious and attractive.

It is, as Verhaeren said, the only system whereby every local nobody is able to imagine himself a somebody. It is in essence a provincialism. It is the "single" bait which caught all the German intellectuals, and which had hooked many of their American confrères (even before "exchange professorships" had set in).

Its action in Germany was perfectly simple. Every man of intelligence had that intelligence nicely switched on to some particular problem, some minute particular problem *unconnected* with life, *unconnected* with main principles (to use a detestable, much abused phrase). By confining his attention to *ablauts*, hair-length, foraminifera, he could become at small price an "authority," a celebrity. I myself am an "authority," I was limed to that extent. It takes some time to get clean.

Entirely apart from any willingness to preach history according to the ideas of the Berlin party, or to turn the class room into a hall of propaganda, the whole method of this German and American higher education was, is, evil, a perversion.

It is evil because it holds up an ideal of "scholarship," not an ideal of humanity. It says in effect: you are to acquire knowledge in order that knowledge may be acquired. Metaphorically, you are to build up a dam'd and useless pyramid which will be no use to you or to anyone else, but which will serve as a "monument." To this end you are to sacrifice your mind and vitality.

The system has fought tooth and nail against the humanist belief that a man acquires knowledge in order that he may be a more complete man, a finer individual, a fuller, more able, more interesting companion for other men.

Knowledge as the adornment of the mind, the enrichment of the personality, has been cried down in every educational establishment where the Germano-American "university" ideal has reached. The student as the bondslave of his subject, the gelded ant, the compiler of data, has been preached as a summum bonum.

This is the bone of the mastadon, this is the symptom of the disease; it is all one with the idea that the man is the slave of the State, the "unit," the piece of the machine.

Where the other phase of the idea, the slave of the State (i.e., of the emperor) idea has worked on the masses, the idea of the scholar as the slave of learning has worked on the "intellectual." It still works on him.

No one who has not been caught young and pitchforked into a "graduate school" knows anything of the fascination of being about to "know more than anyone else" about the sex of oysters, or the tonic accents in Arumaic. No one who has not been one of a gang of young men all heading for scholastic "honours" knows how easy it is to have the mind switched off all general considerations, all considerations of the values of life, and switched on to some minute, unvital detail.

This has nothing whatever to do with the "progress of modern science." There is no contradicting the fact that science has been advanced, greatly advanced, by a system which divides the labour of research, and gives each student a minute detail to investigate.

But this division of the subject has not been the sole means of advance, and by itself it would have been useless. And *in any case* it is not the crux of the matter.

The crux of the matter is that the student, burying himself in detail, has not done so with the understanding of his act. He has not done it as a necessary sacrifice in order that he may emerge.

In the study of literature he has buried himself in questions of morphology, without ever thinking of being able to know good literature from bad. In all studies he has buried himself in "problems," and completely turned away from any sense of proportion betwen the "problems" and vital values.

In most cases the experiment has been merely blind experiment along a main line, in accord with a main idea *dictated by someone else*.

The student has become accustomed first to *receiving* his main ideas without question; then to being indifferent to them. In this state he has accepted the Deutschland über Alles idea, in this state he has accepted the idea that he is an ant, not a human being. He has beome impotent, and quite pliable. This state of things has gone on long enough already.

It is time the American college president, indifferent to the curricula of his college or university, and anxious only "to erect a memorial to his father" (as an American provost once said to me), it is time that he and his like awoke from their nap, and turned out the ideal of philology in favour of something human and cleanly.

EZRA POUND.

Provincialism the Enemy.

II.

Provincialism: an ignorance of the customs of other peoples, a desire to control the acts of other people.

NOTHING "matters" till some fool starts resorting to force. To prevent that initial insanity is the goal, and always has been, of intelligent political effort.

The provincialism of Darius led him to desire the subjugation of the Greeks, and his ignorance of the Greeks led him to think they would put up with him. There is no "getting back to the beginning" of the matter. The fundamental "philosophical" error or shortcoming is in Christianity itself. I think the world can well dispense with the Christian religion, and certainly with all paid and banded together ministers of religion. But I think also that "Christ," as presented in the New Testament (real or fictitious personage, it is no matter), is a most profound philosophic genius, and one credible in the stated surroundings; an intuitive, inexperienced man, dying before middle age. The things unthought of in his philosophy are precisely the things that would be unthought in the philosophy of a provincial genius, a man of a subject nation. The whole sense of social order is absent.

The things neglected are precisely the things so well thought in the philosophy of Confucius, a minister high in the State, and living to his full age, and also a man of great genius.

There is no disagreement. There is a difference in emphasis. Confucius' emphasis is on conduct. "Fraternal deference" is his phrase. If a man have "fraternal deference" his character and his opinions will not be a nuisance to his friends and a peril to the community.

It is a statesman's way of thinking. The thought is for the community. Confucius' constant emphasis is on the value of personality, on the outlines of personality, on the man's right to preserve the outlines of his personality, and of his duty not to interfere with the personalities of others.

The irresponsible Galilean is profounder: "As a man thinketh in his heart," "What shall it profit to gain the world and lose your own soul." A man of decent character will not injure his neighbours. That is all very well. But there are no safeguards.

And Christianity has become the slogan of every oppression, of every iniquity. From saving your own soul, you progress to thinking it your duty or right to save other people's souls, and to burn them if they object to your method of doing it.

The profound intuitions are too incoherent in their expression, too much mixed with irrelevancies, the ironies misunderstood and mistranslated by cheats. The provincial has not guarded against provincialism. He has been the seed of fanatics. I doubt if Confucius has ever been the seed of fanatics. After his death his country was cursed with Buddhism, which is very much the same as part of the pest which spread over mediæval Europe, clothed in the lamb's wool of Christ. It showed in China many resembling symptoms. But this had nothing to do with Confucius, "the first man who did not receive a divine inspiration."

Christ's cross was not so much on Calvary as in His lamentable lack of foresight. Had He possessed this faculty we might imagine His having dictated to His disciples some such text as "Thou shalt not 'save' thy neighbour's soul by any patent panacea or kultur. And especially thou shalt not 'save' it against his will."

In such case the passage would either have been deleted by His "followers," or the Church of Rome would have founded itself on Mohammed. The contest for "rights," democracy, etc., in the West, has been little concerned with personality. If personality has been thought of, it was taken for granted. Tyranny had to be got rid of. So little time has passed since "slavery" was abolished, that one need not greatly despond; that is, slavery *to* an individual owner.

I think the work of the subtlest thinkers for the last thirty years has been a tentative exploration for means to prevent slavery to a "State" or a "democracy," or some such corporation, though this exploration has not been "organised," or "systematised," or coherent, or even very articulate in its utterance.

Undoubtedly, we must have something at least as good as socialism. The whole body of the Allies is presumably united in demanding something at least as good as socialism. The only demand for something definitely and uncompromisingly worse than socialism, worse than democracy, more anthropoid, comes from the Central Powers.

The arts, explorative, "creative," the "real arts," literature, are always too far ahead of any general consciousness to be of the slightest contemporary use. A coal strike, with 2,000,000 orderly strikers happens half a century after the artistic act, half a century after the "creator's," or discoverer's concept of labour in orderly organisation.

When, in the foregoing paragraph, I talk about the few subtle thinkers, I talk of those whose undogmatic speculations will be the bases of "parties" some time after present "political" issues, and "social" issues have been settled.

While half the world is struggling to maintain certain rights which every thinking man has long recognised as just, a few, a very few "unpractical," or, rather, unexecutive men have been trying to "carry the matter further"; to prevent a new form of tyranny succeeding in the place of an old form.

Modern thought is trying to kill not merely slavery but the desire to enslave; the desire to maintain an enslavement. This concept is a long way ahead of any actuality, it is a long way ahead of any working economic system that any of our contemporaries will be able to devise or to operate. But the desire for cannabalism is very largely extinct, and in the realm of reason there is nothing to prevent the conception of other barbaric ideas and desires entering equal extinction.

The desire to coerce the acts of another is evil. Every ethical thought is of slow growth; it has taken at least thirty years to suggest the thought that the desire to coerce the acts of others is evil. The thought belongs to only a few hundreds of people. Humanity is hardly out of the thought that you may have inquisitions and burn people at stakes.

To come back to where I started this brief series of essays: The bulk of the work in Henry James' novels is precisely an analysis of, and thence a protest against, all sorts of petty tyrannies and petty coercions, at close range. And this protest is knit into and made part of his analysis of the habits of mind of three nations at least. And Galdos, Flaubert, Turgenev, despite any proclamations about artistic detachment or any theories of writing, are all absorbed in this struggle. It is a struggle against provincialism, a struggle for the rights of personality; and the weapon of these authors has largely been a presentation of human variety. The German university system has been the antagonist, i.e., off the plane of force and of politics, and in the "intellectual field."

Narrowing the discussion to university educations, for the moment; meeting the philological boasts of efficiency and of "results produced," there is a perfectly good antidote, there is no need of any powers of invention or of careful devising. A Germany of happier era provided the term "Wanderjahr," and the humanist ideals of the Renaissance are sounder than any that have been evolved in an attempt to raise "monuments" of scholarship; of hammering the

student into a piece of mechanism for the accretion of details, and of habituating men to consider themselves as bits of mechanism for one use or another: in contrast to considering first what use they are in being.

The bulk of scholarship has gone under completely; the fascinations of technical and mechanical education have been extremely seductive (I mean definitely the study of machines, the association with engines of all sorts, the inebriety of mechanical efficiency, in all the excitement of its very rapid evolution).

The social theorist, springing, alas, a good deal from Germany, has not been careful enough to emphasise that no man is merely a unit. He "knows" the fact well enough, perhaps. But the error of his propagandist literature is that it does not sufficiently dwell on this matter.

Tyranny is always a matter of course. Only as a "matter of course," as a thing that "has been," as a "custom" can it exist. It exists unnoticed, or commended. When I say that these novelists have worked against it, I do not mean they have worked in platitude, their writing has been a delineation as tyranny of many things that had passed for "custom" or "duty." They alone have refrained from creating catchwords, phrases for the magnetising and mechanising of men.

Shaw slips into the kultur error (I think it is in some preface or other), where he speaks of a man being no use until you put an idea inside him. The idea that man should be used "like a spindle," instead of existing "like a tree or a calf" is very insidious. These two analogies do not present a dilemma. There is no reason why we should accept either Smiles or Rousseau, or utilitarianism, on any plane, or utopic stagnation. But if we did away with analogies and false dilemmas, "causes" and mob orators would have a very poor time.

EZRA POUND.

Provincialism the Enemy.

III.

Fifty graduated grunts and as many representative signs will serve for all needful communication between thoroughly socialised men.—REMY DE GOURMONT.

DE GOURMONT's jibe sums up the intellectual opposition to socialism. The good socialist will say it is only a jibe and that socialism offers as much protection to the individual as any other known system. This is not quite the point, and it is not enough for the "inventor," under which term I include artists and projective thinkers of all sorts. Rightly or wrongly, the "inventor" is apt to consider the general tone of socialist propaganda, and to find it prone to emphasise the idea of man as a unit, society as a thing of "component parts," each capable of an assignable "function."

When socialism can free itself from the suspicion of this heresy, the intellectual opposition to it will, presumably, go to pieces, capitulate, be converted.

The denuded or mechanised life lacks attraction. No intelligent man goes toward it with his eyes open—whether it means a mechanical simplification, or a mechanical complication. "Kultur" has propounded a mechanical complication for the deadening of the faculties.

The "State" forgot the "use" of "man"; "scholarship," as a "function of the State," forgot the use of the individual, or, at least, mislaid it, secreted it for its own purpose. "Philology" laid hold of the arts, and did its best to make them knuckle under. Kunstwissenschaft was exalted. The arts also were to become a function of the State, duly ordered and controlled. It is all exceedingly plausible. Germany was so provincial that she supposed the rest of the world would swallow the bait and submit. America was so provincial that it took her several years to understand that militarism must be put down. Even now, she does not much understand; she is stampeded, thank God, in the right direction, toward the annihilation of Kaisers.

America has as yet no notion of reforming her universities. The connection between the destruction of Rheims, the massacres of near-Eastern populations, etc., and a peculiar tone of study, is not too clearly apparent. Provincialism I have defined as an ignorance of the nature and custom of foreign peoples, a desire to coerce others, a desire for uniformity—uniformity always based on the temperament of the particular provincial desiring it.

The moment you teach a man to study literature not for his own delight, but for some exterior reason, a reason hidden in vague and cloudy words such as "monuments of scholarships," "exactness," "soundness," etc., "service to scholarship," you begin his destruction, you begin to prepare his mind for all sorts of acts to be undertaken for exterior reasons "of State," etc., without regard to their merit.

The right in the "Lusitania" matter is not a question of "military necessity" . . . or of whether the Germans gave a sporting warning . . ., etc.; it is simply that "this kind of thing must not happen." The human value as against the rationalistic explanation is always the weightier.

Take a man's mind off the human value of the poem he is reading (and in this case the human value is the art value), switch it on to some question of grammar and you begin his dehumanisation.

Such dehumanisation went on in the universities of Deutschland, subtly and with many exterior hues. There appeared to be no harm in it so long as it produced nothing more appalling than "grundrissen" and "Zeitschrifts für blankische philologie":—parts of which might conceivably be of some use and facilitate the reading of lost literatures. I know at least one German professor who has produced a dictionary and remained delightfully human at the age of about sixty-five. His abridgment would have helped me to read troubadours if I had not learned to read them before I found it.

I have no objection to any man making himself into a tank or refrigerator for as much exact information as he enjoys holding. There may even be a sensuous pleasure in such entanking. But a system which makes this entanking not only a sine qua non, but a fetish, is pernicious.

The uncritical habit of mind spreads from the university to the Press and to the people. I am well aware that this uncritical habit of mind is hidden by an apparatus criticus, and by more kinds of "criticism" and criteria, and talk about criticism than the man in the street has heard of. But it is for all that uncritical. It divides facts into the known and the unknown, the arranged and the unarranged. It talks about the advancement of learning and demands "original research," i.e., a retabulation of data, and a retabulation of tables already retabulated.

The "State" and the "universities" which are its baccilli work in a uniform way. In scholarship it leads to the connoisseur of sculpture who tells you, re the early Greek work, that your values are "merely æsthetic values," and, therefore, of no importance; he being intent only on archæological values. (This is

C268

C267 Continued
C268 Provincialism the Enemy. III. *New Age*, XXI. 13 (26 July 1917) 288–9.

not fanciful but an actual incident.) It leads, in the general, to an uncritical acceptance of any schematised plan laid down by higher commands of one sort or another. These things have their relative "use" or convenience, or efficiency, but their ultimate human use is nil, or it is pernicious.

The ultimate goal of scholarship is popularisation. (Groans from the scholar, the æsthete, the connoisseur!) I admit that "popularisation" of a sort is impossible. You cannot make a man enjoy Campion's quality by setting a book in front of him. You cannot make a bred-in-the-bone philologist enjoy the quality of an author's style rather than the peculiarity of his morphological forms. That sort of popularisation is not quite what I mean. Popularisation in its decent and respectable sense means simply that the scholar's ultimate end is to put the greatest amount of the best literature (i.e., if that is his subject) within the easiest reach of the public; to free literature, as a whole, from the stultified taste of a particular generation. This usually means, from the taste of the generation which has just preceded him, and which is always engaged in warping the mass humanity of Weld literature into the peculiar modality of its own needs or preferences; needs or preferences often of a transient value which is quite real and often obscured and unduly derided by later eras. He is, or should be, engaged in an attack on provincialism of time, as the realist author is engaged in an attack on a provincialism of place. His job is much more to dig out the fine thing forgotten, than to write huge tomes "about" this, that, and the other.

Fitzgerald's "Omar" is worth all the Persian scholarship of a century. Yet, in my undergraduate days I was accustomed to hear England damned as an unscholarly country, and to be told that practically no authoritative books on any subject had come out of England for many decades. This may, for all I know, be, from some angles, true, but a harping on this point of view shows an ill-sense of proportion. I am not saying that nine hundred small philologists and researchers should all of them have been trying to be second and third Fitzgeralds. I do say that all literary research should look toward and long for some such consummation, and that only with such a hope can it be healthy and properly oriented. And in every department of scholarship or of life I demand a similar orientation. One does not make steel rails in order that steel rails shall be made. Industrialism propagates this heresy with some vigour. Without steel rails international communication would suffer, and "intercommunication is civilisation." That has nothing to do with the matter.

Civilisation means the enrichment of life and the abolition of violence; the man with this before him can indubitably make steel rails, and, in doing so, be alive. The man who makes steel rails in order that steel rails shall be made is little better than the mechanism he works with. He is no safeguard against Kaiserism; he is as dangerous and as impotent as a chemical. He is as much a sink of prejudice as of energy, he is a breeding ground of provincialism.

The history of the world is the history of temperaments in opposition. A sane historian will recognise this, a sane sociologist will recognise the value of "temperament." I am not afraid to use a word made ridiculous by its association with freaks and Bohemians. France and England are civilisation, and they are civilisation because they, more than other nations, do recognise such diversity. Modern civilisation comes out of Italy, out of renaissance Italy, the first nation which broke away from Aquinian dogmatism, and proclaimed the individual; respected the personality. That enlightenment still gleams in the common Italian's "Così son io!" when asked for the cause of his acts.

EZRA POUND.

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

By EZRA POUND

IT was better to dig up the bas-reliefs of Assurbanipal's hunting than to have done an equal amount of Royal Academy sculpture. There are times when archæology is almost equal to creation, or when a resurrection is equally creative or even more creative than invention. Few contemporary composers have given more to to-day's music than has Arnold Dolmetsch.

His first realization was that music made for the old instruments could not be rendered on the piano. This proposition is exceedingly simple. You may play the notes of a violin solo on a piano or a banjo, but it will not be the same music. You may play the notes written for clavichord and harpsichord on the piano, or the pianola, but you will not make the same music. The first necessity, if one were to hear the old sounds, was a reconstruction of instruments, a multiplication of reconstructions; and this, as every educated person well knows, Arnold Dolmetsch has effected.

The next step was the removal of general misunderstandings of the old musical notation. This Mr. Dolmetsch has also triumphantly done in his *Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Novello, London, and H. W. Gray Co., New York). Not only this, but he has opened the way for a reconciliation between musicians and "the intelligent." This last act is extremely important; the reconstruction of old music is an activity which might end in itself. A possible re-fusion of intelligence with that other curious thing commonly known as "musical intelligence" contains many possibilities for the future; for the immediate future, the part of it chiefly concerning us and our mortal enjoyments.

All people have terms of abuse. Among artists and *literati* it is customary to excuse a man's stupidity by saying "He is a musician." Among musicians they say "Oh, that is a singer," implying depths of ignorance inconceivable to all but musicians.

Dolmetsch strikes at the root of the trouble by showing how music has been written, more and more, for the stupid; how the notation or rather the notators have gradually ceased to trust to, or to expect, intelligence on the part of interpreters; with the result that the whole major structure of music, of a piece of music, is obscured; the incidental elements, the detail show on the score equally with the cardinal contentions of the composer.

The neophyte is taught notes one by one, is taught scales. In the old way he would have been given the main structural points, he would have played the bare form of the piece, and gradually have filled in with the details.

There is more in Dolmetsch's "Section 14, on Divisions," than in a long course of practice and exercises; more I mean for the intelligent person to whom the mysteries of music have always seemed rather a jumble; a sort of pseudo-psychism practised by, and practicable for, people otherwise mentally inefficient.

I cannot demonstrate all this on a page. If Dolmetsch would write a shilling manual, simply dogma, leaving out his proofs and his explanations, and if people would use it on children and on themselves, we might have an almost immediate improvement, for a big book travels slowly, and few have the patience to understand anything, though many will obey a command.

The technical points I can scarcely go into, but they are there in Dolmetsch's book for musicians, and for those who have unsatisfied curiosities about music.

C269

C268 Continued

C269 Arnold Dolmetsch. *Egoist*, IV. 7 (Aug. 1917) 104–5.

The general reflections stirred by his writing I may, however, set down.

First: It seems to me that in music, as in the other arts, beginning in the eighteenth century, and growing a poison from which we are not yet free, greater rigidity in matters of minutiæ has forced a break-up of the large forms; has destroyed the sense of main form. Compare academic detail in one school of painting, and minute particularization about light and colour in another.

Any work of art is a compound of freedom and order. It is perfectly obvious that art hangs between chaos on one side and mechanics on the other. A pedantic insistence on detail tends to drive out "major form." A firm hold on major form makes for a freedom of detail. In painting men intent on minutiæ gradually lost the sense of form and form-combination. An attempt to restore this sense is branded as "revolution." It is revolution in the philological sense of the term.

The old way of music, teaching a man that a piece of music was a structure, certain main forms filled in, with certain decorations, stimulated his intelligence, spurred on his constructive faculty. You might play the same lute-piece as many others, but you thought about playing it differently (i.e. with different notes), of playing it better. In a sense that is true of any performer, but the contemporary way of approach lays stress on having a memory like a phonograph; the reflex-centres are as highly thought of as is the main conception. Thematic invention has departed.

Naturally the best musicians escape the contagion, a few good artists in any period always do escape, whatever contagion may be prevalent. In any age also, a few learned men must always support the poet against the music-teacher; the artist who creates against the machine for the vending of pictures; the inventive writer against the institutions of publishing and distribution. The modus is exceedingly simple. Some one must know that the fashion of the last forty years is not the eternal law of the art, whatever art it may be.

The heretic, the disturber, the genius, is the real person, the person stubborn in his intelligent instinct or protected by some trick of nature, some providential blindness, or deafness even, which prevents him from being duped by a fashion; some stubbornness, some unsocial surliness which prevents him from pretending to be duped, from pretending to acquiesce.

When I, for emphasis, say above, "providential blindness or deafness," one must remember that in the case of the artist—if there be some such trick played on him by nature for the preservation of art, the blindness or deafness or whatever apparent protective insensitiveness there may be—there is always a compensating sensitiveness or hyper-sensitiveness, enforced it may be by some voluntary or half-voluntary concentration, which keeps him interested, absorbed in the art.

Nature and humanity will never in the long run be bilked by the music-teacher and the academician. They, nature and humanity, abhor an unreasoning setness; haste is also in their abomination. There also the artist scores, for the "most brilliant," the most apparently sudden great artist is always a plodder. He alone can afford to wait. The singer of late nineteenth-century ballads must get through with his job at once: ditto for the actor, for the successful society portraitist.

In nothing has invention been slower than in the notation of music; it took centuries to find even a Notker, a Gui d'Arezzo. To-day the man who desires to comprehend first and make his noise afterward comes upon the idiotic mess of unexplained, unexplainable scale-playing. The days when a *consort* arranged itself while you waited your turn at the barber's appear purely legendary. Our ears are passive before the onslaught of gramophones and pianolas. By persuading ourselves that we do not hear two-thirds of their abominable grind, we persuade ourselves that we take pleasure in the remainder of what they narrate. We feign a deafness which we have not, instead of developing our faculty for the finer perception of sound.

We pride ourselves on having exact transcripts of Arabic and Japanese and Zulu and Malay music; we take a sentimental pleasure in being reminded (in spite of the drone and wheeze, in spite of shriek and squeak), that we once heard the voice of Chaliapine. And as for the structure of music! . . .

We turn to the printed page; the eye is confused by the multitude of ornamental notes and trappings, lost in the maze; each note is written as importantly as any other. And "Modern" music is so much a fuzz, a thing of blobs and of splotches—sometimes beautiful, and probably the best of it is more beautiful to those who know exactly what fixed lines it avoids.

But the structure of music? . . ." Technicalities" . . . "Artists don't enjoy their art as much as people who just enjoy it without trying to understand." That last quotation is one of the prize pieces of buncombe that the last generation indulged in. There is no comparison between the artist's enjoyment and the enjoyment of the layman. Only the artist can know this, for he is an artist in his own art and layman in all the rest, thus he can get some sense of proportion. He knows the difference between enthusiasm with vague half-comprehension, and enthusiasm plus an exact understanding. If the expert rejects 95 per cent. of all examples of an art presented to him, he has more pleasure in the remainder than the layman can get from the lot with vague and omnivorous liking.

What we know of any art is mostly what some master has taught us. We may not know him in the flesh, but the masterwork, and only the masterwork discontents us with mediocrity, or rather, it clarifies our discontentment; we may have suspected that something was wrong, been uninterested, worried, found the thing dull; the masterwork diagnoses it.

Dolmetsch has also made a fine diagnosis. He has incidentally thrown a side-light on metric, he has said suggestive things about *silence d'articulation*, about the freedoms of the old music. When I say suggestive, I do not mean that we are to get a jargon out of these things, to use for artistic controversy; but there is enough in them to prevent fools from interfering with, or carping at, rhythms achieved by the artist in his own way. Art is a departure from fixed positions; felicitous departure from a norm. It is a fight against mechanics. In music the trouble may well have begun with an attempt to write music for the insensitive and the blockhead.

If we are to regain a thematic sense, or a sense of thematic invention or of structure, if we are to have new music, or to have the old music beautifully played; if we are to have a clearer comprehension of what we do hear, we may owe a good deal to Mr. Dolmetsch.

List of Books

Comment by Ezra Pound

Passages from the Letters of John Butler Yeats.

Cuala Press, Dundrum, Dublin. 12 shillings.

TO begin with one of the more recent; I have already sent a longer review of John Yeat's letters to *Poetry* on the ground that this selection from them contains much valuable criticism of the art to which that periodical is "devoted". I again call attention to the book for its humanism, for its author's freedom from the disease of the age. It is good, for America in particular, that some even-minded critic, writing in detachment, without thought of publication, should have recorded his meditations. There can be no supposition that he hoped to start a social reform. Carlos Williams wrote a few years ago:

"Nowhere the subtle, everywhere the electric". Quibblers at once began a wrangle about the subtlety of electricity. We can not massacre the *ergoteur* wholesale, but we might at least learn to ignore him; to segregate him into such camps as the "New Statesman" and the "New Republic"; to leave him with his system of "graduated grunts" and his critical "apparatus", his picayune little slot-machine.

John Yeats writes as a man who has refused to be stampeded; he has not been melted into the crowd; the "button-moulder" has not remade him. He praises solitude now and then, but he has not withdrawn himself into a pseudo-Thoreauian wilderness, nor attempted romantesque Borroviana. Lest we "of this generation and decade" imagine that all things began with us, it is well to note that a man over seventy has freed himself from the effects of the "Great Exposition" and of Carlyle and Wordsworth and Arnold—perhaps he never fell under the marasmus.

I have met men even older than Mr. John Yeats, men who remembered the writings of the French eighteenth century. They had endured the drough, and kept a former age's richness. When I say "remembered the writings of the French eighteenth century," I mean that they had received the effect of these writings as it were at first hand, they had got it out of the air; there is a later set who took it up as a speciality, almost a fanaticism; they are different. Then there came the bad generation; a generation of sticks. They are what we have had to put up with.

C270 List of Books: Comment by Ezra Pound. *Little Review*, IV. 4 (Aug. 1917) 6–11.
Contents: [1] *Passages from the Letters of John Butler Yeats* [B15]—2. James Joyce's Novel [*i.e. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*]—3. *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* [A12]. . . . *Noh, or Accomplishment* [A13]—4. *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*, by Arnold Dolmetsch—5. *Prufrock and Other Observations*, by T. S. Eliot.

2

James Joyce's Novel. *The Egoist, London. B. W. Huebsch, New York.*

A *PORTRAIT of the Artist as a Young Man* was so well reviewed in the April number of this paper that I might perhaps refrain from further comment. I have indeed little to add, but I would reaffirm all that I have yet said or written of the book, beginning in *The Egoist,* continuing in *The Drama,* etc. Joyce is the best prose writer of my decade. Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* is the only contemporary novel that can compare with *A Portrait; Tarr* being more inventive, more volcanic, and "not so well written." And that last comparison is perhaps vicious. It would be ridiculous to measure Dostoevsky with the T-Square of Flaubert. Equally with Joyce and Lewis, the two men are so different, the two methods are so different that it is rash to attempt comparisons. Neither can I attempt to predict which will find the greater number of readers; all the readers who matter will certainly read both of the books.

As for Joyce, perhaps Jean de Bosschère will pardon me if I quote from a post card which he wrote me on beginning *A Portrait.* It was, naturally, not intended for publication, but it is interesting to see how a fine piece of English first strikes the critic from the continent.

"Charles Louis Philippe n'a pas fait mieux. Joyce le dépasse par le style qui n'est plus *le* style. Cette nudité de tout ornement rhétorique, de toute forme idiomatique (malgré la plus stricte sévérité contre le détour ou l'esthétique) et beaucoup d'autres qualités fondamentales font de ce livre la plus sérieuse oeuvre anglaise que j'aie lue. Les soixante premières pages sont incomparables,......"

The "most serious", or to translate it more colloquially: "It matters more than any other English book I have read". De Bosschère has not yet published any criticism of Joyce, but he is not the only established critic who has written to me in praise of *A Portrait..* Joyce has had a remarkable "press," but back of that and much more important is the fact that the critics have praised with conviction, a personal and vital conviction.

3

Certain Noble Plays of Japan.

Cuala Press, Dublin. 12 shillings.

Noh, or Accomplishment.

Knopf, New York, $2.75. Macmillan, London.

THE earlier and limited edition of this wrok of Ernest Fenollosa contains four plays, with an introduction by W. B. Yeats. The larger edition contains fifteen plays and abridgements and all of Fenollosa's notes concerning the Japanese stage that I have yet been able to prepare for publication. This Japanese stuff has not the solidity, the body, of Rihaku (Li Po). It is not so important as the Chinese work left by Fenollosa, but on the other hand it is infinitely better than Tagore and the back-wash from India. Motokiyo and the fourteenth-century Japanese poets are worth more than Kabir. Fenollosa has given us more than Tagore has. Japan is not a Chinese decadence. Japan "went on with things" after China had quit. And China "quit" fairly early: T'ang is the best of her poetry, and after Sung her art grows steadily weaker.

It would be hard to prove that the Japanese does not attempt (in his art, that is) to die in aromatic pain of the cherry blossom; but his delicacy is not always a weakness. His preoccupation with nuances may set one against him. Where a Chinese poet shows a sort of rugged endurance, the Japanese dramatist presents a fine point of punctilio. He is "romanticist" against the "classical" *and* poetic matter-of-factness of the Chinese writer. The sense of punctilio is, so far as I can make out, a Japanese characteristic, and a differentiating characteristic, and from it the Japanese poetry obtains a quality of its own.

The poetic sense, almost the sole thing which one can postulate as underlying all great poetry and indispensible to it, is simply the sense of overwhelming emotional values. (For those who must have definitions: Poetry is a verbal statement of emotional values. A poem is an emotional value verbally stated.) In the face of this sense of emotional values there are no national borders. One can not consider Rihaku as a forigner, one can only consider him human. One can not consider Odysseus, or Hamlet, or Kagekiyo as foreigners, one can only consider them human.

At one point in the Noh plays, namely in the climax of *Kagekiyo* we find a truly Homeric laughter, and I do not think the final passages of this play will greatly suffer by any comparison the reader will be able to make. If I had found nothing else in Fenollosa's notes I should have been well paid for the three years I have spent on them.

If I dispraise Tagore now I can only say that I was among the first to praise him before he became a popular fad. The decadence of Tagore may be measured. His first translations were revised by W. B. Yeats; later translations by Evelyn Underhill, facilis et perfacilis descensus, and now they say he has taken to writing in English, a language for which he has no special talent. If his first drafts contained such clichés as "sunshine in my soul", he was at least conscious at that time of his defects. Praise was rightly given to his first poems because it was demonstrated and demonstrable that they were well done in Bengali, i. e. that they were written in a precise and objective language, and in a metric full of interest and

C270 Continued

variety. The popular megaphone took up phrases made to define the originals and applied them to the translations. Imagine a criticism of Herrick and Campion applied to a French or German prose translation of these poets, however excellent as a translation in prose! As the vulgarizer hates any form of literary excellence, he was well content with obscuring the real grounds for praise. The unimportant element, that which has made Tagore the prey of religiose nincompoops, might easily have passed without comment. However, it has proved the baccillus of decay. Sir Rabindranath having been raised in a country where the author need not defend himself against blandishment....I mean the force of the babu press is scarcely enough to turn anyone's head or his judgement....Sir Rabindranath is not particularly culpable. His disciples may bear the blame as best they may; along with his publishers. But no old established publishing house cares a damn about literature; and once Tagore had become a commercial property, they could scarcely be expected to care for his literary integrity.

He might still wash and be clean; that is to say there is still time for him to suppress about three fourths of the stuff he has published in English, and retain some sort of literary position.

Another man who stands in peril is Edgar Masters. He did a good job in *The Spoon River Anthology.* What is good in it is good in common with like things in the Greek anthology, Villon and Crabbe: plus Masters's sense of real people. The work as a whole needs rewriting. The difference between a fine poem and a mediocre one is often only the fact that the good poet could force himself to rewrite. "No appearance of labour?" No, there need be no appearance of labour. I have seen too many early drafts of known and accepted poems not to know the difference between a draft and the final work. Masters must go back and take the gobbetts of magazine cliché out of his later work; he must spend more time on *Spoon River* if he wants his stuff to last as Crabbe's *Borough* has lasted. There is a great gulph between a "successful" book and a book that endures; that endures even a couple of centuries.

I would not at any cost minimize what Edgar Masters has done, but his fight is not yet over.

4

The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries, by Arnold Dolmetsch.

Novello, London. W. H. Gray, New York.

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH'S book has been out for some time. No intelligent musician would willingly remain without it. No intelligent musician is wholly without interest in the music of those two centuries. But this book is more than a technical guide to musicians. It is not merely "full of suggestion" for the thorough artist of any sort, but it shows a way whereby the musician and the "intelligent" can once more be brought into touch. If Dolmetsch could be persuaded to write a shilling manual for the instruction of children *and* of mistaught elders it might save the world's ears much torture. Dolmetsch's initial move was to demonstrate that the music of the old instruments could not be given on the piano; any more than you could give violin music on the piano. His next was to restore the old instruments to us. There is too much intelligence in him and his book adequately to be treated in a paragraph. I am writing of him at greater length in *The Egoist*. His citations from Couperin show the existence of vers libre in early eighteenth-century music. I do not however care unduly to stir up the rather uninteresting discussion as to the archaeology of "free" verse.

5

Prufrock and Other Observations, by T. S. Eliot.

The Egoist, London. One shilling.

THE book-buyer can not do better.

Frost tinges the jasper terrace,
A fine stork, a black stork sings in the heaven,
Autumn is deep in the valley of Hako,
The sad monkeys cry out in the midnight,
The mountain pathway is lonely.

.... The red sun blots on the sky the line of the colour-drenched mountains. The flowers rain in a gust; it is no racking storm that comes over this green moor, which is afloat, as it would seem, in these waves.

Wonderful is the sleeve of the white cloud, whirling such snow here.

—From "Noh", by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound. Pound.

Stark Realism

This Little Pig Went to Market

(A Search for the National Type)

Ezra Pound

THIS little American went to Vienna. He said it was "Gawd's Own City". He knew all the bath-houses and dance halls. He was there for a week. He never forgot it— No, not even when he became a Captain in the Gt. American Navy and spent six months in Samoa.

This little American went West—to the Middle-West, where he came from. He smoked cigars, for cigarettes are illegal in Indiana, that land where Lew Wallace died, that land of the literary tradition. He ate pie of all sorts, and read the daily papers—especially those of strong local interest. He despised European culture as an indiscriminate whole.
Peace to his ashes.

This little American went to the great city Manhattan. He made two and half dollars per week. He saw the sheeny girls on the East Side who lunch on two cents worth of bread and sausages, and dress with a flash on the remainder. He nearly died of it. Then he got a rise. He made fifteen dollars per week selling insurance. He wore a monocle with a tortoise-shell rim. He dressed up to "Bond St." No lord in The Row has surpassed him.
He was a damn good fellow.

This little American went to Oxford. He rented Oscar's late rooms. He talked about the nature of the Beautiful. He swam in the wake of Santyana. He had a great cut glass bowl full of lilies. He believed in Sin. His life was immaculate. He was the last convert to catholicism.

This little American had always been adored—and quite silent. He was quite bashful. He rowed on his college crew. He had a bright pink complexion. He was a dealer in bonds, but not really wicked. He would walk into a mans' office and say: "Do you want any stock?..eh.... eh .. I don't know anything about it. They say it's all right." Some people like that sort of thing; though it isn't the "ideal business man" as you read of him in *Success* and in Mr. Lorimer's papers.

This little American had rotten luck; he was educated— soundly and thoroughly educated. His mother always bought his underwear by the dozen, so that he should be thoroughly supplied. He went from bad to worse, and ended as a dish-washer; always sober and industrious; he began as paymaster in a copper mine. He made hollow tiles in Michigan.
His ena was judicious.

This little American spoke through his nose, because he had catarrh or consumption. His scholastic merits were obvious. He stuuied Roumanian and Arumaic. He married a papal countess.
Peace to his ashes.

This little American .... but who ever heard of a baby with seven toes.
This story is over.

C271 Stark Realism; This Little Pig Went to Market (A Search for the National Type). *Little Review*, IV. 4 (Aug. 1917) 16–17.

THREE CANTOS

III

Another's a half-cracked fellow—John Heydon,
Worker of miracles, dealer in levitation,
In thoughts upon pure form, in alchemy,
Seer of pretty visions ("servant of God and secretary of
nature");
Full of a plaintive charm, like Botticelli's,
With half-transparent forms, lacking the vigor of gods.
Thus Heydon, in a trance, at Bulverton,
Had such a sight:
Decked all in green, with sleeves of yellow silk
Slit to the elbow, slashed with various purples.
Her eyes were green as glass, her foot was leaf-like.
She was adorned with choicest emeralds,
And promised him the way of holy wisdom.
"Pretty green bank," began the half-lost poem.
Take the old way, say I met John Heydon,
Sought out the place,
Lay on the bank, was "plungèd deep in swevyn;"
And saw the company—Layamon, Chaucer—
Pass each in his appropriate robes;
Conversed with each, observed the varying fashion.
And then comes Heydon.
"I have seen John Heydon."
Let us hear John Heydon!

"Omniformis
Omnis intellectus est"—thus he begins, by spouting half of
Psellus.
(Then comes a note, my assiduous commentator:
Not Psellus *De Daemonibus,* but Porphyry's *Chances,*
In the thirteenth chapter, that "every intellect is omni-
form.")
Magnifico Lorenzo used the dodge,
Says that he met Ficino
In some Wordsworthian, false-pastoral manner,
And that they walked along, stopped at a well-head,
And heard deep platitudes about contentment
From some old codger with an endless beard.
"A daemon is not a particular intellect,
But is a substance differed from intellect,"
Breaks in Ficino,
"Placed in the latitude or locus of souls"—
That's out of Proclus, take your pick of them.
Valla, more earth and sounder rhetoric—
Prefacing praise to his Pope Nicholas:
"A man of parts, skilled in the subtlest sciences;
A patron of the arts, of poetry; and of a fine discernment."
Then comes a catalogue, his jewels of conversation.
No, you've not read your *Elegantiae*—
A dull book?—shook the church.
The prefaces, cut clear and hard:
"Know then the Roman speech, a sacrament,"

C272 THREE CANTOS. III. *Poetry,* X. 5 (Aug. 1917) 248–54.
(Differs radically from final version.) A passage, chiefly Ezra Pound's version of Andreas Divus, was reprinted as "An Interpolation Taken from Third Canto of a Long Poem" in *Future,* London, II. 5 (Apr. 1918) 121, with added footnote: "The above Passages from the Odyssey, done into an approximation of the metre of the Anglo-Saxon 'Sea-farer.'"

Spread for the nations, eucharist of wisdom,
Bread of the liberal arts.
Ha! Sir Blancatz,
Sordello would have your heart to give to all the princes;
Valla, the heart of Rome,
Sustaining speech, set out before the people.
"Nec bonus Christianus ac bonus
Tullianus."
Marius, Du Bellay, wept for the buildings,
Baldassar Castiglione saw Raphael
"Lead back the soul into its dead, waste dwelling,"
Corpore laniato; and Lorenzo Valla,
"Broken in middle life? bent to submission?—
Took a fat living from the Papacy"
(That's in Villari, but Burckhardt's statement is different)—
"More than the Roman city, the Roman speech"
(Holds fast its part among the ever-living).
"Not by the eagles only was Rome measured."
"Wherever the Roman speech was, there was Rome,"
Wherever the speech crept, there was mastery
Spoke with the law's voice while your Greek logicians . . .
More Greeks than one! Doughty's "divine Homeros"
Came before sophistry. Justinopolitan
Uncatalogued Andreas Divus,
Gave him in Latin, 1538 in my edition, the rest uncertain,
Caught up his cadence, word and syllable:
"Down to the ships we went, set mast and sail,
Black keel and beasts for bloody sacrifice,

Weeping we went."
I've strained my ear for *-ensa, -ombra,* and *-ensa*
And cracked my wit on delicate canzoni—
Here's but rough meaning:
"And then went down to the ship, set keel to breakers,
Forth on the godly sea;
We set up mast and sail on the swarthy ship,
Sheep bore we aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping. And winds from sternward
Bore us out onward with bellying canvas—
Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller.
Thus with stretched sail
We went over sea till day's end:
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean.
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpiercèd ever
With glitter of sun-rays,
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven,
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there.
Thither we in that ship, unladed sheep there,
The ocean flowing backward, came we through to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin, poured we libations unto each the
dead,

First mead and then sweet wine,
Water mixed with white flour.
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best,
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods.
Sheep, to Tiresias only,
Black, and a bell sheep;
Dark blood flowed in the fosse.
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead
Of brides, of youths, and of many passing old,
Virgins tender, souls stained with recent tears,
Many men mauled with bronze lance-heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreary arms:
These many crowded about me,
With shouting, pallor upon me, cried to my men for more
    beasts;
Slaughtered the herds—sheep slain of bronze,
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine.
Unsheathed the narrow steel,
I sat to keep off the impetuous, impotent dead
Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth—
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in sepulchre, since toils urged other,
Pitiful spirit—and I cried in hurried speech:
'Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?

Cam'st thou afoot, outstripping seamen?' And he in heavy
    speech:
'Ill fate and abundant wine! I slept in Circe's ingle,
Going down the long ladder unguarded, I fell against the
    buttress,
Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied!
Heap up mine arms, be tomb by the sea-board, and inscribed,
A man of no fortune and with a name to come;
And set my oar up, that I swung 'mid fellows.'
Came then another ghost, whom I beat off, Anticlea,
And then Tiresias, Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me and spoke first:
'Man of ill hour, why come a second time,
Leaving the sunlight, facing the sunless dead and this joyless
    region?
Stand from the fosse, move back, leave me my bloody bever,
And I will speak you true speeches.'
                                        "And I stepped back,
Sheathing the yellow sword. Dark blood he drank then
And spoke: 'Lustrous Odysseus, shalt
Return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
Lose all companions.' Foretold me the ways and the signs.
Came then Anticlea, to whom I answered:
'Fate drives me on through these deeps; I sought Tiresias.'
I told her news of Troy, and thrice her shadow
        Faded in my embrace.
Then had I news of many faded women—

Tyro, Alcmena, Chloris—
Heard out their tales by that dark fosse, and sailed
By sirens and thence outward and away,
And unto Circe buried Elpenor's corpse."

Lie quiet, Divus.
In Officina Wechli, Paris,
M. D. three X's, Eight, with Aldus on the Frogs,
And a certain Cretan's
Hymni Deorum:
(The thin clear Tuscan stuff
Gives way before the florid mellow phrase.)
Take we the Goddess, Venus:
Venerandam,
Aurean coronam habentem, pulchram,
Cypri munimenta sortita est, maritime,
Light on the foam, breathed on by zephyrs,
And air-tending hours. Mirthful, *orichalci,* with golden
Girdles and breast bands.
Thou with dark eye-lids,
Bearing the golden bough of Argicida.

Ezra Pound

An Interpolation taken from Third Canto of a Long Poem

I've strained my ear for *-ensa, -ombra,* and *-ensa,*
And cracked my wit on delicate canzoni,
Here's but rough meaning:
"And then went down to the ship, set keel to breakers,
Forth on the godly sea,
We set up mast and sail on the swart ship,
Sheep bore we aboard her, and our bodies also,
Heavy with weeping; and winds from sternward
Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships—wind jamming the tiller—
Thus with stretched sail
we went over sea till day's end.
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean,
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpiercèd ever
With glitter of sun-rays,
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven,
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there,
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin,
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour,
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads,
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods.
Sheep, to Tiresias only; black and a bell sheep.
Dark blood flowed in the fosse,
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead,
Of brides, of youths, and of much-bearing old;
Virgins tender, souls stained with recent tears,
Many men mauled with bronze lance-heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreary arms,
These many crowded about me,
With shouting, pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts.
Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze,
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine,
Unsheathed the narrow sword,
I sat to keep off the impetuous, impotent dead
Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth,
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in sepulchre, since toils urged other.
Pitiful spirit, and I cried in hurried speech:
"Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?
Cam'st thou a-foot, outstripping seamen?"
And he in heavy speech:
"Ill fate and abundant wine! I slept in Circe's ingle,
Going down the long ladder unguarded, I fell against the buttress,
Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied,
Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-board, and inscribed:
A man of no fortune and with a name to come.'
And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows."
Came then another ghost, whom I beat off, Anticlea,

And then Tiresias, Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me and spoke first:
"Man of ill hour, why come a second time,
Leaving the sunlight, facing the sunless dead, and this joyless region?
Stand from the fosse, move back, leave me my bloody bevor,
And I will speak you true speeches."
And I stepped back,
Sheathing the yellow sword. Dark blood he drank then,
And spoke: "Lustrous Odysseus
Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
Lose all companions." Foretold me the ways and the signs.
Came then Anticlea, to whom I answered:
"Fate drives me on through these deeps. I sought Tiresias,"
Told her the news of Troy. And thrice her shadow
Faded in my embrace."

Lie quiet Divus. Then had he news of many faded women,

Tyro, Alcmena, Chloris,
Heard out their tales by that dark fosse, and sailed
By sirens and thence outward and away,
And unto Circe. Buried Elpenor's corpse.
Lie quiet Divus, plucked from a Paris stall
With a certain Cretan's "Hymni Deorum";
The thin clear Tuscan stuff
Gives away before the florid mellow phrase,

Take we the goddess, Venerandam
Auream coronam habentem, pulchram. . . .
Cypri munimenta sortita est, maritime,
Light on the foam, breathed on by Zephyrs
And air-tending Hours, mirthful, orichalci, with golden

Girdles and breast bands, thou with dark eyelids,
Bearing the golden bough of Argicida.

The above Passages from the Odyssey, done into an approximation of the metre of the Anglo-Saxon "Sea-farer."

REVIEWS

T. S. ELIOT

Prufrock and Other Observations, by T. S. Eliot. *The Egoist,* London.

Il n'y a de livres que ceux où un écrivain s'est raconté lui-même en racontant les moeurs de ses contemporains—leurs rêves, leurs vanités, leurs amours, et leurs folies.—Remy de Gourmont

De Gourmont uses this sentence in writing of the incontestable superiority of *Madame Bovary, L'Éducation Sentimentale* and *Bouvard et Pécuchet* to *Salammbo* and *La Tentation de St. Antoine.* A casual thought convinces one that it is true for all prose. Is it true also for poetry? One may give latitude to the interpretation of *rêves;* the gross public would have the poet write little else, but De Gourmont keeps a proportion. The vision should have its place in due setting if we are to believe its reality.

The few poems which Mr. Eliot has given us maintain this proportion, as they maintain other proportions of art. After much contemporary work that is merely factitious, much that is good in intention but impotently unfinished and incomplete, much whose flaws are due to sheer ignorance which a year's study or thought might have remedied, it is a comfort to come upon complete art, naive despite its intellectual subtlety, lacking all pretence.

It is quite safe to compare Mr. Eliot's work with anything written in French, English or American since the death of Jules Laforgue. The reader will find nothing better, and he will be extremely fortunate if he finds much half as good.

C273

C272 Continued

C273 T. S. Eliot. *Poetry*, X. 5 (Aug. 1917) 264–71.
A review, signed: E. P., of *Prufrock and Other Observations.*

The necessity, or at least the advisability of comparing English or American work with French work is not readily granted by the usual English or American writer. If you suggest it, the Englishman answers that he has not thought about it—he does not see why he should bother himself about what goes on south of the channel; the American replies by stating that you are "no longer American", and I have learned by long experience that this is the bitterest epithet in his vocabulary. The net result is that it is extremely difficult to read one's contemporaries. After a time one tires of "promise".

I should like the reader to note how complete is Mr. Eliot's depiction of our contemporary condition. He has not confined himself to genre nor to society portraiture. His

> lonely men in shirt-sleeves leaning out of windows

are as real as his ladies who

> come and go
> Talking of Michaelangelo.

His "one night cheap hotels" are as much "there" as are his

> four wax candles in the darkened room,
> Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,
> An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb.

And, above all, there is no rhetoric, although there is Elizabethan reading in the background. Were I a French critic, skilled in their elaborate art of writing books about books, I should probably go to some length discussing Mr. Eliot's two sorts of metaphor: his wholly unrealizable, always apt, half ironic suggestion, and his precise realizable picture. It would be possible to point out his method of conveying a

whole situation and half a character by three words of a quoted phrase; his constant aliveness, his mingling of very subtle observation with the unexpectedness of a backhanded cliché. It is, however, extremely dangerous to point out such devices. The method is Mr. Eliot's own, but as soon as one has reduced even a fragment of it to formula, someone else, not Mr. Eliot, someone else wholly lacking in his aptitudes, will at once try to make poetry by mimicking his external procedure. And this indefinite "someone" will, needless to say, make a botch of it.

For what the statement is worth, Mr. Eliot's work interests me more than that of any other poet now writing in English. The most interesting poems in Victorian English are Browning's *Men and Women,* or, if that statement is too absolute, let me contend that the form of these poems is the most vital form of that period of English, and that the poems written in that form are the least like each other in content. Antiquity gave us Ovid's *Heroides* and Theocritus' woman using magic. The form of Browning's *Men and Women* is more alive than the epistolary form of the *Heroides.* Browning included a certain amount of ratiocination and of purely intellectual comment, and in just that proportion he lost intensity. Since Browning there have been very few good poems of this sort. Mr. Eliot has made two notable additions to the list. And he has placed his people in contemporary settings, which is much more difficult than to render them with mediaeval romantic trappings. If it is permitted to make comparison with a different art,

let me say that he has used contemporary detail very much as Velasquez used contemporary detail in *Las Meninas;* the cold gray-green tones of the Spanish painter have, it seems to me, an emotional value not unlike the emotional value of Mr. Eliot's rhythms, and of his vocabulary.

James Joyce has written the best novel of my decade, and perhaps the best criticism of it has come from a Belgian who said, "All this is as true of my country as of Ireland". Eliot has a like ubiquity of application. Art does not avoid universals, it strikes at them all the harder in that it strikes through particulars. Eliot's work rests apart from that of the many new writers who have used the present freedoms to no advantage, who have gained no new precisions of language, and no variety in their cadence. His men in shirt-sleeves, and his society ladies, are not a local manifestation; they are the stuff of our modern world, and true of more countries than one. I would praise the work for its fine tone, its humanity, and its realism; for all good art is realism of one sort or another.

It is complained that Eliot is lacking in emotion. *La Figlia che Piange* is sufficient confutation to that rubbish.

If the reader wishes mastery of "regular form", the *Conversation Galante* is sufficient to show that symmetrical form is within Mr. Eliot's grasp. You will hardly find such neatness save in France; such modern neatness, save in Laforgue.

De Gourmont's phrase to the contrary notwithstanding, the supreme test of a book is that we should feel some unusual intelligence working behind the words. By this test various other new books, that I have, or might have, beside me, go to pieces. The barrels of sham poetry that every decade and school and fashion produce, go to pieces. It is sometimes extremely difficult to find any other particular reason for their being so unsatisfactory. I have expressly written here not "intellect" but "intelligence." There is no intelligence without emotion. The emotion may be anterior or concurrent. There may be emotion without much intelligence, but that does not concern us.

Versification:

A conviction as to the rightness or wrongness of *vers libre* is no guarantee of a poet. I doubt if there is much use trying to classify the various kinds of *vers libre,* but there is an anarchy which may be vastly overdone; and there is a monotony of bad usage as tiresome as any typical eighteenth or nineteenth century flatness.

In a recent article Mr. Eliot contended, or seemed to contend, that good *vers libre* was little more than a skilful evasion of the better known English metres. His article was defective in that he omitted all consideration of metres depending on quantity, alliteration, etc.; in fact he wrote as if metres were measured by accent. This may have been tactful on his part, it may have brought his article nearer to the comprehension of his readers (that is, those of the *New Statesman,* in which the article appeared, people who are chiefly concerned with sociology of the "button" and "unit" variety). But he came nearer the fact when he

wrote elsewhere: "No *vers* is *libre* for the man who wants to do a good job."

Alexandrine and other grammarians have made cubby-holes for various groupings of syllables; they have put names upon them, and have given various labels to "metres" consisting of combinations of these different groups. Thus it would be hard to escape contact with some group or other; only an encyclopedist could ever be half sure he had done so. The known categories would allow a fair liberty to the most conscientious traditionalist. The most fanatical vers-librist will escape them with difficulty. However, I do not think there is any crying need for verse with absolutely no rhythmical basis.

On the other hand, I do not believe that Chopin wrote to a metronome. There is undoubtedly a sense of music that takes count of the "shape" of the rhythm in a melody rather than of bar divisions, which came rather late in the history of written music and were certainly not the first or most important thing that musicians tried to record. The creation of such shapes is part of thematic invention. Some musicians have the faculty of invention, rhythmic, melodic. Likewise some poets.

Treatises full of musical notes and of long and short marks have never been convincingly useful. Find a man with thematic invention and all he can say is that he gets what the Celts call a "chune" in his head, and that the words "go into it," or when they don't "go into it" they "stick out and worry him."

You can not force a person to play a musical masterpiece correctly, even by having the notes correctly printed on the paper before him; neither can you force a person to feel the movement of poetry, be the metre "regular" or "irregular." I have heard Mr. Yeats trying to read Burns, struggling in vain to fit the *Birks o' Aberfeldy* and *Bonnie Alexander* into the mournful keen of the *Wind among the Reeds.* Even in regular metres there are incompatible systems of music.

I have heard the best orchestral conductor in England read poems in free verse, poems in which the rhythm was so faint as to be almost imperceptible. He read them with the author's cadence, with flawless correctness. A distinguished statesman read from the same book, with the intonations of a legal document, paying no attention to the movement inherent in the words before him. I have heard a celebrated Dante scholar and mediaeval enthusiast read the sonnets of the *Vita Nuova* as if they were not only prose, but the ignominious prose of a man devoid of emotions: an utter castration.

The leader of orchestra said to me, "There is more for a musician in a few lines with something rough or uneven, such as Byron's

> There be none of Beauty's daughters
> With a magic like thee;

than in whole pages of regular poetry."

Unless a man can put some thematic invention into *vers libre,* he would perhaps do well to stick to "regular" metres, which have certain chances of being musical from their form, and certain other chances of being musical through

his failure in fitting the form. In *vers libre* his sole musical chance lies in invention.

Mr. Eliot is one of the very few who have brought in a personal rhythm, an identifiable quality of sound as well as of style. And at any rate, his book is the best thing in poetry since . . . (for the sake of peace I will leave that date to the imagination). I have read most of the poems many times; I last read the whole book at breakfast time and from flimsy and grimy proof-sheets: I believe these are "test conditions." Confound it, the fellow can write—we may as well sit up and take notice. *E. P.*

Provincialism the Enemy.—IV.

I.

"TRANSPORTATION is civilisation." Whatever literary precocity may have led people to object to Kipling, or to "the later Kipling" *as art*, there is meat in this sentence from "The Night Mail." It is about the last word in the matter. Whatever interferes with the "traffic and all that it implies" is evil. A tunnel is worth more than a dynasty.

A tunnel would almost be worth part of this war, or, at least, a resultant tunnel would leave the war with some constructiveness indirectly to its credit, and no single act of any of the Allies would have so inhibitive an effect on all war parties whatsoever. There is something sinister in the way *the* tunnel disappears from discussion every now and again. I dare say it is not the supreme issue of the war. It may not be the millennium, but it is one, and, perhaps, *the* one firm step that can definitely be taken, if not toward a perpetual peace, at least toward a greater peace probability.

Zola saw "one country: Europe, with Paris as its capital." I do not see this, though if I care for anything in politics I care for a coalition of England, France and America. And after years of anxiety, one sees the beginning of, or, at least, an approach to some such combination: America, who owes all that she has to French thought and English customs, is at last beginning to take up her share in the contest.

Fundamentally, I do not care "politically," I care for civilisation, and I do not care who collects the taxes, or who polices the thoroughfares. Humanity is a collection of individuals, not a *whole* divided into segments or units. The only things that matter are the things which make individual life more interesting.

Ultimately, all these things proceed from a metropolis. Peace, our ideas of justice, of liberty, of as much of these as are feasible, the immaterial, as well as material things, proceed from a metropolis. Athens, Rome, the Cities of the Italian Renaissance, London, Paris, make and have made us our lives. New York distributes to America. It is conceivable that in a few centuries the centre may have shifted to the west side of the Atlantic, but that is not for our time.

At present the centre of the world is somewhere on an imaginary line between London and Paris, the sooner that line is shortened, the better for all of us, the richer the life of the world. I mean this both "intellectually" and "politically." France and England have always been at their best when knit closest. Our literature is always in full bloom after contact with France. Chaucer, the Elizabethans, both built on French stock. Translations of Villon revived our poetry in the midst of the mid-Victorian dessication.

C274

Contrariwise, the best of French prose, let us say the most "typical," the vaunted Voltairian clarity is built on England, on Voltaire's admiration of English freedom and English writers.

And the disease of both England and America during the last century is due precisely to a stoppage of circulation. Note that just at the time when Voltaire would normally have been reaching the English public and being translated, the Napoleonic wars intervened, communication was stopped. There has never been a complete or adequate English translation of Voltaire, not even of representative selections. England and America have brushed about in a dust-heap of bigotry for decades. No one has pointed out why. France went on to Stendhal and Flaubert. England declined from the glorious clarity of Fielding. She underwent an inferior century, lacking an essential chemical in her thought. Her anæmia contaminated America.

Even Landor was almost suppressed, not officially and by edict, but left unobtainable, or "selected" by Colvin.

Even before the war what sort of communication had we with France? Who, in any way, realised the Celt, and the Pict in France, or the Charente stock among the English? Who but a solitary crank would look into a south French town called "Gourdon," with a street of "Fourgous," and note the flaming red hair of its denizens? This is a long way from Brittany, and that more generally recognised racial kinship.

I do not wish to sentimentalise. My sole intent is to point out that England had forgotten a number of bonds with France, and that there may remain still more which even war rhetoric has not brought to the surface.

II.

Wars are not ended by theorising. Burckhardt notes as the highest point of renaissance civilisation the date when Milan refused to make war on Venice because a "war between buyer and seller could be profitable to neither." The "Peace of *Dives*" was recognised for an instant and forgotten. Historically, peace has not been doctrinaire. It has been not unlike a rolled snowball. Burgundy and Aquitaine no longer make war on each other. England and Scotland no longer make war on each other. Dante propounded a general central judiciary for all Europe, a sort of Hague tribunal to judge and decide between nations. His work remains as a treatise. What peace Europe acquired she acquired by an enlargement of nations, by coalitions, such as that of Castille, Leon and Aragon.

The closer these unions the greater the area in which a lasting peace is made possible. And against this moves the ever damned spirit of provincialism. Napoleon was its incarnation. Only a backwoods hell like Corsica could have produced him.

C273 Continued

C274 Provincialism the Enemy.—IV. *New Age*, XXI. 14 (2 Aug. 1917) 308–9.

He was simply a belated condottiere working on a much greater scale. The Italian Renaissance cities had produced his type by the hundred.

Coming from a barbarous island he arrived with a form of ambition two centuries behind the times, and wrecks incalculable mischief. He came with an idiotic form of ambition which had been civilised out of his more intelligent, more urban contemporaries.

The same can be said of the Hohenzollern bred in a mediæval sink like North Germany, fed on rhetoric and on allegory. They had a mediæval decore, a mediæval lack of bath-tubs (indeed, this is a slur on some mediæval castles), they had about them a learning which furnishes a parallel to the elaborate scholarship of the schoolmen, and was as fundamentally vain. They desired an isolation. All reactionaries desire an isolation. The project for a means of communication is a wound. A definite start, to be quite concrete for the moment, a definite start on the Channel Tunnel would be worth many German defeats. It belongs to a world and an order of things in which local princes with the right of life and death over their subjects do not exist, and wherein many other mediæval malpractices pass into desuetude.

III.

As for decentralisation, does the general English reader know that the City of New York proposed to secede from the State of New York at the time of the Southern Secession? It is the best parallel I know for the situation of Ulster (? Belfast). We may take it that Ulster is Belfast. As an American I may be permitted to be glad that the United States were not sub-divided; that some trace of civilisation has been permitted to remain in them, and, despite many of their faults, to continue, if not to progress.

Among the present sub-sectional criers within your Islands I hear no voice raised on behalf of civilisation. I hear many howling for a literal and meticulous application of political doctrine; for a doctrinaire application, for a carrying ad absurdum of a doctrine that is good enough as a general principle. Neither from South Ireland nor from Ulster has anyone spoken on behalf of civilisation, or spoken with any concern for humanity as a whole. And because of this the "outer world" not only has no sympathy, but is bored, definitely bored sick with the whole Irish business, and in particular with the Ulster dog-in-the-manger. No man with any care for civilisation as a whole can care a damn who taxes a few hucksters in Belfast, or what rhetorical cry about local rights they lift up as a defence against taxes. As for religion, that is a hoax, and a circulation of education would end it. But a nation which protects its bigotry by the propagation of ignorance must pay the cost in one way or another. Provincialism is the enemy.

IV.

And again for the tunnel which means union and not disseverance. "It would suck the guts out of Paris in a few years, in less than no time." Would it? There are perhaps few people in this island who would stop for such consideration. There are French who would mock the idea, and still more intelligent French who would accept it, *and* desire the tunnel.

The point is *not* would the tunnel turn Paris into a sort of Newport, into a sort of swell suburb of London. (Which it very conceivably might.) The question is, does a closer union of the two capitals make for a richer civilisation, for a completer human life for the individual? And to this question there is only one overwhelmingly affirmative answer.

Not only would it do this, but it would, I think, tend not to making the two cities alike, but to accentuate their difference. Nothing is more valuable than just this amicable accentuation of difference, and of complementary values.

It is a waste of time to arrange one's study of a literary period anywhere save in the British Museum. (No one who has not tried to start the examination of a period elsewhere can fully appreciate this.) I am taking a perhaps trifling illustration, but I wish to avoid ambiguity. It is a waste of time for a painter not to have both the Louvre and the National Gallery (and the Prado, for that matter) "under his thumb." Artists are not the only men to whom a metropolis is of value. They are not an isolated exception. I but take my illustration from the things most familiar to me. To put it another way: Civilisation is made by men of unusual intelligence. It is their product. And what man of unusual intelligence in our day, or in any day, has been content to live away from, or out of touch with, the biggest metropolis he could get to?

A lumping of Paris and London into one, or anything which approximates such a lumping, doubles all the faculties and facilities. Anything which stands in the way of this combination is a reaction and evil. And any man who does not do his part toward bringing the two cities together has set his hand against the best of humanity. EZRA POUND.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

I.—"THE HIBBERT."

UNANIMISM would counsel me to regard "The Hibbert" as a personality or "un dieu"; introspection permits me only the feeling that it is a vague tract, a nebulous aggregate stretching in no well-defined dimension "somewhere" between Mr. Balfour's lighter moments and the high seriousness of the Countess of Warwick. The name has been familiar to me for some years. Since my arrival in the Metropolis I have been accustomed, among what Mr. H—— calls "those few over-cultured people," to hear the phrase "an article in 'The Hibbert.'" I had never read "The Hibbert"; I had never opened "The Hibbert" until about a year ago when I was asked to review a single number of it in a bundle of review-books for the "International Journal of Ethics." Vaguely I imagined "The Hibbert" going its way in Mayfair, lying upon tables in political country houses, proceeding from "libraries" to the humbler houses of the Kensingtons West and South-West and thence into the provinces. Never, to my recollection, was the "article in 'The Hibbert'" baptized. It was "an article in 'The Hibbert'"; it had no name and no author.

"The Hibbert" is "a Quarterly Review of Religion, Theology, and Philosophy." My earliest distinct and, I venture to say, durable, if not permanent, impression of it is of the Countess of Warwick discoursing on the joys of maternity: abundant breasts, of rather the Viennese pattern, the pressing of small reddish hands, a facile and boundless fruitfulness. The memory of her enthusiasm has led me again to "The Hibbert" as a starting-point for this research. "Of that Pierian spring I would again . . . ." I rise disappointed. The pasture in the Hibbertian Helicon is less rich than I had supposed.

One gentleman recommends that the local post-office should bear the national coat of arms duly and properly blazoned, in order that the divorce between art and life be somewhat healed, and the wounds to sensibility, caused by our being familiar with the coat of arms only in vilely engraved advertisements, be filled with improving balsam. (Current number.)

C275

C274 Continued

C275 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . I.—"The Hibbert." *New Age*, XXI. 16 (16 Aug. 1917) 348–9.
An analysis of the British Press, the first of 20 instalments.

The Dean of St. Paul's, a master of technique, opens his broad-minded—I am not sure that for ecclesiastics the word should not be spelled without the hyphen, thus, broadminded article: "The recrudescence of superstition in England was plain to all observers many years before the war." The reader is at once intrigued to know how the Dean of St. Paul's is going to justify his own job and existence. It is, however, only an aniseed-bag, a rhetorical device, a wagging of the legs to draw antelope. We go on to "the absorption of society in gain and pleasure" and an attack on clairvoyants and mediums, whose existence "proves that the Christian hope of immortality burns very dimly among us." (I have not deciphered the function of the sectarian adjective in this sentence, but the reader can seek at the source.)

Secondly, he, the Dean, says: "the clerical demagogue showed more interest in the unemployed than in the unconverted." Whether this "interest" was platonic or watchful he does not state. He proceeds until he reaches contact with the recent democratisation of Heaven. I am there on a firmer footing; I have perused (I think "peruse" is the verb one applies in such cases), perused a recent theological work which deplores the excessive use of "monarchical metaphor" in descriptions of deity. Let me return to Dean Inge. He does not believe that Eternity is an Eternal Now. He considers that "A Christian must feel that the absence of any clear revelation about a *future* (italics his, not mine) state is an indication that we are not meant to make it a principal subject of our thoughts."

The bulk of this number is concerned with "Survival" and "Immortality," whereanent Laurent Tailhade years since on Stanislas de Guaita (not in "The Hibbert"): "Les gens tiennent à conserver leur *moi,* en raison directe de son insignifiance. Un fait bien digne de remarque, c'est l'acharnement à maintenir sans fin leur vie intellectuelle de ceux qui n'ont jamais vécu par le cerveau." I am convinced that many good Hibbertians have read "Raymond."

The Rev. Canon Rawnsley says: "The increase of juvenile delinquents demands the serious attention of all the churches." He endorses some people who "agree with the Leeds commission in deploring the passion for the kinema show among juveniles."

And yet, "and yet," despite their peculiar dialect, the perusal of several numbers of the magazine leaves one with the impression that for both the lay and reverend members of its contributariat the prevailing opinion is that "the Church" is definitely worn out, ready only for the scrap heap, BUT that *the* question is: Here are a lot of fat jobs, or at least "comfortable livings." Leisure is excellent, we must maintain as many people of leisure as possible. A gentleman (of sorts) in every village. The kindly and tired black back of the elderly cleric must not totally disappear from the islands in the street crossings. We are all very tired. New blood is wanted, and sought, me hercule! sought, in far distant Montana, whence an "English Professor," or Professor of English, assures them that he is "convinced that the average college man is giving far more thought to the question of religion than the average non-college man of the same age." "Of college girls" he "can not say so much." The undergraduate seems inclined to regard the Scriptures as fairy tales, but "let no one think religion is a dead issue in American colleges." (Now we know where it has gone to. It has not, like the "English Review," sought asylum in the genteel parlours of Edinburgh; it has nestled into the American colleges.) So much for the Quarterly Review of Religion. The Hibbertian Theology I am but ill fitted to cope with.

I find a thoughtful article by A. D. McLaren on German Hate. Mr. Edward M. Chapman, of New London, Conn., U.S.A., indulges the national passion—I mean the lust for quotation. He heaps up his Pelions on his Ossas. "War," says he, in his opening,—

" ' "War," says Emerson, "quoting Heraclitus" ' " . . .

No, I am not quite through with "The Hibbert's" religion and vocabulary. The Rt. Rev. J. W. Diggle, D.D., says: "In its widest connotation the term sacrament is immeasurably vast; for it includes all cognizable signs of the presence and attributes of the Invisible God." In his two opening paragraphs (about two-thirds of a page) I find the following symptoms: "scrolls of the ages"; "stability of righteousness"; "providential dealings"; "unseen Hand"; "all these—the starry heavens, the rainbow . . . the feeding of sparrows, the moral constitution of the world"; "the certificates of His presence with them"; "His faithful soldiers."

But let us proceed to "education" and the prominent Mr. Begbie. "The task of the schoolmaster is therefore to quicken the intelligence of children while at the same time he develops the fundamental qualities of their English character." (Drake? Hawkins? or Mr. Begbie?)

"Now there are three things which the State demands directly or indirectly in its citizens. It demands that they shall be moral, intelligent and healthy." "No parent ought to be allowed to interfere with a system which is a State system of education."

He sets forth the "ineradicable individualism"; although great intelligence "is not the shining quality" of the English, yet the "germ of it" is to survive the non-by-parent-interfered-with cram-gewissenschaft of the State, whereto the "apathy of the public" is at present the gravest danger or obstacle. It is, in his ideal England, "for the Board of Education to prevent" millions of people from living as if there were "no Wordsworth . . . no Shelley . . . no Dickens," millions who now (in the unregenerate now) eat shrimps "out of paper bags at Blackpool, Yarmouth, and Skegness," despite the "very gracious, tolerant and attractive aristocracy of intelligence" which ornaments this collection of islands, as we know them.

Despite Mr. Begbie's effort to compensate me for the absence of new anti-Malthusian dithyrambics from the Countess, it is only Mr. Crozier (page 572) who presents me with the quintessence of Hibbertism, and rewards my morning of patience.

"With Mr. Wells' new book on Religion—'God the Invisible King'—flaming like a comet in the sky," begins Mr. John Beattie Crozier, who next sets forth some "thoughts that have taken definite form" in his mind on Practical Religion. He asks what "a given human individual" (male, evidently) is to "do in the matter of religion," and decides that it should not be a straight line but a "rising and falling curve rather like the sun in the heavens." "As an infant he will start as a mere blank point or zero emerging from Eternity," as a boy, "an animal mainly thinking of his food." (Shakespeare's mighty line hovers behind Mr. C.) In early life as Matthew Arnold's "barbarian" he "plays the game."

"Later still, let us say as a public school boy (who has always been my ideal for this time of life), let him still 'play the game,' but under stricter control, with religion still a dribblet, but combined with the beginning of real education and culture," "inflexible personal honour." "As a young man" (and so he plays his part) "he is now to put on all his 'feathers' and seek to gain the favourable glances of the fair sex, which he can not do with all his mere knowledge and rough physical prowess" (Kama Sutra, Mr. C.?) "unless he adds to them gentleness and grace of manners and of form and even of personal adornment" as a "stepping stone to the ideal." (Kama Sutra or Mrs. Hodgson Burnett? We must remember the specification about the rising and falling curve, like the sun in, etc. . . .)

Then Mr. C. prescribes a transition stage in which "the society of a g. and v. woman must be his tutor." His religion the "decent," the "right thing." "It must be that of the 'gentleman' and 'man of honour' in Captain Hawtrey's sense of the term." "But if at this stage he could add to this the attitude of mind of a really Christian 'converted man,'" etc., "that

C275 Continued

indeed, in my judgment, would be well-nigh perfection itself!"

The exclamation point is Mr. Crozier's. He then goes on to Phaeton, the Kaiser, renunciation, but despite his Phaetons, and their possible, profound, arcane connection with the flaming comets and sun-symbols of his outset, "The Hibbert" is not so entertaining as the Countess had led me in hope to suppose.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

II.—"BLACKWOOD'S."

"UNANIMISM," as I said of "The Hibbert," would counsel me to regard "Blackwood's" as a personality or un dieu, introspection presents me with a brown cover, printed closely, very closely, in fact, and double columns. The object rests on the magazine rack, always on the magazine rack of a club or a library, any club, any library. I can conscientiously state that I have never seen a copy of Blackwood's in any private house whatsoever. Many people would cavil at its inclusion under my general heading. Never till now, never until this time when a passion to carry realism further than Zola has led me to record the details of human utterance as carefully as he recorded the newspaper details relative to "La Débâcle," have I read a copy of "Blackwood's," never has my eye performed the Gargantuan feat of penetrating its double-columns.

Eight years ago, M., who is not always truthful, alleged that he had met a mythical Blackwood, "Old Blackwood," a man such as we are; and that this man was pleasing, and a cynic, and that he printed N. not because he believed in N.'s work or liked it, but solely because "people like that sort of thing."

But I repeat, M. is not always truthful, and I have even forgotten whether it was really N. who had been so lavishly paid for appearing in "Blackwood's." Neither M. nor any other man I have met has ever claimed to have preceded me in the reading of this review. I am, for all I know to the contrary, a lonely De Gama doubling an uncharted cape.

(Parenthesis: Since writing the above I have pushed inquiry further. One of the most learned officials of the Museum Britannicum assured me that "No one ever read 'Blackwood's.'" Not content with this, I sought an officer of the old Army, who to my question replied firmly: "Yes, I have read 'Blackwood's,' and damn dull it was, too. I hear, since the war, they have gained a good deal of kudos by a sort of Chauvinism which nothing in Germany matches."

He has been wounded in earlier wars than the present, but I consider his statement exaggerated. I think he underestimates the Hun power.)

"Blackwood's" bears on its cover the following statement: "'Blackwood's' represents and appeals to all that is best in the undying genius of the race."—The "Times," Feb. 1, 1913.

I should hardly have expected to catch the "Times" in such an orgy of misanthropy. However, let us examine literature, the deathless voice of all the world, as presented in "Blackwood's."

"Isn't to-day sweet enough for you, mon ami? Just you and I and a punt and a perfect summer's day. Do be reasonable, and let's enjoy the present while we may."—P. 2; "Blackwood's" short story.

Opening of p. 4.—"How could anyone of ordinary flesh and blood be reasonable in a punt with Nan? How altogether desirable she looked, half sitting, half lying, etc. . . . one graceful bare arm, etc. Nan's fingers would make anything infinitely precious."

P. 10.—"The fair, sparse moustache. . . ."

P. 11.—"What a boy he looked!"

P. 16.—"Only five times this week."

P. 17.—"Asked you to marry me."

P. 12 of it, second column.—"Thank the Lord he was dead before the Askaris reached him. He struck a match to light his pipe."

P. 14 column 2.—"He had tried again and again to forget."

Last page.—"Then as she stood up arranging her hair."

NEXT STORY.

"Typical seamen of the British Mercantile Marine, bronzed and breezy."

"It was plain he regarded the packet as of great importance."

"No worthy woman would willingly part for an hour, etc. . . ."

"His tears are very near; his throat chokes: what memories."

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon this little child."

"Even so, Lord Jesus."—Still "Blackwood's."

POESY.

"I wish that I could be a Hun, to dive about the sea,
I wouldn't go for merchant men—a man-of-war for me.

. . . .

And help our eyes at the periscope as the High Seas Fleet goes by."

Anonymous, page 173, "Blackwood's," possibly not by Kipling.

TRAVEL BROADENS THE MIND.

"A summer's dawn in Kashmir is a lovely thing . . . My own destination is the Chasuma Shahi . . . I drive along the barred highway. . . ."

THOUGHT.

"We are in the midst of the greatest war of history."—June, 1917.

"The proposal to hold all elections upon one day is another sop to the Radicals and a resolute attempt to make the plural vote of no effect . . . etc. . . . mere trick to win the approval of the Labour Party . . . etc. If we are electing members to the unpaid service of their country, we should not have a word to say against it. But as we provide the successful candidate with sinecure appointments of £400 a year, we think that they should risk their own money in competing for the prize. . . ."

ETC.

"Bagpipe Ballads," "Roving Lads," "Adventures of an Ensign" (sic).

"The veteran acted as his own cook . . . parti carre dined under an apple-tree, beneath the stars, off three young ducks and two young chickens, with delicious fresh peas and new potatoes."

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ENSIGN.

"The battalion arrived at B——."

MORE THOUGHT.

"Such a man as M. Cailloux, whose activities do not seem to be at an end, could flourish only in the close atmosphere of a democracy."

This year is of especial interest to the readers of "Blackwood's"—it celebrates its century; thus, in the April number:—

"It is given to few enterprises to look back with pride and complacency upon a history of 100 years, to contemplate a long work well achieved, to one end and with one unbroken policy. . . .

"Hand to hand in ceaseless succession the lamp has been passed, alight and duly trimmed; and we who are the lantern-bearers of to-day run our course the more gladly because a 'Blackwood' still leads us, and because the rugged face of George Buchanan still frowns upon our standard. . . ."

C276

C275 Continued

C276 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . II.—"Blackwood's." *New Age*, XXI. 17 (23 Aug. 1917) 369–70.

(Note: This possibly explains the curious cover.)

The writer of the above then goes on to the magazine's tradition; recalls the "almost mythical heroes," Lockhart, Coleridge, de Quincey; leaps upon Trollope, mentions Reade, and, again, in his inspiriting ore rotundo, addresses us:—

"No better example, then, of the force of tradition could be found in the annals of letters than the House of Blackwood. Its continuity is unbroken."

Its continuity is indeed unbroken. Mr. Whibley has a hard case to make out for his suzerains. In the whole pageant of English literature since the days of Coleridge and de Quincey, the one notable name he can seize upon is that of Anthony Trollope, the one name his complacent finger can point to, the one lamp-post to which he can cling in his "contemplation." Since Trollope; no one! not only among the men under forty, but among our elders and among the generation of their fathers! Dickens, God knows he was popular enough not to have been ruled out on mere grounds of rapacity; Thackeray, Browning, Meredith, Fitzgerald, Rosetti, Swinburne, Henry James, Thomas Hardy?

Tradition at its best, tradition of which no better example is to be found, has excluded them all from the pages of "Blackwood's." Let us, therefore, join the Conservative party, let us leave off being moderns, let us no longer be the young knocking at the door; we have this perfect paragon of a publishing house looking after the national literature. We may go our ways in deep silence. Since de Quincey there has been only Trollope and Charles Reade. Synge was a Celt and a foreigner. Hawthorne worked in a Customs house. France is on the other side of the Channel, but the house of Blackwood remains.

Its magazine "represents and appeals to all that is best in the undying genius of the race." The responsible ministers of the "Times" have gone bail for it.

"Blackwood's" represents all the best. We are wearied with mediocrity, let us drink of this pure Castalian, let us have only Falernian, let us cease to ask for periodicals other than those whose perenniality is assured by the continuity of town libraries and club libraries as subscribers. Let us be orthodox, let us seek "sound opinion," let us annihilate ourselves before this triumphal centennial car, let us prostrate before Mr. Whibley.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

III.—ON QUARTERLY PUBLICATIONS.

"The Quarterly" must be done in extenso, or not at all. One cannot approach it on the basis of scattered paragraphs. It is a very solid review. One must take a centennial survey. It does not indulge, at least, it does not appear to indulge, in the facile imbecilities and crankism of "The Hibbert," or in the braggadocio of the Centennial "Blackwood." Its staff do not write about themselves as "light-bearers," etc. I must give my notes upon it time to mature.

The "Edinburgh" differs from it, superficially, in that it prints Gosse. The "Quarterly" does not, or at least has not, for some time printed Gosse. More anon.

The "London Quarterly" (current) divides itself between Gosse, Swinburne; God and Mr. Wells.

The "Church Quarterly" (Art. II, headed in the manner of Quarterlies, "Art., etc."), treats "De Partu Virginis," not in the manner of Sannazaro, but under the title, "The Virgin Birth from a Biological Standpoint." Sir Francis Champneys, M.D., F.R.C.P., says that

"Having been asked a short time ago to speak on the subject of the Virgin Birth, and having been urged to put into writing what I then said, I have decided to attempt to do so. The audience which I addressed was a Christian audience; and, indeed, nothing would have induced me to speak on this subject as I have done to any other sort of assembly. Nor do I now address my remarks except to those who are able to repeat the Creeds *ex animo* or who desire to be able to do so."

He was asked because of "having spent a long professional life among the mysteries of generation and birth." He continues:—

"It cannot therefore be because the mystery of generation is known that the difficulty arises with the birth of Christ. The difficulty arises in the way of *Experience*. In the human species two parents are (as a matter of experience) necessary."

This is not however "universal law," *vide* the Parthenogenesis of Aphides or Green Blight during the summer months.

"Also in the human body many tissues (bones, teeth, hair, etc.), are commonly produced in certain ovarian tumours."

Sir Francis, however, does not wish to be taken as declaring that the Saviour of Mankind was produced after this fashion. He merely illustrates that "exuberance of growth is a sign of life in all tissues." He points out that Luke, "himself a physician," bears testimony to the original events. But he weakens his argument (at least, in my own opinion, it is weakened) by going back to William Harvey A.D. 1653) for further corroboration. He considers the parthenogenesis an "outpost" of incarnation, and believes it should not be given up unless one is prepared to abandon or endanger "incarnation."

(Parenthesis: For those who are sincerely anxious to be able to repeat the Creeds *ex animo* we suggest the use of an ephemeris. It will be noted that many people are born each year "under Virgo." Astrology is much older than modern microscopical science. A slight misunderstanding of case-forms is enough to account for miraculous statements, especially as the story comes to us not in the language of Jerusalem, but in a suburban, hyper-colonial Greek. It places no strain on anyone's credulity to suppose that astrological statements about a nativity might have become a little distorted in the transcription, or even oral tradition, into a foreign tongue. The shifting of the date to coincide with that of the Saturnalia occurred, we presume, somewhat later.)

What Sir Francis' abuse of the Hun and his allusions to the "spiritual home" at the end of his essay "De Partu" have to do with that subject on either a biological or theological basis, I am unable to descry.

He is followed by the Baron Fr. von Hügel, who asks, "What Do We Mean by Hell?" One is inclined to refer him to Billy Sunday, who alone, among moderns, appears to hold definite views. However, the "Church Quarterly" has punctuated this query rather curiously; it reads, verbatim:—

"What Do We Mean by Heaven? And What Do We Mean by Hell? A synthetic attempt by Baron F. von Hugel."

That answer may do as well as another. Ten years ago the "Church Quarterly" reduced its price from 6s. to 3s. the copy; now, owing to the increased cost (150 per cent. on paper) it has been forced to rise again to 4s.

I deeply regret that our town library does not file the back numbers of this highly interesting publication.

The "Edinburgh" is aware both of literature and theology. Sir A. Quiller-Couch begins upon Gosse (Edmund, C.B.) (a man of whom no young man will speak evil) as follows:—

C277

C276 Continued

C277 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . III.—On Quarterly Publications. *New Age*, XXI. 18 (30 Aug. 1917) 384–5.

"It is always a pleasure to read a book by a man who knows how books should be written, and Mr. Gosse's eagerly awaited 'Life of Swinburne' tells the tale vividly, tactfully, adequately . . . etc."

Sir Arthur, almost alone among strident voices, shows the true sense of solidarity which has up to now distinguished his generation.

W. R. Inge is concerned with more civic matters, thus :—

"In every modern civilised country population is restricted by deliberate postponement of marriage. In many cases this does no harm whatever; but in many others it gravely diminishes the happiness of young people, and may even cause minor disturbances of health. Moreover, it would not be so widely adopted but for the tolerance on one part of society of the 'great social evil,' the opprobrium of our civilisation. In spite of the failure hitherto of priests, moralists and legislators to root it out, and in spite of the acceptance of it as inevitable by the majority of Continental opinion, I believe that this abomination will not long be tolerated by the conscience of free and progressive nations. It is notorious that the whole body of women deeply resents the wrong and contumely done by it to their sex."

The Dean further states that medical methods against "a certain disease" are not enough. Early marriage is to become the rule in all cases. The results to be tempered by an "Imperial Board of Emigration."

He, however, deplores the "Comstock" legislation in America. And declares, quite sanely, that it has done "unmixed harm."

In this gargantuan attempt to learn what England and America are thinking one must not fly to conclusions, one must not confuse different shades of opinion. One must also remember that the number of people who implicitly agree both with Dean Inge and with the late Anthony Comstock is infinitely greater than the number of people who read the present periodical, or any or all other periodicals devoted to the affairs of the intellect.

It is extremely difficult for the "ordinarily cultured person" to realise the number of Christians per million of the population.

In October, 1916, the "Edinburgh" took note of Remy de Gourmont; in April, 1916, of Ch. van Lerberghe. They also published a long article by Havelock Ellis. The editor of the "Edinburgh" contributes regularly to "The Sunday Times." Among his contributors are found the editor of "Truth," and the editor, or late editor, of "The Dublin Review."

Against this must be recorded the fact that they devoted 17 pages to Maurice Barrès and, in contrast, 8 to De Gourmont. Mr. Thorold ends his article on Barrès as follows :—

"Among the influences that will go to form the new and emancipated France none will be more important than that of Maurice Barrès."

For all Mr. Gosse's name having become more or less of a jest and by-word, we must at this point commend and support Mr. Gosse against Mr. Thorold.

One cannot kit-kat about in the present pages of the "Edinburgh" and light upon transparent imbecilities. Quiller-Couch is in the main sane in what he has to say about Swinburne. The "Edinburgh" can print the word "bastardy" without endangering a strike of their printers. (Which is something, in England.) There is a reasonable divergence of opinion among its contributors. They took note of Carducci in April, 1914, of Stendhal in January of that year.

They are not always wholly tactful and prescient, to wit (January, 1914) :—

"Few men have achieved a literary success equal to that of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Englishmen may well be proud of a fellow-countryman who is recognised in Germany as one of the most brilliant writers and profound thinkers of the day."

But they had heard of Péguy *before he was killed*. On the other hand they show a tendency to take up with Claudel and that kind of messiness, and its English equivalent (the later Tagore, Katharine Tynan, etc.).

It is to be noted that they have been "stirred" by the war. As early as October, 1914, they were talking about "War and Literature." It was perhaps a little early to be drawing conclusions. *But* they have been better since the war than immediately before it. In fact I find the earlier numbers rather unreadable. About the middle of 1912 they enlarged their type, the editor boldly put his name on the cover, and articles began to be "signed."

They wrote of the "sovereignty of the air" in 1912; of Oliver Wendell Holmes and E. A. Poe in 1910. In 1906 Wells, May Sinclair, Mabel Dearmer and Hitchens ("Garden of Allah") have their novels grouped in an article on "Novels with a Philosophy." Even at that date they seem to have been aware of the French XVIIIth Century, and of a book called Mayne's "Ancient Law." My impression—I do not wish to record it as more than an impression—is that their "tonè" at that period is to be found in frequent phrases like "*no less a figure than*" or "a no less interesting figure of Madame de Maine's court at its later period was Madame du Deffand." I feel Madame de Stael forming a "family group" with Mrs. and Mr. Nekker, décor à la daguerreotype. But I do not feel it fair to judge the present "Edinburgh," i.e., the magazine since 1914, by its issues of the preceding decade.

Purely personal reflection, after having surveyed the last ten volumes of the "Edinburgh Review": I have *not* been a "good boy" or a "suitable curate" as these modes of existence are understood in the British literary episcopacy.

Impersonal or general reflection: Many people who are obviously and undeniably stupid are, it appears, able to write long articles without making "gaffes"; without in any egregious way displaying any of their particular mental limitations or their stupidities. This is because there are in England, perhaps more than in any other country, a great number of people who, without thinking, without any constructive or divinitive mental process of their own, manage to find out what ought to be thought upon any given subject or subjects. And they acquire a suitable and convenient proficiency in the expression of these suitable "thoughts."

ELIZABETHAN CLASSICISTS

By Ezra Pound

I

THE reactions and "movements" of literature are scarcely, if ever, movements against good work or good custom. Dryden and the precursors of Dryden did not react against *Hamlet*. If the eighteenth-century movement toward regularity is among those least sympathetic to the public of our moment, it is "historically justifiable," even though the katachrestical vigours of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* may not be enough to "explain" the existence of Pope. A single faulty work showing great powers would hardly be enough to start a "reaction"; only the mediocrity of a given time can drive the more intelligent men of that time to "break with tradition."

I take it that the phrase "break with tradition" is currently used to mean "desert the more obvious imbecilities of one's immediate elders"; at least, it has had that meaning in the periodical mouth for some years. Only the careful and critical mind will seek to know how much tradition inhered in the immediate elders.

C278

C277 Continued

C278 Elizabethan Classicists . . . I. *Egoist*, IV. 8 (Sept. 1917) 120–2.
The first of five instalments, all five reprinted as "Notes on Elizabethan Classicists."

Vaguely in some course of literature we heard of "the old fourteeners," "vulgariter" the metre of the *Battle of Ivry*. *Hamlet* could not have been written in this pleasing and popular measure. The "classics," however, appeared in it. For Court ladies and cosmopolitan heroes it is perhaps a little bewildering, but in the mouth of Oenone:

The Heroycal Epistles of the learned Poet Publius Ovidius Naso. In English verse: set out and translated by George Tuberuile. 1567. London: Henry Denham.

OENONE TO PARIS

To Paris that was once her owne
  though now it be not so,
From Ida, Oenon greeting sendes
  as these hir letters show,
May not thy nouel wife endure
  that thou my Pisle reade.
That they with Grecian fist were wrought
  thou needste not stand in dreade.

Pegasian nymph renounde in Troie,
  Oenone hight by name,
Of thee, (of thee that were mine owne) complaine
  if thou permit the same,
What froward god doth seeke to barre
  Oenone to be thine?
Or by what guilt have I deserude
  that Paris should decline?
Take paciently deserude woe
  and never grutch at all:
But undeserued wrongs will grieve
  a woman at the gall.

Scarce were thou of so noble fame,
  as platly doth appeare:
When I (the offspring of a floud)
  did choose the for my feere.
And thou, who now art Priams sonne
  (all reuerence layde apart)
Were tho a Hyard to beholde
  when first thou wanste my heart.
How oft have we in shaddow laine
  whylst hungrie flocks have fedde?
How oft have we of grasse and greanes
  preparde a homely bedde?
How oft on simple stacks of strawe
  and bennet did we rest?
How oft the dew and foggie mist
  our lodging hath opprest?
Who first discouerde thee the holtes
  and Lawndes of lurcking game?
Who first displaid thee where the whelps
  lay sucking of their Dame?
I sundrie tymes have holpe to pitch
  thy toyles for want of ayde:
And forst thy Hounds to climbe the hilles
  that gladly would have stayde.

One boysterous Beech Oenone's name
  in outward barke doth beare:
And with thy caruing knife is cut
  OENON, every wheare.
And as the trees in tyme doe ware
  so doth encrease my name:
Go to, grow on, erect your selves
  helpe to aduance my fame.
There growes (I minde it uerie well)
  upon a banck, a tree
Whereon ther doth a fresh recorde
  and will remaine of mee,
Liue long thou happie tree, I say,
  that on the brinck doth stande;
And hast ingraued in thy barke
  these wordes, with Paris hande.

When Pastor Paris shall reuolte,
  and Oenon's love forgoe:
Then Xanthus waters shall recoyle,
  and to their Fountaines flee.
Now Ryuer backward bend thy course,
  let Xanthus streame retier:
For Paris hath renounst the Nymph
  and prooude himself a lier.
That cursed day bred all my doole,
  the winter of my joy,
With cloudes of froward fortune fraught
  procurde me this annoy;

When cankred crafte Iuno came
  with Venus (Nurce of Love)
And Pallas eke, that warlike wench,
  their beauties pride to proue.

. . . . .

The pastoral note is at least not unpleasing, and the story more real than in the mouths of the later poets, who enliven us with the couplet to the tune:

Or Paris, who, to steal that daintie piece,
Traveled as far as 'twas 'twixt Troy and Greece.

The old versions of Ovid are, I think, well worth a week or so random reading. Turning from the Heroides I find this in a little booklet said to be "printed abroad" and undated. It bears "C. Marlow" on the title page.

AMORUM *

Now on the sea from her olde loue comes shee
That drawes the day from heaven's cold axle-tree,
Aurora whither slidest thou down againe,
And byrdes from Memnon yeerly shall be slaine.

Now in her tender arms I sweetlie bide,
If euer, now well lies she by my side,
The ayre is colde, and sleep is sweetest now,
And byrdes send foorth shril notes from every bow.
Whither runst thou, that men and women loue not,
Holde in thy rosie horses that they moue not.
Ere thou rise stars teach seamen where to saile,
But when thou comest, they of their course faile.
Poore trauailers though tired, rise at thy sight,
The painful Hinde by thee to fild is sent,
Slow oxen early in the yoke are pent.
Thou cousnest boyes of sleep, and dost betray them
To Pedants that with cruel lashes pay them.

. . . .

Any fault is more pleasing than the current fault of the many. One should read a few bad poets of every era, as one should read a little trash of every contemporary nation, if one would know the worth of the good in either.

Turning from translations, for a moment, to *The Shepherde's Starre* (1591), for the abandonment of syntax and sense, for an interesting experiment in metric, for beautiful lines, stray in a maze of unsense, I find the incoherent conclusion of much incoherence, where Amaryllis says: "In the meane while let my Roundilay end my follie"; and tilts at the age-old bogie of "Sapphics," Aeolium carmen, which perhaps Catullus alone of imitators has imitated with success.

THE SHEPHERDE'S STARRE, 1591

Amaryllis. In the meane while let this my Roundilay end my follie:

Sith the nymphs are thought to be happie creatures,
For that at faier *Helicon* a Fountaine,
Where all use like white Ritch iuorie foreheads
    Daily to sprinckle,

Sith the quire of Muses atend *Diana*,
Ever use to bathe heauie thoughts refyning,
With the Silver skinne, Civet and Mir using
    For their adornment,

Sith my sacred Nymphs priuiledge abateth,
Cause *Dianas* grace did elect the *Myrtle*,
To be pride of every branch in order
    last of her handmaides;

* *Amorum*, lib. i, elegia 13.

Should then I thus liue to behold ouerted
Skies, with impure eyes in a fountaine harboured
Where *Titans* honor seated is as under
All the beholders ?

Helpe wofull *Ecco*, reabound relenting,
That *Dianas* grace on her helpe recalling,
May well heare thy voice to bewaile, reanswere
Faire *Amaryllis*.

Fairer in deede then *Galatea*, fairest
Of *Dianas* troope to bewitch the wisest,
With amasing eye to abandon humors
of any gallants,

Shee *Thetis* faier, *Galatea* modest,
—Albeit some say in a Chrystal often,
Tis a rule, there lurketh a deadly poyson,
Tis but a false rule.

For what Yse is hid in a Diamond Ring,
Where the wise beholder hath eyes refusing,
Allabasters vaines to no workman hidden,
Gold to no Touchstone.

There bedeckes fairest *Rosamond* the fountaine,
Where resorts those greene *Driades* the waterie
Nimphs, of olive plants recreat by *Phaebus*
Till they be maried.

So beginning ends the report of her fame,
Whose report passing any pennes relation,
Doth entreat her loue, by reinspiration
To dull heads yeelding faer eies reflection,
Still to be present.

Surely among poems containing a considerable amount of beauty, this is one of the worst ever written. Patient endeavour will reveal to the reader a little more coherence and syntax than is at first glance apparent, but from this I draw no moral conclusion. For all half-forgotten writing there is, to my mind, little criticism save selection. "Those greene Driades"; Oenone, "offspring of a floud"; the music of the Elegy must make their own argument.

Next month I shall set forth a few passages from the *Metamorphoses*.

ART AND LIFE

BEDDOES (AND CHRONOLOGY)

By Ezra Pound

KEATS, born in 1795, died in 1821; Shelley, three years his senior, died the year after; Byron's life extended from 1788 to 1824. Beddoes is said to have begun "Death's Jest Book, or the Fool's Tragedy," at Oxford in 1825. This and the rest of Beddoes' writings were almost inaccessible to the public until 1890, when Edmund Gosse edited Beddoes' "Poetical Works." For which edition, however many friendly and unfriendly differences one may have with Mr. Gosse, one must give due thanks and credit.

Out of Beddoes' life, work and "literary position" there arise at least two riddles of interest. One

C279

might and does ask why so good a poet should have remained so long in obscurity; was it due to a quality of his style; or should a poet choose his birthdate with great care: should a young poet begin just after the death of three men of recognised genius, and more or less great popularity? One might say with Keats, Byron and Shelley all dead there was surely plenty of room for a new poet. Or one might say, "No, the public absorbed in the three romantic deaths of three fascinating young men, and giving to their poetry that added attention which demise ever demands, would certainly not pay attention to any new writer. Besides, Wordsworth was still alive."

Perhaps "alive" is scarcely the word one would apply to the "luminary" of the Lake District. Wordsworth drew his first orderly and deliberate breath in 1770, and continued the alternate processes of inhalation and exhalation until 1850. Coleridge and Lamb survived until 1834. Landor lived from 1775 until 1864. But he was too unpopular to have obscured any young man's chance with the public. Blake died in 1827. So on the whole we must say that Beddoes' "position" can not be very well explained by chronology. People say, "There was a time when there *was only* Beddoes." But it seems difficult to place this exact period. Beddoes was born in 1803, and Tennyson six years later, Browning in 1812: if Browning waited for recognition, it is equally certain that Tennyson did not wait very long. So that chronologically Beddoes had neither especially good nor bad luck, and bare dates will not explain him one way or the other.

He is perhaps more "Elizabethan" than any so modern poet, that is, if by being "Elizabethan" we mean using an extensive and Elizabethan vocabulary full of odd and spectacular phrases: very often quite fine ones. Lamb had rediscovered old plays, Keats and Shelley had imitated the period. There was nothing unusual or original in picking this sort of speech as a model. But Beddoes did the thing very well:

"*Athulf:* A fair and bright assembly: never strode
Old arched Grussau over such a tide
Of helmed chivalry, as when to-day
Our tourney swept, leaping billow-like,
Its palace-banked streets. Knights shut in steel,
Whose shields, like water, glassed the soul-eyed maidens,
That softly did attend their armed tread,
Flower-cinctured on the temples, whence gushed down
A full libation of star-numbered tresses,
Hallowing the neck unto love's silent kiss,
Veiling its innocent white: and then came squires,
And those who bore war's silken tapestries.

C278 Continued
C279 Beddoes (and Chronology). *Future*, I. 11 (Sept. 1917) 318–20.
Under the heading: "Art and Life."

And chequered heralds: 'twas a human river.
Brimful and beating as if the great god,
Who lay beneath it, would arise. So sways
Time's sea, which Age snows into and makes deep,
When, from the rocky side of the dim future,
Leaps into it a mighty destiny,
Whose being to endow great souls have been
Centuries hoarded, and the world meanwhile
Sate like a beggar upon Heaven's threshold,
Muttering its wrongs."

It is quite possible to carp at this passage. Its opening is possibly too "descriptive." Current taste may call the end rhetoric. Still it is magnificent rhetoric, and it is only of recent years that people have taken exception to this paraphernalia of Romanticism. Certainly neither Hugo nor Swinburne would have thought this a fault of our author. If he is "tapestry rather than painting," surely the pre-Raphaelites, loaded with their own mediævalism, would not have minded this.

But can these charges be made against the following passage:—

"No more of friendship here: the world is open:
I wish you life and merriment enough

From wealth and wine, and all the dingy glory
Fame doth reward those with, whose love-spurned hearts
Hunger for goblin immortality.
Live long, grow old, and honour crown thy hairs,
When they are pale and frosty as thy heart.
Away. I have no better blessing for thee."

Very well, says the opponent in my head, but this is "Romanticism," there is nothing Elizabethan about it.

"The swallow leaves her nest,
The soul my weary breast;
But therefore let the rain
On my grave
Fall pure; for why complain?
Since both will come again
O'er the wave."

At any rate this strophe is lyric. Prose comes into the play.

"*Isbrand:* Dead and gone! a scurvey burthen to this ballad of life. There lies he, Siegfried; my brother, mark you; and I weep not, nor gnash the teeth, nor curse: and why not, Siegfried? Do you see this? So should every honest man be: cold, dead, and leaden-coffined. This was one who would be constant in friendship, and the pole wanders: one who would be immortal, and the light that shines upon his pale forehead now, through yonder gewgaw window, undulated from its star hundreds of years ago. That is constancy, that is life. O moral nature!"

This passage foregoing is not out of key with Leopardi. And it were perhaps academic to carp at the few unneeded words in the following:—

"I do begin to feel
As if I were a ghost among the men,
As all, whom I loved, are; for their affections
Hung on things new, young, and unknown to me,
And that I am is but the obstinate will
Of this my hostile body."

I try to set out his beauties without much comment, leaving the reader to judge, for I write of a poet who greatly moved me at eighteen, and for whom my admiration has diminished without disappearing. I have a perfectly definite theory as to why my admiration has waned, but I would rather the reader came to his own conclusion. The critic should never be wholly governed by his stylistic beliefs, nor should the layman always think the critic is calling a substance brass, when he, the critic, is only attempting to define gold that is not quite 24 carat. This next speech is simpler syntactically:

"Tremble not, fear me not
The dead are ever good and innocent,
And love the living. They are cheerful creatures,
And quiet as the sunbeams, and most like
In grace and patient love and spotless beauty,
The new-born of mankind. 'Tis better too
To die, as thou art, young, in the first grace
And full of beauty, and so be remembered
As one chosen from the earth to be an angel;
Not left to droop and wither, and be borne
Down by the breath of time."

The pomps of poetry are at his disposal, but a phrase like—

"the sea's wide leafless wind"

is perhaps too fine to be dismissed as one of them.

The patter of his fools is certainly the best *tour de force* of its kind since the Elizabethan patter it imitates:—

"The dry rot of prudence hath eaten the ship of fools to dust; she is no more seaworthy. The world will see its ears in a glass no longer; so we are laid aside and shall soon be forgotten; for why should the feast of asses come but once a year, when all days are foaled of one mother? O world, world! The gods and fairies left thee, for thou wert too wise, and now, thou Socratic star, thy demon, the Great Pan, Folly, is parting from theee. The oracles still talked in their sleep, shall our grand-children say, till Master Merriman's kingdom was broken up: now is every man his own fool, and the world's sign is taken down."

"Farewell thou great-eared mind."

C279 Continued

"My jests are cracked, my coxcomb fallen, my bauble confiscated, my cap decapitated. Toll the bell; for oh, for oh! Jack Pudding is no more."

"I will yield Death the crown of folly. He hath no hair, and in this weather might catch cold and die."

For all this briskness, and for all the pageantry of his speech, and number of decorations in which he might seem to have forestalled the pre-Raphaelites, one speech of the play may well be turned into self-criticism:

"an I utter
Shadows of words, like to an ancient ghost,
Arisen out of hoary centuries
Where none can speak his language."

These lines are as beautiful as anything he has written, but they bring us directly to the question: Can a man write poetry in a purely archaic dialect? Presumably he can, and Beddoes has done so; but would not this poetry, his poetry be more effective, would not its effectiveness be much more lasting if he had used a real speech instead of a language which may have been used on the early Victorian stage, but certainly had no existence in the life of his era?

Making all due allowance; granting that he may be as easy to read as Webster and some of the late Elizabethans, is not this the secret of his comparative unpopularity? Even grant that he is too macabre to suit the "wider" audience which will take nothing but sugary optimism? Grant that he suffers from the samples given in anthologies, which are always the slight lyrics. His best work is in the plays and dramatic fragments. The song, "Old Adam, the Carrion Crow," quoted in the Oxford Book, loses a deal of its force if one have not the introductory lines:

"Thus, as I heard the snaky mermaids sing
In Phlegethon, that hydrophobic river,
One May-morning in Hell."

Or even the whole speech:—

"*Wolfram:* Good melody! If this be a good melody.
I have at home, fattening in my stye,
A sow that grunts above the nightingale.
Why this will serve for those who feed their veins
With crust, and cheese of dandelion's milk,
And the pure Rhine. When I am sick o' mornings,
With a horn spoon tinkling in my porridge-pot,
'Tis a brave ballad: but in Bacchanal night,
O'er wine, red, black, or purple-bubbling wine,
That takes a man by the brain and whirls him round,
By Bacchus' lip! I like a full-voiced fellow,
A craggy-throated, fat-cheeked trumpeter,
A barker, a moon-howler, who could sing
Thus, as I heard, etc. . . . ."

Still the tragedy and the beauty, for he has both, are in the main lost in the gaudiness of the words. His plot in "The Fool's Tragedy" is based on the stabbing of a Duke of Munsterberg by his court jester. Despite the magical element in the play, the passions are great enough to carry the improbabilities. But they will not quite lift the vocabulary. On the other hand, so many people who call themselves lovers of poetry are in reality only lovers of high-sounding words and imposing verbosity, and to them Beddoes should give very great pleasure, for he carries these things in poetry, whereas many others who try to display them do not come anywhere near the seats of the Muses.

Where in Francis Thompson, for example, will you find a page worth the following?

"To trust in story,
In the old times Death was a feverish sleep,
In which men walked. The other world was cold
And thinly-peopled, so life's emigrants
Came back to mingle with the crowds of earth:
But now great cities are transplanted thither,
Memphis, and Babylon, and either Thebes
And Priam's towery town with its one beech,
The dead are most and merriest: so be sure
There will be no more haunting, till their towns
Are full to the garret; then they'll shut their gates,
To keep the living out, and perhaps leave
A dead or two between both kingdoms."

THE LITTLE REVIEW

VOL. IV. SEPTEMBER 1917 No. 5

Inferior Religions*

Wyndham Lewis

I.

TO introduce my puppets, and the Wild Body, the generic puppet of all, I must look back to a time when the antics and solemn gambols of these wild children filled me with triumph.

The fascinating imbecility of the creaking men-machines, some little restaurant or fishing-boat works, is the subject of these studies. The boat's tackle and dirty little shell keeps their limbs in a monotonous rhythm of activity. A man gets drunk with his boat as he would with a merry-go-round. Only it is the staid, everyday drunkenness of the normal real. We can all see the ascendance a "carrousel" has on men, driving them into a set narrow intoxication. The wheel at Carisbrooke imposes a set of movements on the donkey inside it, in drawing water from the well, that it is easy to grasp. But in the case of a fishing-boat the variety is so great, the scheme so complex, that it passes as open and untrammeled life. This subtle and wider mechanism merges, for the spectator, in the general variety of Nature. Yet we have in most lives a spectacle as complete as a problem of Euclid.

Moran, Bestre and Brobdingnag are essays in a new human mathematic. But they are each simple shapes, little monuments of logic. I should like to compile a book of forty of these propositions, one deriving from and depending on the other.

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* [*Editor's note:* This essay was written as the introduction to a volume of short stories containing "Inn-Keepers and Bestre", "Unlucky for Pringle" and some others which had appeared in *The English Review* under Ford Madox Hueffer's editorship, and in other English periodicals. The book was in process of publication (the author had even been paid an advance on it) when war broke out. The last member of the publishing firm has been killed in France, and the firm disbanded. The essay is complete in itself and need not stand as an "introduction". It is perhaps the most important single document that Wyndham Lewis has written. Such stories as had not been previously published will appear in later numbers of *The Little Review*.—*E. P.*]

C280 ["Editor's Note," signed: E. P., to] Inferior Religions [by] Wyndham Lewis. *Little Review*, IV. 5 (Sept. 1917) [3]. A further footnote is supplied by the editor on page 7.

L' Homme Moyen Sensuel*

Ezra Pound

"I hate a dumpy woman"
—*George Gordon, Lord Byron*

'Tis of my country that I would endite,
In hope to set some misconceptions right.
My country? I love it well, and those good fellows
Who, since their wit's unknown, escape the gallows.
But you stuffed coats who're neither tepid nor distinctly boreal,
Pimping, conceited, placid, editorial,
Could I but speak as 'twere in the "Restoration"
I would articulate your perdamnation
This year perforce I must with circumspection —
For Mencken states somewhere, in this connection:
"It is a moral nation we infest".
Despite such reins and checks I'll do my best,
An art! You all respect the arts, from that infant tick
Who's now the editor of *The Atlantic*,
From Comstock's self, down to the meanest resident,
Till up again, right up, we reach the president,
Who shows his taste in his ambassadors :
A novelist, a publisher, to pay old scores,
A novelist, a publisher and a preacher,
That's sent to Holland, a most particular feature,
Henry Van Dyke, who thinks to charm the Muse you pack her in
A sort of stinking diliquescent saccharine.
The constitution of our land, O Socrates,
Was made to incubate such mediocrities,
These and a taste in books that's grown perennial
And antedates the Philadelphia centennial.
Still I'd respect you more if you could bury
Mabie, and Lyman Abbot and George Woodberry,
For minds so wholly founded upon quotations
Are not the best of pulse for infant nations.
Dulness herself, that abject spirit, chortles
To see your forty self-baptized immortals,
And holds her sides where swelling laughter cracks 'em
Before the "Ars Poetica" of Hiram Maxim.

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* [*Note:* It is through no fault of my own that this diversion was not given to the reader two years ago; but the commercial said it would not add to their transcendent popularity, and the vers-libre fanatics pointed out that I had used a form of terminal consonance no longer permitted, and my admirers *(j'en ai)*, ever nobly desirous of erecting me into a sort of national institution, declared the work "unworthy" of my mordant and serious genius. So a couple of the old gentlemen are dead in the interim, and, alas, two of the great men mentioned in passing, and the reader will have to accept the opusculus for what it is, some rhymes written in 1915. I would give them now with dedication "To the Anonymous Compatriot Who Produced the Poem 'Fanny', Somewhere About 1820", if this form of centennial homage be permitted me. It was no small thing to have written, in America, at that distant date, a poem of over forty pages which one can still read without labour. *E. P.*]

C281 L'HOMME MOYEN SENSUEL. *Little Review*, IV. 5 (Sept. 1917) 8–16.
(In English.) With note, signed: E. P., on page 9.

All one can say of this refining medium
Is *"Zut! Cinque lettres!"* a banished gallic idiom,
Their doddering ignorance is waxed so notable
'Tis time that it was capped with something quotable.

Here Radway grew, the fruit of pantosocracy,
The very fairest flower of their gynocracy.
Radway? My hero, for it will be more inspiring
If I set forth a bawdy plot like Byron
Than if I treat the nation as a whole.
Radway grew up. These forces shaped his soul;
These, and yet God, and Dr. Parkhurst's god, the N. Y. Journal
(Which pays him more per week than The Supernal).
These and another godlet of that day, your day
(You feed a hen on grease, perhaps she'll lay
The sterile egg that is still eatable:
"Prolific Noyes" with output undefeatable) .
From these he (Radway) learnt, from provosts and from editors
unyielding
And innocent of Stendhal, Flaubert, Maupassant and Fielding.
They set their mind (it's still in that condition) —
May we repeat; the Centennial Exposition
At Philadelphia, 1876?
What it knew then, it knows, and there it sticks.
And yet another, a "charming man", "sweet nature", but was Gilder,
De mortuis vcrum, truly the master builder?

From these he learnt. Poe, Whitman, Whistler, men, their
recognition
Was got abroad, what better luck do you wish 'em,
When writing well has not yet been forgiven
In Boston, to Henry James, the greatest whom we've seen living.
And timorous love of the innocuous
Brought from Gt. Britain and dumped down a'top of us,
Till you may take your choice: to feel the edge of satire or
Read Benett or some other flaccid flatterer .

Despite it all, despite your Red Bloods, febrile concupiscence
Whose blubbering yowls you take for passion's essence;
Despite it all, your compound predilection
For ignorance, its growth and its protection
(Vide the tariff), I will hang simple facts
Upon a tale, to combat other facts,
"Message to Garcia", Mosher's propagandas
That are the nation's botts, collicks and glanders.
Or from the feats of Sumner cull it? Think,
Could Freud or Jung unfathom such a sink?

My hero, Radway, I have named, in truth,
Some forces among those which "formed" his youth:
These heavy weights, these dodgers and these preachers,
Crusaders, lecturers and secret lechers,
Who wrought about his "soul" their stale infection.
These are the high-brows, add to this collection

C281 Continued

The social itch, the almost, all but, not quite, fascinating,
Piquante, delicious, luscious, captivating
(Puffed satin, and silk stockings, where the knee
Clings to the skirt in strict (vide: "*Vogue*") propriety.
Three thousand chorus girls and all unkissed,
O state sans song, sans home-grown wine, sans realist!
"Tell me not in mournful wish-wash
Life's a sort of sugared dish-wash" !
Radway had read the various evening papers
And yearned to imitate the Waldorf capers
As held before him in that unsullied mirror
The daily press, and monthlies nine cents dearer.
They held the very marrow of the ideals
That fed his spirit; were his mental meals.
Also, he'd read of christian virtues in
That canting rag called *Everybody's Magazine*,
And heard a clergy that tries on more wheezes
Than e'er were heard of by Our Lord Ch .... J....
So he "faced life" with rather mixed intentions,
He had attended country Christian Endeavour Conventions,
Where one gets more chances
Than Spanish ladies had in old romances.
(Let him rebuke who ne'er has known the pure Platonic grapple,
Or hugged two girls at once behind a chapel.)
Such practices diluted rural boredom
Though some approved of them, and some deplored 'em.
Such was he when he got his mother's letter
And would not think a thing that could upset her....
Yet saw on "ad." "To-night, THE HUDSON SAIL",
With forty queens, and music to regale
The select company: beauties you all would know
By name, if named". So it was phrased, or rather somewhat so
I have mislaid the "ad.", but note the touch,
Note, reader, note the sentimental touch :
His mother's birthday gift. (How pitiful
That only sentimental stuff will sell!)

Yet Radway went. A circumspectious prig!
And then that woman like a guinea-pig
Accosted, that's the word, accosted him,
Thereon the amorous calor slightly frosted him.
(I burn, I freeze, I sweat, said the fair Greek,
I speak in contradictions, so to speak.)

I've told his training, he was never bashful,
And his pockets by ma's aid, that night with cash full,
The invitation had no need of fine aesthetic,
Nor did disgust prove such a strong emetic
That we, with Masefield's vein, in the next sentence
Record "Odd's blood! Ouch! Ouch!" a prayer, his swift repentence.
No, no, they danced. The music grew much louder
As he inhaled the still fumes of rice-powder.
Then there came other nights, came slow but certain
And were such nights that we should "draw the curtain"

In writing fiction on uncertain chances
Of publication; "Circumstances",
As the editor of *The Century* says in print,
"Compel a certain silence and restraint."
Still we will bring our "fiction as near to fact" as
The Sunday school brings virtues into practice.

Soon our hero could manage once a week,
Not that his pay had risen, and no leak
Was found in his employer's cash. He learned the lay of cheaper
places,
And then Radway began to go the paces:
A rosy path, a sort of vernal ingress,
And Truth should here be careful of her thin dress —
Though males of seventy, who fear truths naked harm us,
Must think Truth looks as they do in wool pyjamas.
(My country, I've said your morals and your thoughts are stale
ones,
But surely the worst of your old-women are the male ones.)

Why paint these days? An insurance inspector
For fires and odd risks, could in this sector
Furnish more date for a compilation
Than I can from this distant land and station,
Unless perhaps I should have recourse to
One of those firm-faced inspecting women, who
Find pretty Irish girls in Chinese laundries,
Up stairs, the third floor up, and have such quandaries
As to how and why and whereby they got in
And for what earthly reason they remain. . . .
Alas, eheu, one question that sorely vexes
The serious social folk is "just what sex is".
Though it will, of course, pass off with social science
In which their mentors place such wide reliance.
De Gourmont says that fifty grunts are all that will be prized
Of language, by men wholly socialized,
With signs as many, that shall represent 'em
When thoroughly socialized printers want to print 'em.
"As free of mobs as kings."? I'd have men free of that invidious,
Lurking, serpentine, amphibious and insidious
Power that compels 'em
To be so much alike that every dog that smells 'em,
Thinks one identity is
Smeared o'er the lot in equal quantities.
Still we look toward the day when man, with unction,
Will long only to be a *social function*,
And even Zeus' wild lightning fear to strike
Lest it should fail to treat all men alike.
And I can hear an old man saying: "Oh, the rub!
"I see them sitting in the Harvard Club,
"And rate 'em up at just so much per head,
"Know what they think, and just what books they've read,
"Till I have viewed straw hats and their habitual clothing
"All the same style, same cut, with perfect loathing."

C281 Continued

So Radway walked, quite like the other men,
Out into the crepuscular half-light, now and then;
Saw what the city offered, cast an eye
Upon Manhattan's gorgeous panoply,
The flood of limbs upon Eighth Avenue
To beat Prague, Budapesth, Vienna or Moscow,*
Such animal invigorating carriage
As nothing can restrain or much disparage....
Still he was not given up to brute enjoyment,
An anxious sentiment was his employment,
For memory of the first warm night still cast a haze o'er
The mind of Radway, whene'er he found a pair of purple stays or
Some other quaint reminder of the occasion

That first made him believe in immoral suasion.
A temperate man, a thin potationist, each day
A silent hunter off the Great White Way,
He read *The Century* and thought it nice
To be not too well known in haunts of vice —
The prominent haunts, where one might recognize him,
And in his daily walks duly capsize him.
Thus he eschewed the bright red-walled cafés and
Was never one of whom one speaks as "brazen'd".

Some men will live as prudes in their own village
And make the tour abroad for their wild tillage —
I knew a tourist agent, one whose art is
To run such tours. He calls 'em . . . . house parties.
But Radway was a patriot whose venality
Was purer in its love of one locality,
A home-industrious worker to perfection,
A senatorial jobber for protection,

---

* Pronounce like respectable Russians: "*Mussqu*".

Especially on books, lest knowledge break in
Upon the national brains and set 'em achin'.

('Tis an anomaly in our large land of freedom,
You can not get cheap books, even if you need 'em).
Radway was ignorant as an editor,
And, heavenly, holy gods! I can't say more,
Though I know one, a very base detractor,
Who has the phrase "As ignorant as an actor".

But turn to Radway: the first night on the river,
Running so close to "hell" it sends a shiver
Down Rodyheaver's prophylactic spine,
Let me return to this bold theme of mine,
Of Radway. O clap hand ye moralists!
And meditate upon the Lord's conquests.
When last I met him, he was a pillar in
An organization for the suppression of sin . . . .

Not that he'd changed his tastes, nor yet his habits,
(Such changes don't occur in men, or rabbits).
Not that he was a saint, nor was top-loftical
In spiritual aspirations, but he found it profitable,
For as Ben Franklin said, with such urbanity:
"Nothing will pay thee, friend, like Christianity"
And in our day thus saith the Evangelist:
"Tent preachin' is the kind that pays the best."

'Twas as a business asset *pure an' simple*
That Radway joined the Baptist Broadway Temple.

I find no moral for a peroration,
He is the prototype of half the nation.

Imaginary Letters

IV

(Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn)

Ezra Pound

MY DEAR LYDIA:

Your rather irascible husband asks for "Aunt Sallys"*; with the Pyrenees before me and at this late date, it is difficult to provide them. I agree with at least half he says. I am, with qualifications, Malthusian. I should consent to breed under pressure, if I were convinced in any way of the reasonableness of reproducing the species. But my nerves and the nerves of any woman I could live with three months, would produce only a victim—beautiful perhaps, but a victim: expiring of aromatic pain from the jasmine, lacking in impulse, a mere bundle of discriminations. If I were wealthy I might subsidize a stud of young peasants, or a tribal group in Tahiti. At present *"valga mas estar soltero"*, I will not take Miss J., nor her income, nor the female disciple of John.

There is no truce between art and the public. The public celebrates its eucharists with dead bodies. Its writers aspire to equal the oyster: to get themselves swallowed alive. They encompass it.

Art that sells on production is bad art, essentially. It is art that is made to demand. It suits the public. The taste of the public is bad. The taste of the public is always bad. It is bad because it is not an individual expression, but merely a mania for assent, a mania to be "in on it".

Even the botches of a good artist have some quality, some distinction, which prevents their pleasing mass-palates.

Good art weathers the ages because once in so often a man of intelligence commands the mass to adore it. His contemporaries call him a nuisance, their children follow his instructions, include him in the curricula. I am not lifting my voice in protest; I am merely defining a process. I do not protest against the leaves falling in autumn.

The arts are kept up by a very few people; they always have been kept up, when kept up at all, by a very few people. A great art patron is a man who keeps up great artists. A good art patron is a man who keeps up good artists. His reputation is coterminous with the work he has patronized. He can not be an imbecile.

There are a few more people capable of knowing good art when they see it. Half of them are indifferent, three fourths of them are inactive, the exceeding few side with the artist; about all they can do is to feed him. Others, hating his art, may from family or humanitarian motives, feed and clothe him in spite of his art . . . . and attempt to divorce him from it.

These statements are simple, dull. One should write them in electric lights and hang them above Coney Island, and beside the Sarsaparilla sign on Broadway! The Biblical Text Society should embellish them upon busses.

Unfortunately the turmoil of yidds, letts, finns, esthonians, cravats, niberians, nubians, algerians, sweeping along Eighth Avenue in the splendour of their vigorous unwashed animality will not help us. They are the America of tomorrow. . . .

(The good Burn believes in America; the naive English, mad over apriculture, horticulture arboriculture, herbiculture, agriculture, asparagriculture etc., always believe in America . . . . until they have seen it.)

The turmoil of Yidds, Letts, etc., is "full of promise", full of vitality. They are the sap of the nation, our heritors, the heri-

* "Imaginary Letters", by Wyndham Lewis. *The Little Review* for May.

C282 Imaginary Letters. IV. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn). *Little Review*, IV. 5 (Sept. 1917) 20–22.
"Imaginary Letters, I–III. (Six Letters of William Bland Burn to His Wife)," were written by Wyndham Lewis and appeared in the issues for May, June, and July 1917.

tors of our ancient acquisitions. But our job is to turn out good art, that is to produce it, to make a tradition.

"My field must be ploughed up, but the country has need of quiet" (La Famille Cardinal). "I admire Epicurus. He was not the dupe of analogies". Need I give references for all my quotations?

This nonsense about art for the many, for the majority. J'en ai soupé. It may be fitting that men should enjoy equal "civic and political rights", these things are a matter of man's exterior acts, of exterior contacts. (Macchiavelli believed in democracy:: it lay beyond his experience). The arts have nothing to do with this. They are man's life within himself. The king's writ does not run there. The voice of the majority is powerless to make me enjoy, or disenjoy, the lines of Catullus. I dispense with a vote without inconvenience; Villon I would not dispense with.

Bales are written on the false assumption that you can treat the arts as if they were governed by civic analogies. The two things are not alike, and there is an end to the matter.

It is rubbish to say "art for the people lies behind us". The populace was paid to attend greek drama. It would have gone to cinemas instead, had cinemas then existed. Art begins with the artist. It goes first to the very few; and, next, to the few very idle. Even journalism and advertising can not reverse this law. I have scribbled a very long letter, and not answered half the good William's diatribe. My regards to Mrs Amelia.

Yours,

WALTER VILLERANT.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

IV.—THE "SPECTATOR."

THE "Spectator" is something peculiar. I must put this thing *dans son cadre*. Approaching the centre of English Kultur, one enters gradually a state of awareness to certain forces or properties of that centre, and among them the "Spectator." This publication greeted me courteously. I cannot quite remember how I learned that the "Spectator" was a sort of parochial joke, a "paper printed in London for circulation in the provinces." All I know is that the "Spectator" is an unfailing butt. You can raise a smile, a pale and disdainful smile anywhere, veritably anywhere, as far as my experience goes, by the mere mention of the "Spectator." At the present moment (for I am writing this prologue before making my usual inspection of the "mentality" to be analysed) I do not know why the "Spectator" is so greatly and unfailingly a fountain of merriment.

In a way, even vaguer, I know that it emanates from some people called "Stracheys,"* called generically and comprehensively "Stracheys." I know by hearsay that they differ among themselves; that they exist in generational strata; that they are "militarist" and "conscientious," etc.; that they speak with peculiar voices; that they are "beings apart," despite the fact that one of them, perhaps more than one, looks like a banker. The only one I ever saw did not look like a banker. I cannot conceive him on the Exchange.

The "Spectator" is by hearsay "'conservative." It has "dictated the conservative policy," whatever that phrase may mean. Save that it has given me one, or perhaps it is two, favourable reviews, I know absolutely nothing about it. For prejudging this paper or these people I have no more reason than the Athenian citizen who said, "I am tired of hearing him called Aristides the Just"; save perhaps this, that I did hear of a rural vicar of eighty who refused to write *any more* for the "Spectator" "Because it really was too *arrière*"

Thus we shall at least learn what the vicar of eighty or sixty or fifty or whatever his age was, thought *"too arrière."* Commençons!

"Spectator," No. 4,650, first page:

"We do not know on what authority the 'Daily Mail' bases its figures, but they seem to us inherently improbable. . ."

"This is a situation which demands the whole determination and all the skill and resource of the Navy. . ."

"When American vessels are built in large numbers they will be needed to transport the great American Army, etc. . ."

"We want Labour to be solid in support of the Government policy in the future as it has been in the past; if therefore the Government, who have, etc. . . come t.t.c. that etc. Br. delegates g.t. Stockholm, we should not protest t.w.s.h.s. misgivings. . . . "

"Another reason . . . Government must accept the responsibility. . . "

"No demand is really 'popular' unless all the constituent parts of the people are behind it. We all belong to the people. . . We are all the people. The Government represents us all . . ."

"The Government must act with a proper sense, etc. . . ."

Page 2.—The P.M. made a v.g. speech o.t.w. at Queen's Hall last Sat., the 3d aniv. of G.B. entry i.t.c.:

* A returning traveller recounts the following dialogue:—

Scene: A distant part of the English seaboard.

Precocious little girl, aged nine: "Mother, what *is* a Strachey?"

Mother: "Oh, it will take too long! It's too boring to explain it all to you."

Child (having been "told," and possibly labouring under a misapprehension): "But, mummy, I'll have to know some day."

I offer this with no comment. I am assured of its actuality.

C283

C282 Continued

C283 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . IV.—The "Spectator." *New Age*, XXI. 19 (6 Sept. 1917) 406–7.

"Sir W.R.'s *rugged* optimism *shines* out . . ." (italics mine.)

"The Germans have not turned O. and Z. into such m. fortresses without g.r."

"Those who talk lightly of the military advantages of autocracy . . "

"But as we all know only too well, incomes are not equal in this or in any other country, and the case, etc."

(Watch this carefully.)

"Indeed, by imposing adequate taxation the State assists the operations of war, because the taxes themselves, etc. . . "

"Frankly, we believe it would be difficult to the point of impossibility to say whether a man had or had not used his money dishonestly to procure his own social distinction . . ."

"The 'Gillie Dhu,' for instance, who inhabits Ross-shire, is a merry little fellow . . ."

"The Control of Uric Acid . . . Hints to the Middle-Aged." (Advt.)

"Y.M.C.A. Headquarters."

"Spectator," No. 4,649:

"Our aeroplanes played a.g.p. i.t.v."

"Throughout the week the French have had m.h.f. on the C.d.D.".

"The Allied Governments were strongly represented at a Conference on Balkan affairs held in Paris last week."

No. 4,648:

"A military disaster has befallen o.R.a."

"The Government doubtless have been further shaken in their position and authority by their handling of the Mesopotamian affair."

"Bismarck's tradition holds . .

"The Fellows of the Royal Societies have had a dining club since 1743."

No. 4,646.

"The 'Times' military correspondent suggests, we do not know with what authority . . ."

"There is generally some drawback to the pleasure to be got out of a garden. . . ."

"We have spoken of the large numbers of letters written; their name is legion. The daily outgoing mail of the British Armies in France needs a considerable force to cope with it. It may, at first sight, seem strange that the unlettered portion of the community should put on record such an enormous amount of literature."

(This is what might be termed in Arizona, "a fair chunk of it.")

It continues :—

"Their ideas are few, their vocabulary limited, but their letters as the sands of the sea-shore for number, it is not as if there were anything of more than usual interest to say."

(Apparently not). And there, my dear Watson, we have it. I knew that if I searched long enough I should come upon some clue to this mystery. The magnetism of this stupendous vacuity! The sweet reasonableness, the measured tone, the really utter un-undeniability of so much that one might read in this paper! Prestigious, astounding! There are no disconcerting jets and out-rushes of thought. The reader is not unpleasantly and suddenly hustled with novelties. No idea is hurled at him with unmannerly impetus. Observe in the last quoted passage the gradual development of the idea of multitude. How tenderly the writer circles about it, from "large" to "legion," with its scriptural and familiar allusiveness; from "considerable" to "enormous," and then this stately climax, this old but never outworn or outcast comparison with the number of the sands of the sea-shore—measuredly refraining from exaggeration, from the exaggeration of including such sand as might be supposed to rest at the bottom or middle of the Neptunian couch, rather than being dumped and disposed round its border.

That is really all there is to it. One might learn to do it oneself. There is "nothing of more than usual interest." The problem is to present this at length, and without startling the reader. Others have done it. The "New Statesman" is what might be called a shining (if not rugged) example, in action, incipient, under weigh. Aimed at the generation which read Bennett, Wells, Shaw, Galsworthy, rather than Lord Macaulay, this weekly has done, is doing, the "same stunt," if we by so gutter-snipish and saltimbanquic a phrase may describe anything so deliberate as the on-glide of the successful and lasting "Spectator." The "New Statesman" is a prime exemplar of the species, leading the sheltered life behind a phalanx of immobile ideas; leading the sheltered thought behind a phalanx of immobile phrases. This sort of thing cannot fail. Such a mass of printed statements in every issue to which no "normal, right-minded" man can possibly take exception! Familiar, but all the dearer for that. Ce sont les vieilles chansons. The "New Statesman" gives the same sense of security, of static unchanging existence, of a mental realm without any volcanoes, of a population in almost strenuous agreement with a norm. It is, perhaps, not the Spectatorial norm. Of this I have no means of judging. It is indubitably a norm of similar or identical species. The gap between Macaulay and Galsworthy is merely a temporal gap.

"It is not" let me return once again to the key-note, "It is not as if there were anything of more than usual interest to say."

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

V.—"THE STRAND," OR HOW THE THING MAY BE DONE.

For those who have not followed the sign "Seek Safety First! Read the 'Spectator'!" there remains the great heart of the people. Not receiving comfort in the groves of academicians, I have gone "out into the open"; to the popular font. In the wideness and wildness of adventure I feel like Captain Kettle and Don Kishótee. Heaven knows what I shall come upon next!

"The Strand" is a successful, and obviously successful, magazine. It carries 58 pages of ads. in double column, 50 before and the remainder at the back of its "reading matter," to say nothing of the cover with ads. on three sides and a modest statement, or command, concerning "FRY'S COCOA" neatly fitted into its belettered façade. It does not contain pictures of actresses or of Mlle. Régine Montparnasse in the act of saying that she wears beach stockings because sand is disagreeable to the feet. It is thicker and uses a slightly better paper than the other 8d. and 6d. (olim 6d. and 4½d.) magazines on the stand where I found it.

Putting aside my personal preferences for "literature," thought, etc., and other specialised forms of activity, we (and again obviously so) will find here a display of technique, of efficiency. This, No. 321, vol. 54, is manifestly what a vast number of people want; what a vast number of people spend the requisite 8d. to obtain. This is the "solid and wholesome." The ads. proclaim it. The absence of actresses' legs is a sign of power. "The Strand" can sell without their assistance . . not only to those who despise or disapprove of the legs, torses, etc., of our actresses, but also to the dissolute who know that these delicacies can be more

C284

C283 Continued

C284 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . V.—"The Strand," or How the Thing May Be Done. *New Age*, XXI. 20 (13 Sept. 1917) 425–7.

effectively "conveyed" in the pages of the large illustrated weeklies than in small-paged monthly magazines. I suspect that "The Strand" is "soundly" imperialist; believes in the invincibility of Britain (odds ten to one under *all* circumstances); does not present Americans in an unfavourable light—for is not the language more or less common to both countries, are there not American readers to be thought of? In normal times I think the comic characters might have about them a "foreign touch." However, let us come to the facts. Let us see "what carries the ads."

1. "Sherlock Holmes Outwits a German Spy." Red band on the cover. "His Last Bow, The War-Service of Sherlock Holmes." This is what business managers of periodicals call "the real thing." Sir A. Conan Doyle has never stooped to literature. Wells, Benett, and the rest of them have wobbled about in penumbras, but here is the man who has "done it," who has contributed a word to the language, a "character" to the fiction of the Caucasian world, for there is no European language in which the "Great Detective" can be hid under any disguise. Herlock Sholmes, spell it as you like, is KNOWN. Caines and Corellis lie by the wayside. Sherlock has held us all spellbound. Let us see what is requisite. Let us see what we are asked to believe.

In the first place, there is a residue in the minds of everyone who sees this name on the magazine cover. We all know something about Mr. Holmes. We have no difficulty in calling to mind this figure. He is perfectly fearless, possessed of inordinate strength, is absolutely impervious to the action of all known drugs and narcotics, and possessed, if not of eternal youth, at least of an eternal prime, of an invulnerable energy. He is also an eunuch (though I have no doubt that Sir Arthur would fit him out with a past full of romance if ever the public desire it).

In the present story we are asked to believe that two years before the war (i.e., 1912), Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey visited Sherlock, who had then retired to the South Downs to study bee-culture. "The Foreign Minister alone I could have withstood, but when the Premier also, etc.," says Sherlock, with his usual modesty. These dignitaries asked him to round up the Chief German spy. (For the Empire was then alert to these matters.) Sherlock at once went to America and grew a real Amurikun beard.

When the action takes place, he has not seen his dear Watson for some time. In fact, they stop in a breathless passage to see how time has mutually treated them, and find themselves unmarked by his ravages. Nevertheless, when Holmes telegraphs Watson to appear at Harwich "with the car," Watson appears. What djinn could be more obedient to his Aladdin? In the midst of a most vital affair, you naturally do trust someone you haven't seen for several years to arrive on the instant with "the car" in response to a telegram which is bound to find him at home. (After all, the car is only a "Ford." The German Embassy had a Benz motor.)

Let us examine the modus. Let us see what is left to the imagination or credulity of the reader, and just what the author is most careful NOT to trust to the intelligence of the reader.

1. The exposition of the position of things by the German head spy and the Chief Secretary of the Legation (? I forget whether this is von Kühlmann), at any rate, they are very explicit, and the documents in the safe are clearly labelled, "Harbour-Defences," "Naval Signals," etc.

2. When Sherlock (who is, of course, the chief spy's most trusted assistant) arrives, they begin to talk rather freely, before the reader is assured that Watson, the chauffeur, is well out of hearing. However, it might be assured that he is. Sherlock, in delivering all the naval signals, is careful to say, "a copy, mind you, not the originals." But this is not trusted to the reader in so simple a form. Two paragraphs are taken to explain (*between the assistant Sherlock and the boss spy*) that the originals would have been missed.

That is the sort of thing that the reader is *not* trusted to see for himself.

3. Sherlock chloroforms the chief spy. This is about all the action there is in the story. He suddenly produces a sponge soaked in chloroform. This chloroform is so strong that he and Watson have to ventilate the room a few moments later, yet no whiff of this chloroform has aroused the suspicions of Von Bork. Of course, he had it in a specially constructed thermos flask, or something of that sort, but this detail is left to the reader's "imagination" or inattention. Time required for extraction and use on Von Bork's mouth and nose equals three-fifths of a second.

I am reminded of a little story in the Italian comic paper, "Quattro cento venti." Alpine traveller having missed his shot at a bear, and being at the end of his ammunition, remembers that he has seen bears dance to a tambourine. He at once begins to play a tambourine, and the bear dances. He is saved.

Friend: "But where did you get the tambourine?"

Traveller (unabashed): "Made it out of the bear's hide."

4. Further details: Sherlock has taken to Claridge's. The Imperial Tokay they drink at the spy's expense is from Franz Joseph's special cellar. Sherlock still has (p. 234) "his long, nervous fingers." Sherlock recalls his triumphs over Prof. Moriarty and Col. Moran (p. 234). Further on we find the true steam calliope: "It was I who brought about, etc., and late King of Bohemia, when, etc., Imperial Envoy . . . etc. nihilist Klopman, Count Von und Zu Grafen . . . etc." So like that pretty little song:

"I'm the guy wot put de salt in de ocean."

"There is only one man," said Von Bork.

We must really agree with Von Bork. Sherlock is unique, but mankind remains amazingly unaltered and unalterable. He likes a relief from reality, he likes fairy stories, he likes stories of giants, he likes genii from bottles. Sherlock with his superhuman strength, his marvellous acumen, his deductive reasoning (which is certainly not shared with the reader), has all the charms of the giant. He is also a moral Titan: right is never too right. The logical end of these likes is, or was, God. The first clever Semite who went out for monotheism made a corner in giantness. He got a giant "really" bigger than all other possible giants. Whenever art gets beyond itself, and laps up too great a public, it at once degenerates into religion. Sherlock is on the way to religion, a modern worship of efficiency, acumen, inhumanity. Only a man on familiar terms with his public as Sir Arthur, as habituated to writing for that public, would dare "lay it on so thick." His Sherlock's peroration (supposedly, August 2, 1914) is a mixture of moving—prognostication of the "cold and bitter" wind which will blow over England and wither many in its blast, and a hurry to cash a £500 cheque before the arrested spy (then actually in their Ford motor-car, and about to be taken to Scotland Yard) has time to stop payment. Watson is urged to "start her up."

Sir Arthur is as illogical as any other sort of fanatic. He is loud in praise of Sherlock's faculty for reason, but his own flesh or mind, or whatever it is, falls a little short of divinity.

So much for the red-label story. It undoubtedly sells the magazine. BUT it is not all the art of making a magazine, and, besides, one can NOT count on such a draw as Sherlock for every issue. There is a lot more in the technique of successful magazine making than in getting an occasional story from Sir A. Conan Doyle.

The next item is "Confessions of a Censor-Fighter," by William G. Shepherd. This is clean, hard copy, six to seven pages of the first-hand experience of a newspaper correspondent during the present war, and much the best thing in the number.

Next Item. Luxurious room, light such as "Rembrandt," etc., burglar, quelled by tremendous will-

C284 Continued

power and "concentrated lightning" from the "flint-blue eyes" of a blind man. Blind man very noble, burglar very base, and has deeply injured the blind man and the lady of his devotion. Bell rung in the last paragraph when the blindness is discovered.

Next Item: Comic story, bell in last paragraph but one.

Next Item: Mark Hambourg tells how to play the piano.

Next Item, in smaller print, end of continued story (résumé of the first half given in black print). Killer Ames, the wicked pearl-fishing captain, terribly wicked, hero terribly noble, tremendous passions, tremendous situations. Very readable. Very probably quite impressive if read without too close attention. Point: Nobility is exalted. One must always remember this point in any study of melodrama. And, moreover, one must not scoff at it. In this story the fundamental life values are right. By this rightness the author is able to "move" the reader, despite his surface exaggerations, *à la* Hyper-Conrad. Of course, one skips large paragraphs to "get on."

The most wildly romantic and melodramatic writer always has this one advantage over the professed "realist," that whenever anything "happens" in real life it is often different from, and often in excess of "fiction," of the patterns of life already portrayed.

The dull writer, seeking only verisimilitude, possibly writing without experience or imagination, does not take this into account, and his work lacks a real profundity. I am not saying melodrama is profound. But the "unlikely" element in romance has a profound value, a value that no æsthetic, no theory of literature, can afford to omit from its scheme of things.

Next Item: "The Tanks," described at the request of the authorities by Col. E. D. Swinton, who is obviously put to it, to make an "account" without saying very much. The editors say he has written "masterly" stories. He is probably busy with other matters; and it is unfair to look at his article too closely. The beginning is verbose, a predicate does the split over six lines, etc. He says "*Schutzengrabenvernichtungsautomobil*" is not likely to be used as a topical refrain in vaudeville song. Toward the end he conveys some interesting information.

Next Item: Story, young man called "The Wastrel," worst recorded act that of distinguishing himself at football, gives his life for a cad who, we are assured, is very brilliant, although he behaves like an ass and displays no intellectual gifts.

Next Item: "Lion-Kings," in the smaller print. Brief biographies of Pezon family, possibly left over from before the war stock of copy.

Next Item: Story translated from the French. With the aid of its illustrations, we are to believe that "little milliners" in Paris are equipped with rather nice evening gowns, and that the way to strangle cruel Russian ex-Governors is with long gloves which leave no mark on the throat.

Next Item (small italics): Paragraph on "Improvement on Double Dummy."

Next Item: "For Greater Italy!" (in the smaller print). Descriptive writing of the Italian front, all the usual words, presumably conveys nothing which might not have been left to camera and cinematograph. We are expected to read through such important bits of conversation as "*Buon' giorno, signor capitano.*" Life is too short to read this article. With the exception of the paragraph on "Double Dummy," it is, however, the only unreadable thing in the magazine. (Note: Author writes of D'Annunzio as if he were greater than Leopardi. This, however, may be merely a slip of the pen; by "modern poet" he may mean "living poet." It is, however, quite possible that Leopardi's name is unknown to him.)

Next Item: Acrostics (half page).

Next Item: "Funny Pictures" for children (4 pages).

Next Item: "Perplexities," one page of puzzles. Very good puzzles, too.

Next Item: "The Acting Duchess," usual farce about charming people *with* titles and egregious bounder without. Probably not based on a very close study of "the aristocracy," and would "do on the stage."

Next Item: Curiosities. One page.

Then comes Notice (as on front cover) that "The Strand Magazine" can be sent post free to the troops. (This postal regulation applies equally to all other periodicals.)

Finis: Johnny Walker, Secrets of Beauty, Jaeger, Protective Knickers, Eno's, etc.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

VI.

"THE SPHERE," AND REFLECTIONS ON LETTER-PRESS.

THIS study like any other branch of natural science demands great endurance. The individual specimens must, or at least should, be examined with microscopic attention; otherwise one's generalities will descend into mere jeux-d'esprit, and the patient student of contemporary misfortune will derive from them nothing more than a transient amusement.

Not as a theologian interpreting the Divine Will in infallible dogma, but as a simple-hearted anthropologist putting specimens into different large boxes—merely for present convenience tumbling things apparently similar into the same large box until a more scientific and accurate and mature arrangement is feasible, let me attempt a very general classification of such periodicals as have yet obtruded themselves in my research: There are, or seem to be:

First: "B. & S." periodicals, i.e., those designed to keep thought in safe channels; to prevent acrimonious discussion in old gentlemen's clubs. e.g., respectable quarterlies, "The Spectator," e.h.g.o.

Second: Periodicals designed to inculcate useful and mercantile virtues in the middle and lower middle classes or strata, e.g., "The Strand," and "Cocoa" in general.

Third: Trade journals, such as "The Bookman," "The Tailor and Cutter," "Colour," etc.

Fourth: Crank papers. Possibly one should include here as a sub-heading "religious periodicals," but I do not wish to press this classification; I do not feel the need of two categories, and my general term will cover a number of crank papers which are not definitely religious, though often based on "superstition," i.e., left-overs of religions and taboos.

Fifth: Papers and parts of papers designed to stop thought altogether.

This last group is obviously quite distinct from the four groups that precede it. I do not mean to say that one can tell at a glance which papers belong to it, but its aim is radically different. The first group desires only to "stop down" thought, to prevent its leading any man into any unusual or "untoward" action. The second group aims to make its reader a self-helping and undisturbing member of the commercial community, law-abiding, with enough virtue to be self-content. The third group is a specialisation of the second. It aims to do in particular trades and groups what the second does for the salaried and wage-earning order in general, i.e., to tell it or show it what sort of work is demanded; where one can get the best price, etc., e.g., "Colour" presents monthly sample illustrations (free of cost to its editors) by people who more or less

C285

C284 Continued

C285 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . VI.—"The Sphere," and Reflections on Letter-Press. *New Age*, XXI. 21 (20 Sept. 1917) 446–7.

obviously desire to be transferred from the "main text" to the advertising section of the paper. It also tells you about Mrs. Gumps' "Place in Art" or Mr. R. Roe's "Place in Art," patiently explaining each month just which follower of Mr. Brangwyn is the true successor to Botticelli, Monticelli, Mantegna, Boucher, Watteau, Conder, Manet, Albrecht Dürer, Velasquez, or whoever it may be who most needs an inheritor at the moment. (By the kindness of such and such "Galleries.")

This is essentially the scheme of "The Bookman," although Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton and Dr. Robertson Nicoll both need careful scrutiny on their own account. "The Lives of Publishers, a careful and comparative study by one not in their employ," is a book we have long been in need of.

The fourth group expresses those of the community who desire all people to "do something." Regardless of the individual temperaments with which nature has endowed us, these people desire us to behave in a particular way. For example, some of them earnestly desire us all to procreate in abundance, others desire that we cease wholly from procreation; others demand that people uninstructed in Confucianism go at great expense into far parts of the earth to prevent Orientals from remaining Confucians. Still others demand that we desist from alcohol in all forms, substituting food, coffee, tobacco; others demand that we substitute one form of alcohol for another. Others demand that laws be arranged in a book with an intelligible system, still others demand that laws *must* essentially be without any system whatever. Some demand the "suppression of all brothels in Rangoon and other stations in Burmah" ("The Shield," July 1916, a very interesting periodical). Others desire that we believe in "God." Others desire that we should not "believe in God."

These periodicals must be distinguished from other propaganda for shifting the taxes, for a shifting of the taxes must almost of necessity bring, at least temporary, advantage to certain interested groups of individuals; but in many cases the "crank" periodical is more or less without "interest," for it can make no possible difference to Mrs. Crabbee of Hocking whether Lo Hi Li of Canton believes or disbelieves in Confucius, or whether the young men in Burmah cleave to, or eschew, the customs of their fathers.

Now in the face of these papers and on the grave of the Victorian era, it is by no means surprising that many people should have desired to stop thought altogether, or that there should have sprung up many papers like "The Sketch," whose obvious aim is to console the inane for inanity.

It is perfectly natural that people overwearied with being asked to decide at what age the female shop assistant of Hammersmith shall be judged fit to mislead the butcher-boy; overwearied with being asked to support missionaries to keep the Fijians sufficiently friendly to trade with the vendors of spirits, and to decide which sect shall morally uplift which islanders; overwearied with being asked to decide the necessary ratio between bath-tubs, work hours, salvations of various brands; overwearied, etc. . . . it is perfectly natural that these people should desire "surcease" from thinking at all; just as after a period of frumpery and too many petticoats worn at once, it is perfectly natural that people should take delight in "Eve" with no petticoats whatsoever, and in similar mental ricochets.

It seems unlikely that anyone else has ever read the letter-press of illustrated weeklies, i.e., more than enough to learn who it is who is "chatting" . . . for someone always is "chatting." It is being done in the current numbers of three of them. I take "The Sphere" because it appears to be about "middle-size." It eschews the simple aphrodisiacs of the "brighter" papers; it has fewer cross-sections of dissected ships showing little compartments marked: coal, whale-oil, ballast, engines, crew, etc., than are published in the "Ill. London News." This last, "The Sketch," and "The Sphere" are familiar to me because I used to dine occasionally in a restaurant where veal "Milanese" was 1/3, the same being now 1/9. I judge these papers are aimed at people who paid 1/3 for veal cutlet before the War, and who are still able to afford the same dish, slightly smaller at an advance of 40 per cent. That is, I should say, about the average economic range of the 6d. (now 7d.) weekly. And "The Sphere" is about the average weekly, having fewer salients than the others. **Current number 11¾ by 16, ⅜ inches. Cover: Soldiers in waterproof blankets, looking at camera, but labelled "Fighting"; Fry, Shoolbred's, "Army Club." Full page illustration. Books received: "Harry Lauder's Logic," 1s., etc.** "Plays Worth Seeing," are described as follows:—

1. Most attractive musical comedy, with some pleasant songs and picturesque scenes.
2. Irresponsible company provide an excellent night's entertainment. Play continues very popular, and the Song . . . is spreading far and wide over the Kingdom.
5. —— looks very chic as the heroine.

First text page, Editorial.

"It is curious that certain people should allow themselves to formulate such an ignorant and careless question as 'What are we Fighting For?'"

"Mr. Wells has perhaps forgotten . . . famous pledge . . . Asquith . . . never sheathe the sword . . . ultimatum, . . . Serbia . . . Belloc. . . ."

Usual picture of "chatting." Fourteen pages of war pictures and maps. These things are of interest, are to be found in various weeklies. One wishes the editors would stick to photographs and not employ "artists."

Usual "science" page or half-page: "164,000,000 miles," etc. Mr. Lucas: "But apart from money, which has nothing to do with the pleasures of craftsmanship, it must be great fun to write aphorisms." Sketch of "Tommy in Italy, like Tommy in France, is on the best of terms with his Allies."

A LITERARY LETTER.

"Personally, I care nothing. . . I do not mind whether Shakespeare wrote the plays assigned. . . . I do not care a single jot about the authorship of Elizabethan drama. . . . A playwright never hesitated to borrow. . . ."

"Anyone who can write a book on the Elizabethan drama, one feels to be a friend with whom one would like to discuss various problems. . . . I would fain have gone through, in this or another Letter, the eight volumes of Middleton (every line of which I have read)."

Mehercule ! ! !

"And have endeavoured to demonstrate the essential greatness. . . ."

"I paid for my edition of the works of Webster in four volumes, published by Pickering in 1830, edited by Alexander Dyce, not less than £4 10s., and a friend paid £7 or £8 for a copy rendered additionally valuable by a wider margin. I paid a guinea for the plays of Tourneur. edited by Churton Collins."

"Dyce's one volume edition—an uncomfortable book to read. . . ."

"The Elizabethan dramatists are not really available to-day to any but those who, like myself, spend more money than prudence justifies upon books."

"One of my favourites among the Elizabethans. . ."

"Further, it may interest those who remember the discussion about the German word, *Kadaver*. . . "

"Now, I have great admiration for Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch as a novelist, and I count him one of the most attractive men I know."

"If I were giving advice to a young student of literature (and my correspondence indicates that this Letter fulfils some such purpose in countless cases)."

SISTE VIATOR.

Gentle friend, let us pause, let us drop a modest and not too prominent tear for the adolescent and countless correspondent.

C285 Continued

There is more of this, there is even a part page headed "Literature." Blind worship of Shakespeare is deplored, but "The Tempest" is said to be better than Dekker's "Shoemaker's Holiday." Then follows a full page of the Pope, as damning a piece of evidence as even the most rabid atheist could desire.

In "Literature" we learn that, "Here Dion Cosway found his cousin Myola." "In the Petrol World," *sono profano,* I am unfit to discuss things, but the foot-pump seems an admirable, pain-saving invention.

WOMAN'S SPHERE IN WAR-TIME.

Here we note the repetition of the paper's own title, "Sphere," and :—

"Three years of the tangled web of war have passed away, with all our preconceived notions knocked to bits . . . timely Zepp . . . flattened purses and forced simplicity . . . infuse dashes of decorativeness into our attire . . . inexpensive devices . . . clever fingers . . . ordinary frock . . . absurdly simple . . decorative withal." (Surely this last must be the editor ipse.)

"Jersey of powder-blue tricot, . . . autumn toilette, dainty decoration . . . out of the commonplace . . ."

There is more of this both here and in other weeklies; but I am more concerned about the "countless" correspondent than with the problem of introducing literary archaism into the female dress paragraph.

EZRA POUND.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

VII.

FAR FROM THE EXPENSIVE VEAL CUTLET.

WEARIED with the familiar scene, I mounted a 'bus at Piccadilly Circus and proceeded via Vauxhall to Clapham, and thence by another 'bus via "The Borough" and Hackney to a bridge spanning, I believe, the Lea River. Here beneath the rain stretched northward a desolate, flat and more or less Dutch landscape. Below the west side of the bridge was a yard and dock for regenerating canal boats. It was not unlike a Venetian *squero*. On the other side of the bridge, and stuffed almost under it, was the copy of a poorish German bier-garten; in the forty-foot stream were a few disconsolate row-boats of the familiar Serpentine pattern. The bridge was largely surmounted by a policeman. He decided my wife was innocent, and warned me in a glooming and ominous silence, with a sort of projected taciturnity of the eye, that I was to commit no foul play in that neighbourhood.

I offered no explanation of my presence. If I had said "I came because I saw LEA BRIDGE on a 'bus-sign," he would have considered the explanation inadequate. Certain social gulfs are unbridgeable. I am convinced the policeman did not and does not yet understand my presence overlooking his disconsolate river. I am equally certain, after having traversed those 'bus routes, that the millions are unplumbed by our "literature." What! Beyond the scope of Conan Doyle, or Hall Caine, millions indifferent to Mr. Wells' views upon God; millions unexpressed in the pages of Bennett, and even in the pages of Jacobs; sunk in vice? No, surely, only a few of them sunk in vice, and the rest of them sunk deep in virtue, as deep as their specific weight will permit; but at any rate terra incognita, unknown to the most popular writer, inarticulate, unreceptive.

I am perfectly certain these people do not read "The Sketch," or "Blackwood," or even "Truth," though I am assured that this latter paper circulates widely among the nonconformists of North London. And what, in God's name, do they read? What data can they provide save to takers of census, to compilers and statisticians? And what sort of an image of the "social order" has anyone been able to form; even the most social of novelists? In a flight and fury of Galsworthian phantasy we might suggest a flabby but decorative poppy: the slightly pathetic "aristocracy," some of whose "photos" appear in the illustrated Press; and below this a sort of pustulent dough, the plutocracy, the hog-class, depicted by Belloc and other writers, hated from above and below, but tolerated in its upper layer by the "aristocracy" whom it appears to support, though in reality our metaphorical Galsworthian flower is held up by a slender stiff stem: people whose males dress for dinner, habitually and without thought for the changing of raiment; below them people to whom the boiled shirt is a symbol of gaiety, gaiety more or less rare, to whom the evening black is a compensation for emptiness of the pocket, to whom the low-cut waistcoat is friendly, familiar; below them, in the "stem," people who regard their evening costume with something like reverence, with just a touch of the continental superstition for the "frac" and for "smok'ing."

There are also the followers and companions of Mr. Shaw, who advocate personal cleanliness but eschew the boiled shirt on principle, and below them the followers of reformers who begin their economy on the laundry-bill; who regard the body as the tawdry, rather despicable servant of the civic instrument fixed in the head. There is also organised labour.

But with all these one has come nowhere near "The Great Heart of the People." There must be, in all this waste of low dung-coloured brick, "the people" undependable, irrational, a quicksand upon which nothing can build, and which engulfs everything that settles into it; docile, apathetic, de-energised, or, rather, unacquainted with energy, simply The Quicksand. About them we are ignorant, we are as ignorant, or more ignorant than we were about Dublin before James Joyce wrote "A Portrait of the Artist"; we have had a few books "about them"; the books from them are unwritten, or unprintable. Even the manuscripts I have in mind are not of them, they are of Whitechapel, with a tinge of foreign, Yiddish, Polish, expressiveness. They divulge only something alien in the mass, they are not the mass expressing itself.

With the exception of "The Strand," I have as yet, unthinkingly, been concerned only with "Reading Matter for the West End." Last evening I began to ask the questions: What do the people read? Answer: Had I ever heard of the "Quiver"? No, I had not heard of the "Quiver"; I had heard of the "Shield," the "Clarion," and a curious American and religious paper called the "Ram's Horn." (This latter has, or had, a cover portraying a priest or levite of Israel blowing the instrument.)

Knowledge or opinions regarding the "Quiver":

My first informant: It had knitting patterns. It was widely known. Informant believed that no *man* had ever read the "Quiver."

Second informant (a woman of thirty): "Oh yes, when I was about ten, the cook used to have it."

Third informant (newsvendor), would get it for me, did not believe me likely to find a copy in Kensington; looked it up on a list, price 7d. I felt it could not be as popular as I had hoped.

Fourth informant (newsvendor): Oh yes, used to have it. What was it like? "Oh it had . . . it was more intellectual . . . er . . er . . perhaps you might say more scriptural. It had good reading in it. Servants read it. A friend of theirs used to get it: read it first." (I did not make out its ultimate destination.) It is not "more scriptural."

THE QUIVER (price 8d. . . . published La Belle Sauvage).

(A large pile of them discovered at "Smiths")

"Mlle. Gaby Deslys (heavy black type for the name), famous Parisian artiste, writes (anent Saltrates) :—I find that a handful dissolved in the bath makes the

C286

C285 Continued

C286 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . VII. Far from the Expensive Veal Cutlet. *New Age*, XXI. 22 (27 Sept. 1917) 464–6. In part, on the *Quiver*.

water Oh! so fragrant, refreshing and invigorating. A teaspoonful in the footbath quickly fills the water with oxygen, etc., foot troubles disappear."
(autograph reproduced.)
Animadversion: Gaby has been mugging up chemistry.

"Mr. Harry Pilcer (black for name as above), the well-known dancer, writes:—In one week I was able to walk without discomfort, etc."

FIRST STORY. Young female journalist ascends from flat or "diggings" through sky-light, descends through another after losing herself upon roofs; finds young man seated before a revolver.

Result, the Altar!! No, gentle reader, I was about to fly to that conclusion myself, but we both show our ignorance of popular writing. We forget that the unexpected is often the key-note of interest. "Result, the altar" is crude, it is too simple for the popular mind. Result young man sulky (despite the luxury of the illustrations), young man with literary ambitions resents interruption in suicide, tells of his failure, conversation on suicide and on the beauty of his literature lasts until morning, he shaves, she is about to leave in order to prevent her "char-lady" "having a fit on the spot." Postman knocks: two letters, for these things do not occur one at a time, the first requests author to call on theatre manager, the second announces legacy of £20,000 from uncle in Australia. Result: the altar, plus "brilliant" literary collaboration, and they become "owners of one of the most charming little houses in town, with several successful plays, and as many 'best sellers' and no failures to their credit," "and are something of celebrities in their way."

What *do* Wells, Bennett, and Doyle know of the great popular heart? The events of this narrative occupy five pages, leaving one-fourth of a page for magazine heading and title. The illustrations are of the school used by "The Century." The sub-headings are: On the Leads; Stella Intrudes; An All-night Sitting; The Postman's Knock.

SECOND ITEM: My Girls and the New Times, a frank talk, by a middle-aged mother.

She wished the home to be "a refuge and an inspiration," but the girls desired the great city. Declaration of present War made them realise "for the first time what it meant to have a home." "They realised in the flesh the comfort and the beauty of a common life." "Hard work has proved their salvation." "Love and the quiet and the pleasant surroundings of their home proved grateful comforts" after hospital and farm labour. Her "daughters have become domesticated. They have not had time to study cookery or housecraft in detail, but they have acquired the real domestic spirit." One of the maids left and they had to turn to. "If they do not marry they will still want homes of their own" even if only a cheap flat or rooms. "To know something of the practical side of home-making, to grasp the art of shopping and to know the value of foodstuffs, etc., will be of immense value to girls living alone." "The war has shown my girls, and the girls of hundreds of other mothers, not only to appreciate their homes, but to be able to make homes."

The logic of this—it is part of a passage headed "Close to Pain, but far from Pessimism" is not quite clear to me. The point has been overlooked by Von Bernhardi and other Teutonic praisers of War, but I have no doubt that they will be grateful for the hint, and will use it in future appendices to their works. They will also delight in revelation of Britannia.

The mother wishes her girls to marry, but why their sundry accomplishments could not have been acquired under the reign of Saturn is nowhere explained to us. The healing hand of Mars has wrought this metamorphosis and solved her domestic perplexities. "Because of the War," she says, "I have lost—and found my girls. It is a paradox, but immeasurably true."

There are further exhortations to "let our girls bring their men friends to tea or dinner, and let us welcome them with perfect naturalness." We are told that "Most men are too ready to take it for granted that their girls will marry." Parents are exhorted to help towards this consummation . . . "The colonies need women. Our daughters need husbands." The mother is going to write to friends in New Zealand to ask them to offer hospitality to her youngest. She is not going to wait for official action, even though the price of fares has gone up. 4 pages.

THIRD ITEM: Chapter XXVI (copyright in U.S.A. by Mrs. Baillie Reynolds). "The night of the Orenfels ball . . . . He was a gentleman—an English gentleman; then what was he doing masquerading as a peasant at Orenfels." Decore: marble seat, tennis lawn, faultless behaviour.

"Conscious—as what girl is not conscious—of being admirably gowned, and looking remarkably nice . . . mine arms . . . bearing you down river bank . . . I wish you would not! In England we do not talk like that . . . limpid eyes . . . Was not Otho a foreigner . ."
Illustration, à la Prisoner of Zenda, "There is much the music shall plead for me."
"actually preferred her, little Betty." 12 pages.

FOURTH ITEM: The Woman's Harvest . . with photos. Photos for the most part show female harvesters wearing broad expressions of pleasure. "On the banks of the Nile, with its periodic overflowings to make the desert blossom as the rose, gangs of slaves, etc." Continental females also have tilled, etc. 7 pages, counting the illustrations.

FIFTH ITEM: "The Duchess of Granstone must have been an interesting lady—Auntie often speaks of her to me." "Call me Louis, he murmured." £50,000 worth of jewels, villain plans theft, or abduction of heiress. Villain's manners much more polished than those of handsome young knight of the shires. 6 pages.

SIXTH ITEM: Village comedy, sub-Jacobs, verbs in present tense, "thank-ee . . . better like . . . do complain a bit . . . that there . . ." 3 pages.

SEVENTH ITEM: Tale of the French revolution, Tricolour, old Versailles days, Marquis de . . .
(Loose leaf folder on "Wiping away tears," inserted at this juncture.)
"I am Jeannot Fouron—butcher by trade, and, faith, I'm not ashamed of it! I've butchered to some purpose to-day." "He glanced with an evil laugh." Danger from mob, revolution: bloody monster. Lovers united.

EIGHTH ITEM. Informs us that "Before the War, fox-hunting was certainly one of the most familiar of British rural sports. Zoographical data re/ foxes translated into idiom of "Sometimes papa will make his appearance, but he never joins in the gambols of his family," 2½ pages, plus 4 photos, three of which display foxes; in the other I can discern no fox, but one may be imagined lurking in the underbrush.

NINTH ITEM: But no! These four letters from a Holiday Worker to her friend, beginning "Dear Mate," and continuing "When the call to national service rang throughout the length and breadth of the land"; these and the beating heart of the magazine demand more than a brief and hurried notice.

There is another story about a boy scout. There are three full pale page reproductions of the Piazzetta, the Bridge of Sighs, the Dome of St. Mark's, labelled "Venice the Queen of Cities." And there is something about the possibilities of potatoes, but the beating heart of the magazine is in its competitions and personal correspondence, and in "The League of Young British Citizens," Patron in Chief H.R.H. Princess Patricia of Connaught. These things cannot be scamped, they cannot be lightly passed over. No wind will cleave this Red Sea before us. I have been all, alas all, too brief in my consideration of the middle-aged mother. I trust the reader will turn to her for

C286 Continued

himself. She cannot be compressed in an extract. The wine of Mt. Bazillac will not travel. You should smell this aroma from the petal and not from the distillation.

ELIZABETHAN CLASSICISTS

By Ezra Pound

II

A GREAT age of literature is perhaps always a great age of translations; or follows it. The Victorians in lesser degree had Fitzgerald, and Swinburne's Villon and Rossetti. One is at first a little surprised at the importance which historians of Spanish poetry give to Boscan, but our histories give our own translators too little. And worse, we have long since fallen under the blight of the Miltonic or noise tradition, to a stilted dialect in translating the classics, a dialect which imitates the idiom of the ancients rather than seeking their meaning, a state of mind which aims at "teaching the boy his Latin" or Greek or whatever it may be, but has long since ceased to care for the beauty of the original; or which perhaps thinks "appreciation" obligatory, and the meaning and content mere accessories.

Golding was no inconsiderable poet, and the Marlow of the translations has beauties no whit inferior to the Marlowe of original composition. In fact, the skill of the translations forbids one to balk at the terminal "e." We conclude the identity without seeking through works of reference.

Compare (pardon the professorial tone whereof I seem unable to divest myself in discussing these matters), compare the anonymous rather unskilled work in the translation of *Sixe Idillia*, with Marlow's version of *Amorum*, lib. iii, 13.

The XVIII Jdillion

HELLENS EPITHALAMION *

In Sparta long agoe, where Menelaus wore the crowne,
Twelve noble Virgins, daughters to the greatest in the towne,
All dight upon their haire in Crowtoe garlands fresh and greene,
Danst at the chamber doore of Helena the Queene,

What time this Menelay, the younger Sonne of Atreus,
Did marry with this louely daughter of Prince Tyndarus.
And therewithal at eue, a wedding song they jointly sung,
With such a shuffling of their feete, that all the Pallace rung.

CYCLOPS TO GALATEA THE WATER-NYMPH

IX Jdillion

. . . .

O Apple, sweet, of thee, and of myself I use to sing,
And that at midnight oft, for thee, aleavne faunes up I bring,
All great with young, and foure beares whelps, I nourish up for thee.
But come thou hither first, and thou shalt have them all of me.
And let the blewish colorde Sea beat on the shore so nie.
The night with me in cave, thou shalt consume more pleasantlie.
There are the shadie Baies, and there tall Cypres-trees doe sprout,
And there is Ivie blacke, and fertill Vines are al about.
Coole water there I haue, distilled of the whitest snowe,
A drinke divine, which out of wooddy Aetna mount doth flowe.
In these respects, who in the Sea and waues would rather be?
But if I seem as yet, too rough and sauage unto thee,
Great store of Oken woode I have, and never quenched fire;
And I can well endure my soul to burn with thy desire,
With this my onely eie, then which I nothing think more trimme.

* *Sixe Idillia*, published by Joseph Barnes, Oxford, 1588; 100 copies reprinted by H. Daniel, Oxford, 1883.

C287

Now woe is me, my mother bore not me with finns to swimme,
That I might dive to thee.

The "shuffling of their feete" is pleasing, but the Cyclops speaks perhaps too much in his own vein. Marlow is much more dexterous.

AMORUM *

ad amicam si pecatura est, ut occulte peccat

. . . .

Seeing thou art faire, I bar not thy false playing,
But let not me poore soule wit of thy straying.
Nor do I give thee counsaile to liue chast
But that thou wouldst dissemble when 'tis past.
She hath not trod awry that doth deny it,
Such as confesse haue lost their good names by it.
What madness ist to tell night sports by day,
Or hidden secrets openly to bewray,
The strumpet with the stranger will not do,
Before the room be cleare, and dore put too.
Will you make shipwracke of your honest name
And let the world be witnesse of the same?
Be more aduisde, walke as a puritaine,
And I shall think you chast do what you can.
Slippe still, onely deny it when tis done,
And before people immodest speeches shun,
The bed is for lasciuious toyings meete,
There use all toyes, and treade shame under feete,
When you are up and drest, be sage and graue,
And in the bed hide all the faults you haue.
Be not a shamed to strippe you being there,
And mingle thighes, mine ever yours to beare,
There in your rosie lips my tongue intomb,
Practise a thousand sports when there you come,
Forbare no wanton words you there would speake,
And with your pastime let the bedsted creake.
But with your robes, put on an honest face,
And blush and seeme as you were full of grace.
Deceiue all, let me erre, and think I am right
And like a wittal, thinke thee uoide of slight.

The reader, if he can divert his thought from matter to manner, may well wonder how much the eighteenth-century authors added, or if they added anything save a sort of faculty for systematization of product, a power to repeat certain effects regularly and at will.

But Golding's book published before all these others will give us more matter for reverie. One wonders, in reading it, how much more of the Middle Ages was Ovid. We know well enough that they read him and loved him more than the more Tennysonian Virgil.

Yet how great was Chaucer's debt to the Doctor Amoris? That we will never know. Was Chaucer's delectable style simply the first Ovid in English? Or, as likely, is Golding's Ovid a mirror of Chaucer? Or is a fine poet ever translated until another his equal invents a new style in a later language? Can we, for our part, know our Ovid until we find him in Golding? Is there one of us so good at his Latin, and so ready in imagination that Golding will not throw upon his mind shades and glamours inherent in the original text, which had for all that escaped him? Is any foreign speech ever our own, ever so full of beauty as our *lingua materna* (whatever *lingua materna* that may be)? Or is not a new beauty created, an old beauty doubled, when the overchange is well done? Will

. . . cum super atria velum
Candida purpurum simulatus inficit umbras

quite give us the "scarlet curtain" of the simile in Flight from Hippomenes? Perhaps all these things are personal matters, and not matter for criticism or discussion. But it is certain that "we" have forgotten our Ovid, "we" being the reading public, the readers of English poetry, have forgotten our Ovid since Golding went out of print.

* *Amorum*, lib. iii, elegia 13.

C286 Continued
C287 Elizabethan Classicists . . . II. *Egoist*, IV. 9 (Oct. 1917) 135–6.

METAMORPHOSIS *

While in this garden Proserpine was taking hir pastime,
In gathering eyther Violets blew, or Lillies white as Lime,
And while of Maidenly desire she fillde hir Haund and Lap,
Endeauoring to outgather hir companions there. By hap
Dis spide her: lovde her: caught her up: and all at once well nere.
So hastie, hote, and swift a thing is Loue as may appeare.
The Ladie with a wailing voyce afright did often call
Hir mother and hir waiting Maides, but Mother most of all.

ATALANTA †

. . . . . .

And from the Citie of Tegea there came the Paragone
Of Lycey forrest, Atalant, a goodly Ladie, one
Of Schœnyes daughters, then a Maide. The garment she did weare
A brayded button fastned at hir gorget. All hir heare
Untrimmed in one only knot was trussed. From hir left
Side hanging on hir shoulder was an Ivorie quiuer deft:
Which being full of arrowes, made a clattering as she went.
And in hir right hand she did beare a bow already bent.
Hir furniture was such as this. Hir countnance and hir grace
Was such as in a Boy might well be cald a Wenches face.

THE HUNTING

Assoone as that the men came there, some pitched the toyles,
Some tooke the couples from the Dogs, and some pursude the foyles
In places where the swine had tract: desiring for to spie
Their owne destruction. Now there was a hollow bottom by,
To which the watershots of raine from all the high grounds drew.
Within the compasse of this pond great store of Oysters grew:
And Sallowes lithe, and flackring flags, and moorish Rushes eke,
And lazie Reedes on little shankes, and other baggage like.
From hence the Bore was rowzed out, and fiersly forth he flies
Among the thickest of his foes as thunder from the Skies.

FLIGHT FROM HIPPOMENES

. . . now while Hippomenes
Debates theis things within himself and other like to these,
The Damzell ronnes as if her feete were wings. And though that shee
Did fly as swift as arrow from a Turkye bowe: yit hee
More woonded at hir beawtye than at the swiftnesse of her pace
Her ronning greatly did augment her beawtye and her grace.
The wynd ay whisking from her feete the labells of her socks
Uppon her back as whyght as snowe did tosse her golden locks,
And eke thembroydred garters that were tyde beneathe her ham.
A redness mixt with whyght uppon her tender body cam,
As when a scarlet curtaine streynd ageinst a playstred wall
Doth cast like shadowe, making it seeme ruddye therewith all.

* *Metamorphosis*, by Arthur Golding, 1567. The Fyft booke.
† *Atalanta*. The Eight booke.

Reality and particularization! The Elizabethans themselves began the long series of sins against them. In Ovid at least they are not divorced from sweeping imagination as in the *Fasti* (v. 222):

Unius tellus ante coloris erat;

or in the opening of the *Metamorphoses*, as by Golding:

Which Chaos hight, a huge rude heape and nothing else but even
A heavie lump and clottred clod of seedes

. . . . . .

Nor yet the earth amiddes the ayre did hang by wondrous slight
Just peysed by hir proper weight. Nor winding in and out
Did Amphitrytee with her armes embrace the earth about,
For where was earth, was sea and ayre, so was the earth unstable.
The ayre all darke, the sea likewise to beare a ship unable.

. . . . . .

The suttle ayre to flickering fowles and birdes he hath assignde.

I throw in the last line for the quality of one adjective, and close this section of excerpts with a bit of fun anent Bacchus.

ADDRESS TO BACCHUS. IV

Thou into Sea didst send
The Tyrrhene shipmen. Thou with bittes the sturdy neckes dost bend
Of spotted Lynxes: throngs of Fowhes and Satyres on thee tend,
And that old Hag that with a staff his staggering limmes doth stay
Scarce able on his Asse to sit for reeling every way.
Thou comest not in any place but that is hearde the noyse
Of gagling womens tatling tongues and showting out of boyes.
With sound of Timbrels, Tabors, Pipes, and Brazen pannes and pots
Confusedly among the rout that in thine Orgies trots.

IMAGINARY LETTERS

V

(Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn)

Ezra Pound

MY DEAR LYDIA:

Russians! No. William is *matto* over his Russians. They are all in the beginning of *Fumée* — all the Russians. Turgenev has done it: a vaporous, circumambient ideologue, inefficient, fundamentally and katachrestically and unendingly futile set of barbarians. Old Goff says of savages: "I like savages. They do nothing that is of the least use, they do nothing the least intelligent, they do nothing of the least interest. They are bored. They have ceremonies. The malice of boredom: the medicine man makes them dance in a ring for hours in order to *degust* their stupidity, *per assagiarlo*, to bask in the spectacle of a vacuity worse than his own."

C288

C287 Continued

C288 Imaginary Letters. V. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn). *Little Review*, IV. 6 (Oct. 1917) 14–17.

I mistrust this liking for Russians; having passed years in one barbarous country I can not be expected to take interest in another. All that is worth anything is the product of metropoles. Swill out these nationalist movements. Ireland is a suburb of Liverpool. And Russia! The aged Findell comes back in ecstacy, saying "It is just like America." That also bores me. They say Frankfort-am-Main is just like America.

Paris is not like America. London is not like America. Venice is not like America. Perugia is not like America. *They are not the least like each other.* No place where the dew of civilization has fallen is "just like" anywhere else. Verona and Pavia are different. Poictiers is different. Arles is a place to itself.

Dostoevsky takes seven chapters to finish with an imbecile's worries about a boil on the end of his nose. Dostoevsky is an eminent writer. Let us thank the gods he existed. I do not read Dostoevsky. Several young writers have impressed me as men of genius, by reason of tricks and qualities borrowed from Dostoevsky. At length when the craze is over, I shall have to read Dostoevsky. And so on . . . . I have also read Samuel Butler. And Poetry? As the eminently cultured female, Elis writes me that her little cousin will have nothing to do with it. Rubbish! Her little cousin will read Li Po, and listen to the rondels of Froissart. I know, for I tried her.

Elis has imbibed a complete catalogue, with dates, names of authors, chief works, "influence" of A, B, C, on M, N, O, etc., etc., with biographies of the writers, and "periods". Buncomb! Her cousin, who knows "nothing at all", is ten times better educated. No? She "doesn't like poetry". *Anglice*: she doesn't like Swinburne. It is not the least the same thing. And she is worried by most of Dowson, etc.

Elis appeals to me as possessing "manner" or "prestige", i. e. professorial aspects, to coerce the rebellious infant.

She says I used to read Swinburne "so splendidly". Damn it all! I believe this to be true. The "first fine", etc. "The hounds of swat are on the wobbles wip wop". Magnificent sound. Now as a matter of fact I tried to read A. C. S. to the small cousin and broke down lamentably. The constant influx of "wrong words" put me out of it altogether.

And Browning is full of jejune remarks about God. And only parts of Landor are left us. And Elis says the girl will be no use to me whatsoever. (Neither she may, perhaps. But who is any use to me? Hackett I see once a month in a state of exhaustion, i. e. H. in a state of exhaustion). He makes two negative but intelligent remarks, and departs before the conversation develops. Your spouse is afar from us both. We are surrounded by live stock.

I enjoy certain animal contacts . . . . without malice. I have a "nice disposition". I pat them like so many retrievers . . . *ebbene?* I live as a man among herds . . . . for which I have a considerate, or at least considerable, if misplaced, affection. "Herds" is possibly a misnomer. A litter of pups that amuses me. I am not prey to William's hostilities . . . save that I dislike ill-natured animals.

As for poetry: : : how the devil *can* anyone like it . . . given, I mean, the sort of thing usually purveyed under that label?

The girl asked me the only sane question I have ever had asked me about it.

"But is there no one like Bach? No one where one can get all of it?"

That staves in my stratified culture.

The Odyssey? But she does not—naturally, she does not read greek. She is "wholly uneducated". That is to say I find her reading Voltaire and Henry James with placidity.

And Dante? But she does not read italian. Nor latin. And besides, Dante! One needs a whole apparatus criticus to sift out his good from his bad; the appalling syntax from the magnificence of

the passion. Miss Mitford said "Dante is gothic." Out of the mouths of prudes and imbeciles! Gothic, involved, and magnificent, and a master of nearly all forms of expression. And what, pray, is one to reply to a person who after having read *Maison Tellier*, refuses to stand "The fifth chariot of the pole, already upturning, when I who had etc., . . . turning as Pyramus whom when the mulberry had been tasted . . . . not otherwise than as etc." The quotation is inexact, but I can not be expected to carry english translations of Dante about with me in a suit case. Dante is a sealed book to our virgin, and likewise Catullus, and Villon is difficult french . . . . and Sappho . . . . perhaps a little Swinburnian? *Ille mi par esse* . . . . is possibly better than the Aeolic original; harder in outline. (If this bores you, give it to Elis). Chaucer writes in a forgotten language. One must read earlier authors first if one is to run through him with ease as with pleasure. What the devil is left us? What argument for a person too sincere to give way to the current mania for assenting to culture? The fanaticism of certain people who believe they ought to "read poetry" and "be acquainted with" art. A person, I mean, who has taken naturally to good prose; who is so little concerned with appearing educated that she does not know whether Shelley is a dead poet or still living, ditto, Keats. It is quite oriental. Ramdath told me a tale from the Mahabharata, but it was only when I found it in the Mahabarata that I discovered it had not happened to Ramdath's grandpapa. If people would forget a bit more, we might have a real love of poetry. Imagine on what delightful terms the living would compete with their forbears if the doriphory of death were once, for even a week or so, removed from the "brows" or "works" of the "standard" authors. No more Job and Stock's "Works of the Poets", series including Mrs. Hemans, Proctor and Cowper 7/6, 5/, 2/6, hymn-book padded leather with gilding, real cloth *with* gilding, plain covers. The great Victorian age has done even better. Culture, utility!! I found in lodgings a tin biscuit-box, an adornment. It represensented a bundle of books, of equal size, bound in leather, a series, the spiritual legacy of an era, education, popularity. The titles of the tin books were as follows:

History of England.
Pilgrim's Progress.
Burns.
Pickwick Papers
Robinson Crusoe.
Gulliver's Travels.
Self-Help.
Shakespeare

Is it any wonder we have Gosse cautioning us against De Maupassant's account of Swinburne, and saying that De M's unbridled fancy gave great offence when it reached the recluse at Putney. Or dribbling, i. e. Gosse dribbling along about "events at the Art Club which were *widely discussed at the time*" (italics mine) when he might have said simply "Algernon got drunk and stove in all the hats in the cloak-room".

Yours,

WALTER VILLERANT.

EDITORIAL ON SOLICITOUS DOUBT
Ezra Pound

VARIOUS people have expressed certain doubts as to whether . . . *The Little Review* . . . . etc. . . . .

Good people, be at rest: the price of *The Little Review* will never be raised for present subscribers or for those who subscribe before January 1, 1918 . After that we can make no promises. The quality will not decline; if we give "twice as much of it" the new readers will have to pay more. If we had given you only Mr. Yeats's fourteen poems we would already have given you more literature than is to be found in the "four big" magazines since the beginning of our present volume.

Next month you will have a whole play by Lady Gregory. Mr. Lewis, after having been in some heavy fighting is now in hospital, and that leisure has made sure the supply of his prose for some time. I have now at my elbow the first eighty-eight pages of the best book Ford Madox Hueffer has written. Why "the best book"? Five years ago Mr. Hueffer read me this manuscript, an unfinished work for which there was presumeably "no market". I read the typescript which was brought me last evening; so familiar is the text that I can scarcely convince myself that it is five years since I heard the even voice of the author pronouncing it. I do not think my memory is particularly good, I think there must be some quality in a man's style and matter if it is to stay fresh in another man's mind for so long. Mr. Hueffer's *Women and Men* will run in *The Little Review* from January 1918 to May 1919 inclusive, unless interfered with by force majeur. Perhaps it is not his best book.

Lest there be any confusion about Olivers, Madoxes, Madox Browns, Francis Hueffers, etc. Ford Madox Hueffer is the author of various novels, and of *The Heart of the Country, The Soul of London, Ancient Lights, Collected Poems,* of *On Heaven*, the first successful long poem in English vers libre, after Whitman. This poem appeared in *Poetry* for June 1914, and has certainly as much claim to permanence as, say, Meredith's *Love in the Valley*.

Beside his own achievement, Mr. Hueffer has done one definite service to English letters. This service is unquestioned, and recognition of it does not rest upon any personal liking or disliking of Mr. Hueffer's doctrines of writing. In 1908 he founded *The English Review*; for a year and a half he edited that magazine and during that time he printed work not only by the great men of letters, Anatole France, Thomas Hardy, Swinburne, Henry James, not only by men of public reputation like Wells, and Conrad and Bennett, but also by about all the younger men who have since made good. For example by Lewis (in 1909), and by other now well-known young men who have both made good and declined since that date. His editorship of the review marks a very definate period; at the end of it, as its glory was literary, not commercial, it was bought by certain jews, who thought Mr. Hueffer a damn fool (possibly because of his devotion to literature), and who gave the editorship into other hands. Comparison of current numbers of *The English Review* with the first numbers issued from 84 Holland Park Avenue, will give any thinking person all the data he wants in deciding between the folly of Hueffer and the folly of manufacturing, political hebrews. In fact, if a crime against literature could bring any shame upon that class of person, this family would go into penitence, which needless to say they will not. But the careful historian of literature will record and remember their shame. The files of the review being stored in the British Museum, the data will continue available. There will be no faking the records.

C289 Editorial on Solicitous Doubt. *Little Review*, IV. 6 (Oct. 1917) 20–22.
Repeated in IV. 8 (Dec. 1917) 53–55. Latter half reprinted as "Summary" in *The Little Review Anthology*—B54—pp. 145–6.

The Little Review is now the first effort to do comparitively what *The English Review* did during its first year and a half: that is, to maintain the rights and position of literature, I do not say in contempt of the public, but in spite of the curious system of trade and traders which has grown up with the purpose or result of interposing itself between literature and the public.

We act in spite of the public's utter impotence to get good literature for itself, and in despite of the efforts of the "trade" to satiate the public with a substitute, to still their appetite for literature by providing them, at a cheaper rate and more conveniently, with a swallowable substitute.

Whereanent a very successful journalist has said to me: We, i. e. we journalists, are like mediums. People go to a spiritist séance and hear what they want to hear. It is the same with a leading article: we write so that the reader will find what he wants to find.

That is the root of the matter; there is good journalism and bad journalism, and journalism that "looks" like "literature" and literature etc . . . .

But the root of the difference is that in journalism the reader finds what he is looking for, what he, the reader wants; whereas in literature he must find at least a part of what the author intended.

That is why "the first impression of a work of genius" is "nearly always disagreeable", at least to the "average man". The public loathe the violence done to their self-conceit whenever an author conveys to them an idea that is his, not their own.

This difference is lasting and profound. Even in the vaguest of poetry, or the vaguest music, where in a sense the receiver may, or must, make half the beauty he is to receive, there is always something of the author or composer which must be transmitted.

In journalism, or the "bad art" which is but journalism thinly disguised, there is no such strain on the public.

I am now at the end of my space. Of Remy de Gourmont's feeling toward such a magazine as we are now making I will write in the December number.

THE READER CRITIC

Letters from Ezra Pound

Chère Editeuse:

May I be permitted to leave the main part of the magazine, and reply in the correspondence columns to several other writers of letters?

A. R. S. Cher Monsieur: There is one section of our magazine devoted (DEEvoted) to "interpretation"; it is, if you have not divined it, The Reader Critic. It is, so far as I know, the only publication that ever has "interpreted" our native country. Never before has the intelligent foreigner been able to learn "what the American artist is up against."

V. H., (Maine). Chère Madam: Could Lewis but hear you, through his gas-mask, gazing at the ruins of one of the gun parapets of his battery, I think he would smile with the delicate and contented smile that I have at moments seen "lighting his countenance". There was once a man who began an article: "WE MUST KILL JOHN BULL, we must kill him with Art". These words smote the astonished eyes of the

C290

C289 Continued

C290 ✉ Letters from Ezra Pound. *Little Review*, IV. 6 (Oct. 1917) 37–39.
Under the heading: "The Reader Critic." Replying to letters.

British public. No other Englishman had ever before so blasphemed the effete national symbol. Neither had any one else very much objected to the ladies in nightgowns which distinguished Punch' caricatures. The writer was, needless to say, Wyndham Lewis. He will probably have died for his country before they find out what he meant.

L. P. Cher Monsieur: You ask "What sympathy can the majority of readers feel for the foreign editor, Ezra Pound, with his contemptuous invective against the "vulgus"? Are the majority of the readers "vulgus"? We had hoped the few choice spirits were gathered. Perhaps they have only migrated to this side of the ocean.

There was also a lady or mother who wrote to me (personally) from New Jersey, asking me to stop the magazine as Lewis's writings were "bad for her milk". (I am afraid there is no way of softening her phrase for our readers). Madame, what you need is lactol and not literature; you should apply to a druggist.

And there is the person who says all my stuff is "in a way propaganda. If not", what am I "trying to do", etc. Cher Monsieur: My propaganda is the propaganda of all realist and almost all fine un-realist literature, if I seek to "do" anything it is only to stimulate a certain awareness. It would not distress me if the reader should suddenly look upon his surroundings and upon his own consciousness and try to see both for himself, in his own terms, not in my terms, nor in the terms of President Wilson, or W. D. Howells, or *Scribner's*, or any other patent cut-size machine, or home-mould or town-mould, or year-mould. Voilà toute ma petite propagande. It is so little propaganda that I am quite content if it has no such effects, and if two or three pleasant people are enabled to get through a dull evening more easily with the aid of my sketches; or those of the writers whom I have brought to this magazine. There are some people who are not entertained by *Success*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Seven Arts*, *The Dial* and all that contingent. "Matter", as Lewis has written, "which does not contain enough intelligence to permeate it, grows, as you know, rotten and gangrenous." It is not everyone who enjoys the aroma of a dormant and elderly corporis litterarum, nor the stertorous wheeze of its breathing.

If I were propaganding I should exhort you to get a decent international copyright law—though as my own income will presumably never equal that of a plumber, or stir the cupidity of the most class-hating, millionaire-cursing socialist, I have very little interest in this matter.

I should exhort you to enliven your universities. I should, whatever your nationality, exhort you to understand that art is exceeding slow in the making, that a good poet can scarcely write more than twenty good pages a year, and that even less that this, if it be good, should earn him his livelihood. (This problem with good augury I shall of course attempt to solve with this magazine.) I should, if you are American, exhort you, for your own good, to try not to drive all your best artists out of the country. (Not that I object to living in London, North Italy, Paris, or that my name need be dragged into the matter). I would ask you to try to understand WHY American literture from 1870 to 1910 is summed up in the sentence: "Henry James stayed in Paris reading Flaubert and Turgenev. Mr. William Dean Howells returned to America and read the writings of Henry James." And WHY Whistler stayed in Europe, although Chase went back to the Philadelphia Fine Arts Academy. These are simple questions which the serious reader will not try to shirk answering.

However these matters do not belong to the body of the magazine, which will at best, as the clubman complains, be devoted to "invention" if there is enough invention to fill it; and at worst to active cerebration.

Votre bien dévoué,

Ezra Pound.

P. S. An american author writes to me "You mix your damn foolery with sense, so you continue readable". Chére Editeuse, what does this person want? Does he wish it unmixed and therefore unreadable? Should he follow the sign "Seek safety first!"? Read *The Spectator!* Does he wish "sound opinion", cautious statement, the *New Republic's* guarded hazard that six and seven probably will make thirteen, but that, etc........ ?

This Approaches Literature!

Abel Sanders:

The enclosed document may be of interest to you, as showing the true nature of the forces against which we are arrayed.

SECRET

Translation of a German document dated February 20, 1916, taken from a German prisoner captured near Ypres, Comines Canal, March 2, 1916).

Committee for the increase of population

Notice No. 138756.

Sir:

On account of all able-bodied men having been called to the colours, it remains the duty of all those left behind for the sake of the Fatherland to interest themselves in the happiness of the married women and maidens by doubling or even trebling the number of births.

Your name has been given us as a capable man, and you are herewith requested to take on this office of honour and do your duty in a proper German way. It must here be pointed out that your wife or fiancée will not be able to claim a divorce, it is in fact hoped the women will bear this discomfort heroically for the sake of the War.

You will be given the district of ....Should you not feel capable of carrying on the task allotted to you, you will be given three days in which to name someone in your place. On the other hand if you are prepared to take on a second district as well, you will become a "Deckofficer"* and receive a pension.

An exhibition of photographs of women and maidens in the district allotted to you, is to be found at the office of . . . . You are requested to bring this letter with you.

Your good work should commence immediately on this notification. A full report of results is to be submitted by you after nine months.

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* "Deck" possibly meaning "coverlet".

C290a

C290 Continued

C290a ✉ This Approaches Literature! *Little Review*, IV. 6 (Oct. 1917) 39.
Under the heading: "The Reader Critic," as from Abel Sanders; enclosing a translation of a secret German document, "taken from a German prisoner captured near Ypres," titled, "Committee for the increase of population."

One of the promptest and most cordial responses came from Ezra Pound, then as now in London. In a long letter of August 18th, 1912, he wrote:

I *am* interested, and your scheme, so far as I understand it, is not only sound but the only possible method . . .

But?—Can you teach the American poet that poetry *is* an *art*, an art with a technique, with media, an art that must be in constant flux—a constant change of manner—if it is to live? Can you teach him that it is not a pentametric echo of the sociological dogma printed in last year's magazines? Maybe—anyhow you have your work before you. . . .

If I can be of any use in keeping you or the magazine in touch with whatever is most dynamic in artistic thought, either here or in Paris—as much of it as comes to me, and I *do* see nearly everyone that matters—I shall be glad to do so.

I send you all that I have in my desk—an over-elaborate "Imagiste" affair, and a note on the Whistler exhibit.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

VIII.—THE BEATING HEART OF THE MAGAZINE.

I RETURN with interest undiminished to the "frank" and middle-aged mother—my periscope for surveying the no-man's land of the unexplored popular heart.

"Those days of peace which now seem so remote were not altogether happy for parents " I take this sentence from near her beginning. For the word "peace" substitute almost any other temporal designation, for "parents" substitute any other noun indicating any other group of humanity, the sense of the statement will remain, I think, unimpaired. "Cliché," as generally used, has meant a set phrase; we have here something slightly different; it may be called the "gapped linotype."

From style we proceed to matter: mother states that there was restlessness and vague discontent finding expression in the crudest form of violence. Home was the last place where her girls cared to spend their time. The home of the "gapped linotype" had ceased to allure them. They preferred to study "pharmacy," "music seriously," and "secretarial work"; the one desire common to all the three daughters was that of escaping the home of gapped linotype and reaching London. Mother felt that she had "ceased to play a part that mattered in the lives" of her daughters. Can we deduce from this that there is still a large section of the community which has not accepted the idea that the human offspring must at some period of its development cease sucking at the mental dugs of its parents; or at least a vast area in which this idea comes as a shock—a shock to the middle-aged maternal, and perhaps paternal, parent?

I say, advisedly, "large section of the community," for the moot points in "The Quiver" must be the moot points of its extensive audience; just as the moot points of an art journal are the moot points of a certain number of artists. I mean that obviously the people who read this drivel must be people to whom these questions are of interest, people who get a certain thrill of satisfaction, a certain stimulus to their self-confidence or relief from their self-diffidence, in reading that Mary ought to have her own latch-key, or may stay out until ten, or that (as further in this " Frank Talk ") Mary should be not only allowed but encouraged to bring James home to dinner, or to invite him "to the house."

Mother in the present case of offspring-desiring London was distressed, her helplessness was "disheartening," she could but wait, "ready always with patience and sympathy and understanding." We should, perhaps, add " with an almost overwhelming assurance of modesty." We deduce from this last quotation that there are numerous readers who are not surprised that an author, speaking as one of a great number, as one who knows, "of course, that most mothers have felt these fears"; that such a representative of maternity should believe herself fully endowed with these three superhuman endowments. Mother, in this case, is fully convinced that she possessed "patience, sympathy and understanding"; her equipment has never been subject to self-suspicion.

In the next sentence, she hopes "that in the bitter struggle of life, and with the coming bitter experiences, they might be glad to return as wanderers to their home." It is perhaps over-severe to translate this formulation of the unconscious into: "Hoping life would be so dam'd hard that daughters would be driven back to the locus of the gapped linotype."

Note that we have attained an almost peasant or folk pessimism in the forecast of "the struggle of life," and "coming bitter experiences." This is deeper than the scriptural turn at the end: " Wanderers to their etc."

When the war came, the family was preparing for separate holidays; war, however, united 'em; they realised what it meant to have a home (herd instinct in presence of danger?). Mother does not mean home in the material sense. (Nor did Lord Haldane, but we must stick to the point.) Family "realised in the flesh the comfort and beauty of a common life." (Immaterial flesh?) "They saw that, when all is said and done, blood is stronger than water."

Does the popular "common sense" consist in the huddling together of proverbial phrases (often indisputable facts, or, at least, relatively indisputable metaphor), with incoherent deductions, contradictions, etc., leading to yet other proverbial phrases; giving the whole fabric a glamour of soundness? The popular reader gets a proverbial phrase which he accepts; he then passes through something which is but a blurr to his mind; he is worried for a moment, then he comes on the next proverbial phrase, is soothed, thinks the "whole thing is all right."

"Just as the coming of war linked up our far-flung" (not battle-line, but) "dominions, so it gathered together the members of my family, glad to have the common centre of a beloved home." The action of the adjective "beloved" is a little hard to determine. However, we must accept the metamorphosis from centrifugal to centripedal. The family mobilised. Pharmacy was, "of course," useful in hospital. Brothers become "adored brothers," home-surroundings become "pleasant surroundings." I am not, however, concerned with an extraordinary condition. I am searching

C292

C291 ✉ *Poetry*, XI. 1 (Oct. 1917) 38.
An extract, dated: 18 Aug. 1912. Quoted in Harriet Monroe's article "These Five Years," pp. 33–41. On helping *Poetry* and sending his first contributions, "an over-elaborate 'Imagiste' affair"—"Middle-Aged"—and "To Whistler, American."

C292 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . VIII.—The Beating Heart of the Magazine. *New Age*, XXI. 24 (11 Oct. 1917) 505–7. More on the *Quiver*.

for the popular intellection. Mother also is looking towards the end of the war, despite the fact that it has so embellished her home life. After declaring on p. 891 that all her three female offsprings were anxious to escape from the home, via the diverse channels of pharmacy, etc., she states on p. 892, that "It is the restless, wavering temperament that seeks escape from home." She forebodes that this family characteristic will burst out again after the war, or no, she forebodes that it may be necessary, despite their war-acquired domesticity, for them to go. The prebellum characteristic of the junior members of the family was indubitably, according to the trend of her statement, "restless and wavering"; the middle-aged maternal characteristic was "patient, sympathetic, understanding."

Another popular assumption soon follows, or, rather, several, in the lines "helpless woman, living alone in diggings," "dishonest landlady." Before the war the girls made beds, darned stockings, occasionally went to market, but "were too busy with intellectual experiments to come down to home-making." "They would discuss Shaw and Nietzsche, but they would not discuss a leak in a gas-pipe, or the making of a simple soup." The verb "discuss" is most interesting. "They still find time to read the best in to-day's literature. But they are not concerned with intellectual freaks or bizarre ways of thought."

Ah, mes amis, we must go further. We must find some family where they did not read Shaw and Nietzsche. However, let us keep on with this stratum, the stratum where the middle-aged "discuss" the leak in the gaspipe, and the daughters abstain from "bizarre" ways of thought. This designation is very helpful. It clarifies very considerably our concept of the "Quiver" readers. To the gas-leak-discussing mother "The Question of Marriage" brings the following words: "I want my girls to marry. The wise Creator did not intend man or woman to live alone. I am old-fashioned enough, etc."

Note possessive "my" before girls; "wise" before Creator. Tribal possessive. Primitive, folk or peasant pessimism as to bitterness of life, overlaid with unhellenic belief in wisdom of Creator. Stand made for the "old-fashioned" wifehood and motherhood. Note the association of "virtue" with old custom. This association dates at least from the Roman era.

Mother however approves of wage-earning by wives. "If a woman has special talents let her exercise them after marriage and earn money for herself." The tincture of modern theoryism has not left mother unscathed. This overlay is of extreme interest to us. She opines (I believe that word is correct) that no "woman is the happier for deliberately refusing wifehood and motherhood because of the possibilities of a great career." Greatest women have not so refused. "Their work is better, not worse, because they have known the joy of motherhood." We note here the introduction of dogmatism: the more or less quiet introduction of dogmatism. The dogmatic element is, we note, wholly unconnected with the "fruits of experience" and other matter of the "talk" that has preceded.

However, mother proceeds to say that a woman writer told her "my best work has been done since baby came." Mother, because of her belief in "these things," substantiated by woman writer's improvement on advent of "baby," proposes to match-make as hard as she can, and to lose no time in setting about it. "The nation must have mothers." Note here the tendency to State concept. The need of the State tending to coerce the act of the individual. The greatest "peace work" for middle-aged mothers is, according to our authoress, "to help their daughters to find husbands with whom they can lead happy, nationally useful lives." We note here that internationalism has not reached the gas-leak stratum.

The next paragraph is most interesting:

"I know, as a middle-aged woman, that it is not always easy to be polite and genial to the friends of our children who come in at all sorts of unexpected times."

Deductions: 1. Politeness is not habitual, or at least it is not second nature, in the gas-leak stratum. It presents difficulties to the middle-aged mother.

2. Politeness is in some way confused with, or associated with, "geniality."

3. The simple method of letting said friends of offspring alone has not occurred to gas-leaking mother.

3a. Housing accommodation probably not sufficiently ample to permit or facilitate such non-intervention.

4. "Friends of our children" enter at "all sorts of unexpected times."

Note this last as indication of habits of the stratum. Mother was discussing marriageable and suitable males. These appear to be free and idle at "all sorts of unexpected times." Do they call on the way to employment? Are they employed? Are they "travellers" whose hours of employment are unfixed? Does the remark refer to schoolboys and students, or to female friends? In the latter case, how does it connect with potential husbands? It is easiest to suppose the Shaw-reading daughters are to marry into the student stratum. But will they?

Mother continues: "We would much rather read the evening paper and settle down to a quiet evening than make ourselves charming." The implication is that such settling down would irrevocably damage daughter's chances of matrimony. However, mother advocates "most informal hospitality," "men friends to tea or dinner," make them feel at home, any time, never a nuisance, not to be welcomed with scowls. But must not let every man who comes to house think you regard him as possible husband. This is the narrow bridge, the hair stretched over the chasm.

But preventing "his" feeling this, is not enough; there is "more in matchmaking" than just this one bit of camouflage. The male population is less numerous than the female. Deterrent causes of matrimony; as per mother: 1. Men afraid girl's standard of comfort too high (this to be remedied by the war); 2. Men have not, "in hundreds of cases, the chance of meeting women of their own position"—this "obstacle will remain unless the mothers of the country overcome it." Mother once heard a young business man say the only women he met were barmaids and girls in tobacconists' shops. "Father could be useful here. Both parents should help more." Foreign ideal of match-making utterly repugnant to English mind, not suggested that father should deliberately seek potential husbands among his friends. Simple hospitality to lonely young employees and colleagues. Riches not to be expected of the young male, provided he "has ambition." Father should not frown on every y. m. not making £500 per annum.

Mother has another plan; does not think girls should marry Australians and Canadians until they have crossed waters and inspected colonial life. Suggests exchange hospitalities between parents of Dominions (sic) for one son rec'd in Eng. one daughter to be entertained in colony. (*cf.*, Roman *hospitium*) Mother says that "before the war such exchanges of hospitality were frequently arranged between French and English parents." (This interesting point has been overlooked by many hurried sociologists.)

Mother thinks Empire League and Agents-General should do something about it—she does not say what. She does not, as I indicated in a former chapter, intend to wait for the Agents-General. Cost would not be greater than sending girl to cheap German school, or French family. Better do with fewer servants, etc., than deny chance of marriage and motherhood. £100 total cost of long visit to Australia or New Zealand, and "money spent on travel is never money wasted."

This is the first indication we have of economic status of mother's family, and those for whom she writes. Families with £100 epargnes chance it on Australian bridegroom. Canadian chances cheaper. Cost of emigration to domestic servant, until recently,

C292 Continued

£3 to Australia. Better grade female now wanted. Reduced passage rates to ladies investigating colonies, with probable motherhood, highly recommended. War has brought colonies nearer, with "flaming patriotism"; cheaper travel will bring them still nearer.

(Note: Nothing could possibly be sounder than this last contention.)

Girls brought back to home-circle by war, mothers should seek to provide them with (peroration à la the Countess of Warwick) "another nome in which to dwell, there to hear the laughter of little children about their firesides as we heard it in the long ago." Observe that this scheme is slightly different from the procreation tempered with emigration scheme which we noted in an earlier study.

So much for what mother has put down on the printed pages (four pages double column). Note the ground tone. The ground tone not only of this little "frank talk," but of all this sort of writing. Whether the talk is "frank" makes little difference; if it is not the talk of a mother, or of someone expressing her own personal and typical mentality, but merely the tour de force of someone writing for a given audience, it is at least a successful tour de force. It represents the mentality of the not innumerous readers who accept it. This sort of didacticism proceeds by general statement, it is specifically ignorant of individual differences, it takes no count of the divergence of personalities and of temperaments. Before its swish and sweep the individual has no existence. There are but two conclusions: 1. That these people do not perceive individuality as existing; 2. That individual differences in this stratum are so faint as to be imperceptible.

Compare this abstract sort of writing with an earlier form of abstraction, to wit, the Morality Plays. In the morality of "Everyman" the abstract or generalised Everyman is confronted with Death, Pleasure, Riches, etc. Both he and they become strangely and powerfully "humanised." They become so humanised, in fact, that a later generation insists on having "Iago" instead of "Cunning," and "Hamlet" instead of "Hesitation" or "Dubiousness." The equations of the Morality Play are basic equations of life.

It is perfectly possible to contend that there is a basic equation under mother's "talk": the difference lies in the treatment. Traduisons!

In our allegory or morality play, youth (female) desires to be exposed to the attack of the male; to exercise its predatory capacity for being seized. Middle-age (female) equally desires youth (female) to be mated, but desires herself (Middle-age) to be surrounded by youth (female), desires stimulus of young female's magnetic whirr, desires male, if possible, to make its spring in vicinity of Middle-age; this, however, can be dispensed with, so long as youth (female) is somewhere or somehow mated, plus more or less assurance of lifelong sustenance. All this is however weakened, covered with sickly pall of circumstance, state-theory, matriarchal sentimentality, minute attritions, mental inexactitudes. Similes of weaning and severance of umbilical cord, arise in the critic's mind. Maze of incoherence and proverbial statements. Fundamental element reduced to a minimum by the stylistic treatment. Sex-heave of the individual entirely circumlocuted, passion of the individual with its infinite ricochets untouched.

Question again arises: Is this critical estimate correct, or are the people, for whom this stuff is poured out, so devitalised that question of individual passion, individual drive, is not a factor in their existence? At any rate, the tension of "Everyman," or of the hero of the Morality Play, is obviously absent from anything presented by this modern general and aphoristic treatment of situation.

Many questions flow round one: Is this stratum maintained, reproduced, by multitudes verging on impotence? One cannot ask the ratio between impotence and genteelness, for even genteelness is absent; we are in the presence of almost every vulgarity. We might ask the ratio between lack of mental grip and vulgarity; but that question does not reach anything. Lack of mental grip is equally consonant with good manners. Yet good breeding and the gutter both make for some sort of mental directness. The "gas leak" stratum is obviously in a gap between gutter and breeding. I don't know that we can determine much else.

I have not yet come to the end of the "Heart Throbs." Besides, we *must* get lower than the strata that reads Shaw and Nietzsche.

Note in the first method of abstraction mentioned above, the emphasis is on the fact of certain similarities or universals in the lives of all men, however superficially diverse; in the latter method there is the assumption of a lack of divergence. No mediæval writer ever thought or wrote of any man as "a unit" in the modern sociological or statistical fashion. Apart from the tax-roll ancient empires had no statistics. The individual might be murdered for a whim, but modern democracy has invented the present method of melting him into a compost. Or is it merely a recognition of compost—compost actually existing in nature? An unconscious, or semi-conscious recognition?

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

IX.—FURTHER HEART THROBS.

INTIMATE and touching as "mother's" talk may have seemed, we have not yet exhausted the possibilities of the magazine. "Hitch your waggon to a star" is enjoined only by one advertisement; other objects please hitch to the competitions. "Daphne" is pleased, "very pleased with the result of the 'Heading Competition.'" "Chrissie Potts very much wants to find a girl about her own age to correspond with. She is 15, fond of painting, photography, and reading." Various correspondents recommend books by Gene Stratton Porter, William J. Locke, and other authors. All this under the ægis of "Daphne." The "League of Young British Citizens" (Patron-in-Chief, Princess Patricia of Connaught) draws the pageant to its close. The editor takes this in hand as "Alison" has departed. "Daphne" ends by assuring her readers that she will always be pleased to hear from them, and then the editor takes up the tale: "My Dear Companions,—I have a surprise for you, and an unpleasant one! Our good friend 'Alison,'" etc., is torn from them. She shrinks from farewells; the companions should feel and say "a great big thank you to Alison for all she has done for us." She had taken an individual interest. The editor, now that Alison has gone, has been "pondering deeply over the future of the League."

"Years ago, in times of national crisis, 'The Quiver,' was ever at the front with good works." Miss Woolf rendered invaluable service about the Deep Sea Fisherman, married, and went to Ceylon. She is now stepping into the breach left by Alison, but competitions will be left entirely to Daphne. The companions are, however, to write to Mrs. L., née Woolf, and wish her well. Then follow letters from an ex-postal censor, a "gallant sailor boy," Lieutenant ——, and from William ——, who is very glad that Lena, Violet, David, and Philip are doing well, living a beautiful life, etc. Another "companion" is congratulated on Higher Grade School examination.

These things appear slight enough, but they must not pass by us unheeded. The well-connected family

C293

C292 Continued

C293 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . IX.—Further Heart Throbs. *New Age*, XXI. 25 (18 Oct. 1917) 527–8. On the *Family Herald* and *Punch*.

with the large scrap-book on its drawing-room table is no more symptomatic. We know that the family photograph album bound in red leather (and, a grade higher, in black leather) no longer, at least we presume that it no longer, abounds in Mayfair; but the scrap-book, the scrap-book with illustrations from the "Sketch" and the "Tatler," showing the distinguished family in all its splendours, seats, and positions, is extant, if it have not replaced its precursor.

The yearn of "mother's." daughters to escape the gapped linotype repeats itself in the yearn of the suburb for companionship; hence Leagues of Companions; hence simple-hearted epistles; hence church congregations; the difference being that Mayfair is nearer the top, and passably conscious of itself, its possibilities, the number of meetable persons, and the derivative advantage per person.

The theoretic sociologist is prone to pass over these things; the politician, or practising sociologist, is aware of them, perhaps without much formulation; the anthropologist will attempt to envisage them calmly, as he would envisage the customs of exogamy among more primitive tribes; to him it is little matter whether the female young are taken to the centre of Africa, to reserved places where they dance for hours on end until their muscles are abnormally strengthened; whether they patrol the passeo at Arles; whether they be taken to dances indoors, more or less tribally organised; whether they are "waited for" after church; or whether they are left, where the tribal organisation is deficient, to family or individual efforts, more or less unsystematic, more or less veiled. It is his business to classify, to make, if he can, "head or tail of it." As the anthropologist starts without a sense of "ought" he has one more chance, or several more chances, of making head or tail of it, than has the theorist who wants to fit mankind or "future society" to a model.

All we can postulate is that in certain strata the desire for encounter is sufficient to make these numerous correspondence columns, "leagues," etc., lucrative to their managers. I have not sufficient data at hand to determine much else concerning the correspondents. I do not know whether they, as a mass, read, like "mother's" offspring, Shaw and Nietzsche. But I have spent enough time on these suburbs for the present.

In the hope of getting below the Shaw-Nietzsche zone I purchased the "Family Herald." This paper I had often heard mentioned. Whenever a stylist wishes to damn a contemporary, especially a contemporary novelist, he suggests that said novelist is specifically fit to "write for the 'Family Herald.'" The phrase is as familiar as are the terms "Strachey" and "Spectator." The "Family Herald," No. 3881, Vol. CXIX, price One Penny, is not at first sight distinct from various other penny weeklies on the bookstall. Why its name is more familiar, why it is the accepted symbol of debasement among hyper-sensitised literati, I have no present means of discerning. Twenty pages, treble col., paper as used in daily newspapers, ads. 4 pp. and 1 col. It sub-heads itself "The Household Magazine of Useful Information and Entertainment."

First item. Poem. Far from the worst I have seen, and mildly suggestive of Longfellow with his fancy lightly turned amorous.

Second item. Story beginning with statement that "The two roses . . . were having one of their tiffs." This is a little confusing, but I take it to be a sort of horticultu-allegorical prelude to the love-interest and the lovely day that follows. (5 cols.)

Third item. Chap. IV of continued effort. Lady Agatha, Madame de Grespignan (Gareth's mother), Joan Lady So-and-So, relatives of the late Earl, etc. (12 cols.)

Fourth item. Chap. IV. Chas. Wynn, of good family, who has had to go to Australia on account of "gambling propensities," the Earl, Molly, Mary (known as Minnie), etc. (8 cols.)

Fifth item. Answers to Correspondence re "Zabern," "Liverpudlian," "Dorking," and a judicial separation. One page. Other answers deferred.

Sixth item. Editorial. "The Influence of Government on National Character." This is a perfectly sane and clear editorial, quite as good as any other editorial in any British periodical. There is no nonsense about it, no humbug, no quackery. It is informative. It explains to its readers the state of the franchise in Germany; administrative organisation of German towns, etc.; lack of local control, etc. It points out that local control is more highly developed in England. It does not broach the "dangerous" question of universal suffrage, or of manhood suffrage, but it is perfectly fair in its comparison of present actualities. It contains the kind of knowledge about a foreign country that is good to disseminate. It is the kind of popular education that a more sensitive, more intelligent capital would have been disseminating for years past concerning Germany and other foreign States. The disease of the Press is that it never will disseminate such information "beforehand." A more intelligent race would have been aware of these symptoms, stati, facts concerning neighbouring peoples. It would not wait for an Armageddon to awaken it into curiosity, into inspecting the nature of its neighbours. Six years ago only a crank would have tried to publish in a popular paper an essay on German local government. Only a recognition of the unity of this planet will lead future people to pay any attention to the nature and symptoms of their neighbours.

Next page: Moral Reflections, quarter col. Statistics, about a quarter col. "Scientific and Useful," remainder of col. Varieties, 2 cols.

Next page: Jokes, much the same sort of jokes as you find at the back of "The Century" or "Harper's" or in "Punch." In fact, this sort of small jab would seem to be the one feature common to the periodicals aimed at all zones of society. Let us note this polybious element. The "joke," the "humorous anecdote," is a usually minute dénouement, it is a dash of the unexpected or "the incongruous," it is a letting of the cat, usually an almost infinitesimal cat, out of the bag. Note this in comparison with the periodicals for the "stopping down" of thought. The joke is a letting out of the unimportant or trifling cat. Nobody minds what little Mary said to the Curate. Realist literature is a letting out the big cat. It is giving away the gigantic or established show, when the show is an hypocrisy; it is giving away with an ultimate precision. Shakespeare's "Histories" give away the show of absolute monarchy. They are the greatest indictment ever written. The realist novelists let out the cats of modernity, many forms of many oppressions, personal tyrannies, and group tyrannies. The slime will not tolerate the great gestes; they insist on the dribble of "humour," as it is called; they like people who are "funny." Note, for example, that "Punch" has never been on the side of a minority. It is, for all its pleasantry and nice behaviour, the most cowardly organ in England.

Note also that the "Family Herald," with its perfectly sane editorial, is a cut above "Punch." The "Herald" has no section devoted to the degradation of letters. It does not use its circulation for the deliberate debasement of any part of literature, as does "Punch" its review column for the consistent besmirching of every serious attempt of English novelists to paint the thing as it is.

Sir Owen Seaman is presumably neither a yahoo nor a mattoid; there is some moral tinge in his status. The law being what it is, perhaps we had better allow the man Seaman to find and apply to himself the suitable word for one who having a certain position, carrying with it a more or less fortuitous power to further or hinder good writing, definitely uses that position for the degradation of letters. This insult is deliberate and impersonal. I have never written a novel. I am there-

C293 Continued

fore a fit peron to deliver it. "Punch," originally a broken-nosed, broken-backed cuckold, is strangely overblown; has strangely puffed himself up into a symbol of national magnitude. We see him heraldic in Tabard, leading in a new dynasty upon horseback. I pass over the poor devils who have to be "funny" once a week for a living; they keep to the original rôle of jesters and society entertainers; but this pomposity of "Punch," as an "organ," "Punch" the "serious" is in no need of sympathy. It is time he was taken back to his bauble (Knighthood and a' that).

Return to the "Family Herald." Next item:—Children's Hour. Sunshine Guild (charity). Motto for the week, eight lines of rhyme, repeating the two lines—

"Back of the gloom—
The bloom!"

(Optimism spreading from Ella and Marie to ???)

Next item (skipping ads.): Woman's Sphere (*cf.* Mr. Shorter's paper). The "Family Herald" is not quite so gushing as "The Sphere" in this dept., or as Vogue, Frilly, etc. There is in the "Herald's" dress col. no archaic English, such as is found in "The Sphere."

Next item. "At Home," recipes, etc., chess, draughts, and lastly the key or distinctive feature, "Helps to Health." I had at first mistaken this for an ad. column, but no, the "Herald's" family physician replies to correspondents. This is the first such column I have found. A. B. S. is addressed as follows: "Do not be silly and make such an exhibition of yourself." Auntie Bee receives these instructions: "I fear you will have a difficult task. Medicines are no avail, only moral suasion on your part and the exercise of a free and a firm will on her part can do any good. A strong argument for her would be the 'comparative' one—viz., to put before her the condition of society generally if all were similarly affected, for you must never allow it to be named 'affliction.' Change of air, scene, and society will play a useful part . . . iron jelloids, etc." Archie has perhaps "an excess of natural waxy secretion in the ears"; white curd soap is recommended. Exercise, air, washing of various parts are suggested to other correspondents. The family physician seems possessed of good sense. The column is doubtless useful, and other weeklies might profit by similar methods.

As an indication of stratum note that the "Family Herald" is the first paper in which I have found ads. relative to "nits and vermin in the hair," and the ad. beginning "IF YOUR CHILD has nits or head pests." It is arguable, by these portents, that the "Family Herald" reaches, or at least approaches, the verminous level, but still it is a cut above "Punch." The "family physician" is useful, and "Punch's" book reviews are of no use whatever, though they be camouflaged by Punch's "pleasantry."

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

X.—THE BACKBONE OF THE EMPIRE.

In the periodicals we have examined hitherto we have found every evidence for the loss of Antwerp and the Gallipoli muddle; and no sign of a reason why England should have won the battle of the Marne or held the Ypres salient. The virtues recommended or implied by "The Strand Magazine" might have helped with the commissariat; the "Edinburgh" is but one voice, and a slow one; the editorial in the "Family Herald" is retrospective, and counterbalanced by the concurrent fiction in its pages. But I am morally certain that the Kaiser had never opened a copy of "Chambers' Journal," for no monarch who had ever perused this phenomenon could have hoped to starve England with U-boats or permanently to have wrested to himself the scarred soil of Belgium. The Hohenzollern may for three generations have subscribed to many English periodicals; from the bulk of them the decadence of the Anglo-Saxon race was a not unlikely conclusion; people fed on these things would "plump dead for neutrality." The poor simple German!! Thorough in so many things, he had neglected, to his cost, "Chambers' Journal."

The tone of this paper is indicated in such sentences as:

"On these the boy set to work with a quiet, dogged resolution that, after a while, met with its due reward." or:

"Buckle was a conscientious student, and worked ten hours daily for seventeen years before publishing."

Madame, one copy of this paper is sufficient to form your boy's character—and irrevocably. It is the Nelson Column, the Bull-dog breed, the backbone of the Empire, the Trafalgar Square among papers. I do not make mock of it. For three hours after first opening its pages I sat spell-bound, tense, muttering to myself the lines:—

"and man in tail-less terror
Fled shrieking to the hills."

At last we have escaped Shaw and Nietzsche. It is mentioned, in a curious article on President Wilson, that his parents read him Scott and Dickens in his boyhood. Since the date of these authors, the readers of "Chambers' Journal" must have read, I think, "Chambers' Journal" exclusively.

There is in this paper no intellectual vacillation, no Russian irresolution. I am glad to say that even God is almost eliminated. He is, I admit, referred to vaguely and occasionally, but, on the whole, He is metaphysical, and He has been, in practicality, replaced by the king, who says a few choice words over the body.

"'I regret to inform you, sir,' the captain said, addressing the king as his admiral. . . ."

"'Mc . . . was a brave man,' the King said, returning the captain's salute."

The officers and men stand rigidly to attention regretting that they had not shown more foresight in appreciating their paymaster's assistant.

A rear-admiral has congratulated "Chambers" on a former serial, in the words: "The 'Navy' as shown in the story is absolutely photographic." Of course the Navy *is* just the least shade, jest-the-wee-little-least shade "photographic." The rear-admiral is, unsuspectingly, a master of English. I should have searched for that word a long time.

However, let us turn backward to "Chambers' Journal." It is a dam fine thing that a man should have grit enough to die for his duty as he conceives it; or even that he should stick at something or other until he makes a good job of it. That is the beginning of "Chambers."

The "Strand" might have inculcated a few commercial virtues, but the "Strand" is a puny weakling compared with the strenuous "Chambers," Sam Smiles is a laggard and sluggard; he would have approved and despaired.

Style, of course, is not for them; they are wholly impervious; to rally them on their rhetoric would be as useless as trying to persuade a bronze lion with argument. No true Chambersite would regard a problem of style as anything but immoral, a sort of absinthe, an æstheticism in the worst sense of the term. We must meet them on their own ground, on the high moral tone of their subject matter.

Madame, one copy of this periodical . . . boy's character . . . and irrevocably!! Consider this outline of a story.

C294

C293 Continued
C294 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . X.—The Backbone of the Empire. *New Age*, XXI. 26 (25 Oct. 1917) 545–6.
On *Chambers's Journal*.

Will, sickly and the dullard of the class, had a stutter, and limped, but once having come upon a noble French motto, he was enabled to translate the same later and save his form from detention. This lit within his breast the spark of ambition. He diligently ascended the school to the tune of " On these the boy, etc." Issuing from school he was denied the advantages of a University education, but set to learn modern languages; he also took a course in non-stammer, and courses in physical exercise—" Ossa upon Pelion—Muller upon Sandow," is the phrase. The family noticed his improvement. The reader looks to the ad. col. There is, however, no ad. for the curing of stammer, only " Wincarnis," " Electricity Victorious (infinite joy of health)," " Could you lift a ton? " Mind and Memory, Don't wear a truss, and Eno's as usual.

However, " Will " is not content with these mentioned advances; his lame leg still handicaps him; he consults a doctor; he does not want his family to be worried; his father gives him a vacation; he conceals his whereabouts, and has the limp rectified. Possibly the long leg is sawed off a bit to bring it level with the short one. Anyhow, war is declared. One expects it (from the tone of the sentences) to be the Crimean, but we come on a mention of khaki. It must be the Boer war! But no! it is our own Armageddon. "Will" turns up in uniform to the unmingled delight and wonder of his admiring family. " Stutter, limp, rotten chest, no muscle," what of it? Invictis! Dogged as does it! Let no man despair.

We are next told that " The Discoveries of Genius Alone Remain." Buckle's steadfastness is cited, also the marvellous padded passage of Buckle containing this sentence. Breechloaders and percussion-caps seem to be the "discoveries" most in the mind's eye of the writer. The dilatoriness of the War Office in recognising inventions is sternly censured.

Hold this in mind, I shall refer to it later. Or no, let us turn at once to the article "Agriculture as a fine art." I had thought arts beneath them, but the art of the hedger and ditcher is proclaimed for its craftiness. " Canopied by azure glimpsed between a shower of snowy petals decked with virginal green," the virtuous agriculturist perseveres in skill far surpassing that of the theoretical layman. Excellent, excellent. The plowman replete with primæval virtues, etc.

This is really dam fine. These people whom I thought so stern in their cult of efficiency have wrought round Hodge this mantle of poesy. They have rebuked the War Office for inefficiency. Their strenuous hold on tradition has led them to ignore the existence of steam ploughs, of steam tractors, or of any of the modern farm implements. They are truly a wonderful people.

One had best take their paper in due order.

Item 1. Story in the manner, more or less, of Walter Scott. "The air seemed truly to merit the epithet of filthy bestowed on it by one of Shakespeare's witches."

Item 2. Agriculture, as mentioned.

Item 3. Chap. XXXVII., of continued story, begins with farce Dickens, introduces a rough diamond, little cripple girl,

" 'Oh, my God!' and huddling to the fence, Spike broke into a fierce and anguished sobbing" (The term " righteous ire " occurs not in this tale but in item 1). Continued effort contains also love interest " between those quivering, parted lips came a murmur of passionate prayer and pleading." Heroine legally married, presumably to high class gent. boxer, long resists consummating her marriage on the ground that her brother's intention or attempt to murder her spouse has declassed her for such honours of wedlock. Finest possible feelings displayed by all the " good " participants in the story.

Item 4. "Civilizing influence of Buffalo Bill." *Finale verbatim sic*: " Guess Bill's a greater civilizer than Julius Cæsar himself or any noble Roman of them all. Perhaps he was." Bill had succeeded in roping a few bronchos inside the precincts of the Coliseum, despite police prohibition.

Item 5. The self-helpful tale of the lame boy who began with a stammer and ended in uniform.

Item 6. Discoveries of genius, as mentioned.

Item 7. A Chaplain describes the front.

Item 8. The continued effort intrudes itself again.

Item 9. Typical British traveller from the wilds describes the relative merits of black races as servants, "get through a deal of hard work on very little food, etc." " Variety of rickshaw boys and found them willing enough. Bearing the white man's burden, why shouldn't the beggars . . .?"

Item 10. Continuation of Item 1.

Item 11. Shark stories.

Item 12. Effusion, by Mr. Bart Kennedy, beginning " Wine of the grape is good, but wine of the earth is better." "The most delicious I have ever tasted. . . . Finer was it than the finest wine of the grape that I have ever tasted. . . . We used to go to the Alhambra to drink it when day was nearing its close. It was an Italian count who first put me on to it . . . A time will come to pass when the wine of the earth will have gone. . . . Man and his works and his heroes and his gods will be as nothing that has gone nowhere. And the earth will roll, a thing of desolation. When gone is the earth wine."

Footnote.—Mon Cher Bart, the scriptural prophecy refers only to more briny varieties of the liquid; the good book declares that the " sea " shall be no longer extant. You cannot possibly have been imbibing sea-water in the Alhambra gardens. The total absence of *fresh* water is specified only in hell; around the throne of the Redeemer the ever-flowing water of life will doubtless be found an apératif, palatable substitute. —E. P.

This prose is followed by a poem beginning with "sweet violets," running on through " sward," " dawning of each happy day," " glories manifold," " yonder " and " rill." However, the pseudo Wordsworth has no more inversions in his rhyme than Mr. Bart Kennedy has in his prose dithyrambics on the potation of the aqueous fluid.

Item 14. Story of the man who hadn't the naval style and on whose corpse the King placed a verbal wreath.

Item 15. Effect of war on the nation's gold.

Further sections of items already mentioned.

Item 18. German doings in South America. The ethics of the Chançon de Roland. " The pagans are wrong the French are right," applied rather heavily to the Bosche.

Item 19. " A million a year down London drains."

Item 20. Poem.

Item 21 is devoted to President Wilson as follows: "In time so distant that even the history of this ghastly and fateful world-convulsion will be condensed by the historians into a page or two, the peroration of Woodrow Wilson's address to Congress will be given in full." " No man is more devoted to home life."

P.S.—Considerations of space tore me from the contemplation of "Chambers."

The Empire owes its status to its moral priority. I mean that Herbert of Cherbury, or someone from whom he cribbed it, perceived before continental nations the advantage of some sort of probity. That Hesperian bloom, Benj. Franklin, condensed it into his aphorism on "Best policy," but long before his day England had seen the superiority of a moral claim to naïve Machiavellianism, such as lately practised by the Bosche. So long as you have a strong moral case you are, perforce, either a conqueror or a martyr, and the bones of the martyrs are excellent fuel for rebellions. The children's children of the oppressors, however efficient, may at any moment be called on to pay. "Chambers," which is more full of self-helpful maxims than any German possibly could be, has taken a firm stand on this pedestal. Its moral foregoneness is most bracing. Heroes are bred on such reading matter, and possibly blockheads.

C294 Continued

The only other problem that faces us is that of rhetoric. Is it necessary to drug the young with such doses of it, in order to bring them up to the scratch? I dare say it is. "Chambers" has lasted a long time. The mind, set like a rock, and immobile as to two-thirds of its possible excursions and activities, may be driven concentrated into the remaining territory, OR it may acquire the habit of immobility.

If anyone wants to know how people wrote and thought in 1832, "Chambers" is available; and if any-one is so naïve an utopian that he imagines that people no longer think in exactly that manner, there is the continued circulation of "Chambers" to confute him.

The ethic of "Chambers" is enough to terrorise any foreign nation to the point of a declaration of war; its tone, its lack of mental flexibility is enough to terrify them from it. It is so obvious that people, thinking as they do, can conceive nothing short of owning *all* the earth. It seems so likely that, having acquired it, they would permit no artist to live; would permit no mental experiments, no questioning of their excellent Lacedæmonian dogma; only in their one great gleam of stupidity (their ignorance of farm machinery in the year 1917) can one take comfort. They are dangerous if unwatched, but such stupidity, though a peril to neighbouring States, will probably be unable to close *all* the loopholes wherethrough an intelligent man might escape. As a wall of brass around Britain, i.e., on the purely defensive, I can conceive nothing superior, save foresight and intelligence, qualities much too rare to be counted on.

ELIZABETHAN CLASSICISTS

By Ezra Pound

III

THE sin or error of Milton—let me leave off vague expressions of a personal active dislike, and make my year-long diatribes more coherent. Honour where it is due! Milton undoubtedly built up the sonority of the blank-verse paragraph in our language. But he did this at the cost of his idiom. He tried to turn English into latin; to use an uninflected language as if it were an inflected one, neglecting the genius of English, distorting its fibrous manner, making schoolboy translations of latin phrases: "Him who disobeys me disobeys."

I am leaving apart all my disgust with what he has to say, his asinine bigotry, his beastly hebraism, the coarseness of his mentality, I am dealing with a technical matter. All this clause structure modelled on latin rhetoric, borrowed and thrust into sonorities which are sometimes most enviable.

The sin of vague pompous words is neither his own sin nor original. Euphues and Gongora were before him. The Elizabethan audience was interested in large speech. "Multitudinous seas incarnadine" caused as much thrill as any epigram in *Lady Windermere's Fan* or *The Importance of Being Earnest.* The Dramatists had started this manner, Milton but continued in their wake, adding to their high-soundingness his passion for latinization, the latinization of a language peculiarly unfitted for his sort of latinization. Golding in the ninth year of Elizabeth can talk of "Charles his wane" in translating Ovid, but Milton's fields are "irriguous," and worse, and much more notably displeasing, his clause structure is a matter of "quem's," "cui's," and "quomodo's."

Another point in defence of Golding: his constant use of "did go," "did say," etc., is not fustian and mannerism; it was contemporary speech, though in a present-day poet it is impotent affectation and definite lack of technique. I am not saying "Golding is a greater poet than Milton," these quantitative comparisons are in odium. Milton is the most unpleasant of English poets, and he has certain definite and analysable defects. His unpleasantness is a matter of personal taste. His faults of language are subject to argument just as are the faults of any other poet's language. His popularity has been largely due to his bigotry, but there is no reason why that popular quality should be for ever a shield against criticism. His real place is nearer to Drummond of Hawthornden than to "Shakespear" and "Dante" whereto the stupidity of our forbears tried to exalt him.

His short poems are his defenders' best stronghold, and it will take some effort to show that they are better than *Phoebus Arise.* In all this I am not insisting on "Charles his wane" as the sole mode of translation. I point out that Golding was endeavouring to convey the sense of the original to his readers. He names the thing of his original author, by the name most germane, familiar, homely, to his hearers. He is intent on conveying a meaning, and not on bemusing them with a rumble. And I hold that the real poet is sufficiently absorbed in his content to care more for the content than the rumble. And also that Chaucer and Golding are more like to find the *mot juste* (whether or no they held any theories thereanent) than were for some centuries their successors, saving the author of *Hamlet.*

Beside the fustian tradition, the tradition of *cliché* phrases, copies on greek and latin clause structure and phrase structure, two causes have removed the classics from us. On one hand we have ceased to read greek with the aid of latin cribs, and latin is the only language into which any great amount of greek can be in a lively fashion set over; secondly, there is no discrimination in classical studies. The student is told that all the classics are excellent and that it is a crime to think about what he reads. There is no use pretending that these literatures are read as literature. An apostolic succession of school teachers has become the medium of distribution.

The critical faculty is discouraged, the poets are made an exercise, a means of teaching the language. Even in this there is a great deal of buncombe. It is much better that a man should use a crib and know the content of his authors than that he should be able to recite all the rules in Allen and Greenough's grammar. Even the teaching by rules is largely a hoax. The latin had certain case feelings. For the genitive he felt source, for the dative indirect action upon, for the accusative direct action upon, for the ablative all other periphoric sensation, i.e. it is less definitely or directly the source than the genitive, it is contributory circumstance; lump the locative with it, and one might call it the "circumstantial." Where it and the dative have the same form, we may conclude that there was simply a general indirect case.

The humanizing influence of the classics depends more on a wide knowledge, a reading knowledge, than on an ability to write exercises in latin, it is ridiculous to pretend that a reading knowledge need imply more than a general intelligence of the minutiæ of grammar. I am not assuming the position of those who objected to Erasmus's "tittle-tattles," but there is a sane order of importance.

When the classics were a new beauty and ecstasy people cared a damn sight more about the meaning of the authors, and a damn sight less about their grammar and philology.

We await, *vei jauzen lo jorn,* the time when the student will be encouraged to say which poems bore him to tears, and which he thinks rubbish, and whether there is any beauty in "Maecenas sprung from a line of kings." It is bad enough that so much

C295

C294 Continued

C295 Elizabethan Classicists . . . III. *Egoist*, IV. 10 (Nov. 1917) 154–6.

of the finest poetry in the world should be distributed almost wholly through class rooms, but if the first question to be asked were: "Gentlemen, are these verses worth reading?" instead of "What is the mood of 'manet'?" if, in short, the professor were put on his mettle to find poems worth reading instead of given the *facilem discensum*, the shoot, the supine shoot, of grammatical discussion, he might more dig out the vital spots in his authors, and meet from his class a less persistent undercurrent of conviction that all latin authors are a trial.

The uncritical scholarly attitude has so spread, that hardly a living man can tell you at what points the Roman authors surpass the Athenians, yet the comparison of their differences is full of all fascinations. Yet because Homer is better than Virgil, and Aeschylus, presumably, than Seneca, there has spread a superstition that the mere fact of a text being in greek makes it of necessity better than a text written in latin—which is buncombe.

Ovid indubitably added and invented much which is not in greek, and the greeks might be hard put to find a better poet among themselves than is their disciple Catullus. Is not Sappho, in comparison, a little, just a little Swinburnian?

I do not state this as dogma, but one should be open to such speculation.

I know that all classic authors have been authoritatively edited and printed by Teubner, and their wording ultimately settled at Leipzig, but all questions concerning "the classics" are not definitely settled, cold-storaged, and shelved.

I may have been an ensanguined fool to spend so much time on mediæval literature, or the time so "wasted" may help me to read Ovid with greater insight. I may have been right or wrong to read renaissance latinists, instead of following the professorial caution that "after all if one confined oneself to the accepted authors one was sure of reading good stuff, whereas there was a risk in hunting about among the unknown."

I am much more grateful for the five minutes during which a certain lecturer emphasized young Icarus begorming himself with Daedalus' wax than for all the dead hours he spent in trying to make me a scholar.

> modo quas vaga moverat aura,
> Captabat plumas: flavam modo pollice ceram
> Moliabat; lususque suo mirabile patris
> Impediabat opus.

"Getting in both of their ways." My plagiarism was from life and not from Ovid, the difference is perhaps unimportant.

Yet if after sixteen years a professor's words came back to one, it is perhaps important that the classics should be humanly, rather than philologically, taught, even in classrooms. A barbaric age given over to *education* agitates for their exclusion and desuetude. Education is an onanism of the soul. Philology will be ascribed to De la Sade.

And there is perhaps more hope for the debutante who drawls in the last fashionable and outwearied die-away cadence "Ayh! *Trois Contes?* THAT'S a good buk," than for the connoisseur stuffed full of catalogues; able to date any author and enumerate all the ranges of "influences."

ART AND LIFE

LANDOR (1775—1864)

A NOTE BY EZRA POUND

OUR poetry and our prose have suffered incalculably whenever we have cut ourselves off from the French. All that we most hate in the Victorian era is due to an interruption of the current; the Napoleonic wars occurring just when French eighteenth century culture should, by rights, have been infiltering through the English; and this loss has scarce been made good. Such losses are perhaps never made good.

Our prose is only just taking count of the existence of Stendhal and Flaubert. On the other hand, one must not exaggerate. The exchange between the two countries is not wholly uneven. England, to her glory, was not always dowdy Victorian, Voltaire was indebted to English philosophers, and if we reach back to Fielding we find a prose author worthy of any continental tradition; or, receding further, Burton of the "Anatomy" can perhaps hold his own against the robust phrasing of Brantome.

The Eighteen Nineties in England were doing very much what Gautier had been doing in France in the Eighteen Thirties, and there is a fineness in Gautier's later work for which one will seek in vain among the English poets succeeding. They might indeed have learned it from Gautier; or they might have learned it from Landor, but this latter study would have been almost as heretical as the former. The Victorian cult of the innocuous so distressingly interposed itself. One is tired of hearing depreciation of Tennyson, but he is a very convenient example. The "Spectatorial" mind, whether in press or in school-room, has recommended "safe" poets. Mr. Wordsworth, a stupid man, with a decided gift for portraying nature in vignettes, never yet ruined anyone's morals, unless, perhaps, he has driven some susceptible persons to crime in a very fury of boredom. Milton, because at a convenient time he utilised a then popular phase of religion, has long enjoyed a reputation based only in small part on his actual poetic value.

Landor, a republican, at a time when such politics were more suspect than syndicalism is at present, was carefully edged out of the way. In his dialogue on the Chinese Emperor, the little children of the palace oppose their simple arithmetic to the western doctrine of the Trinity. Landor has not been a popular author.

His collected works are nevertheless the best substitute for a University education that can be offered to any man in a hurry. His fame is by no means the "faultless fame" of Swinburne's poem in memorial of him. He is a very uneven author; but there is no difficulty in knowing what Swinburne

C296

C295 Continued

C296 Landor (1775–1864). A Note . . . *Future*, II. 1 (Nov. 1917) 10–12.
Under the heading: "Art and Life."

had in mind when he, in his first youth, wrote those verses, for Gautier himself has never given to the world a more chiselled marmorean quatrain than Landor's:

Past ruin'd Ilion Helen lives,
Alcestis rises from the shades;
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

It was typical that Landor should have inserted an address "To General Andrew Jackson, President of the United States," at the beginning of the second volume of "Pericles and Aspasia" (edition of 1842). The poem, almost needless to say, has nothing whatever to do with "Pericles and Aspasia." There are those who have no middle ground in the mind, Landor was conceivably of them, now writing the perfect and incomparable sentence, and now tumbling into most utter incongruity.

We have had so many translations marked only by a clumsy approximation to certain Greek and Latin grammatic idioms that one may perhaps open with prejudice even the classical dialogues in the "Imaginary Conversations." The vocative case, and second person singular of the pronoun, intrude even in the almost *vers libre* of the Peleus and Thetis (spoken in "Epicurus, Leontion and Ternissa"):

PELEUS: "*Goddess! to me, to thy Peleus, Oh how far more than goddess! why then this sudden silence? why these tears? The last we shed were when the Fates divided us, saying the earth was not thine, and the brother of Zeus, he the ruler of waters, had called thee. Those that fall between the beloved at parting are bitter, and ought to be: woe to him who wishes they were not! but these that flow again at the returning light of the blessed feet should be refreshing and divine as morn.*

TERNISSA (*as* THETIS): "*Support me, support me in thine arms, once more, once only. Lower not thy shoulder from my cheek, to gaze at those features that (in times past) so pleased thee. The sky is serene; the heavens frown not on us: do they prepare for us fresh sorrow? Prepare for us! ah me! the word of Zeus is spoken: our Achilles is discovered; he is borne away in the black hollow ships of Aulis, and would have flown faster than they sail, to Troy.*

"*Surely there are those among the gods, or among the goddesses, who might have forwarned me: and they did not! Were there no omens, no auguries, no dreams, to shake thee from thy security? no priest to prophesy? And what pastures are more beautiful than Larissa's? what victims more stately? Could the soothsayers turn aside their eyes from these?*

PELEUS: "*Approach with me and touch the altar, O my beloved! Doth not thy finger now impress the soft embers of incense? how often hath it burned, for him, for thee! And the lowings of the herds are audible for their leaders, from the sources of Apidanus and Enipeus to the sea-beach. They may yet prevail.*"

THETIS: "*Alas! alas! Priests can foretell but not avert the future; and all they can give us are vain promises and abiding fears.*"

I do not know whether Landor first wrote the dialogue in this curious mixture of broken verses turning now and again into prose, and then later put it into regular metre, without improving it; or whether being unsatisfied with his "regular" verse he re-wrote the passages in this rhythmically interesting agglomerate. In it Peleus mentions old age, as if it might also befall the immortal Thetis, and then breaks off:

"*Had I forgotten thy divinity? forgotten it in thy beauty? Other mortals think their beloved partake of it then mostly when they are gazing on their charms; but thy tenderness is more than godlike; and never have I known, never have I wished to know, whether aught in our inferior nature may resemble it.*

THETIS: "*A mortal so immutable! the Powers above are less.*

PELEUS: "*Time without grief would not have greatly changed me.*

THETIS: "*There is a loveliness which youth may be without, and which the gods want. To the voice of compassion not a shell in all the ocean is attuned; and no tear ever dropped from Olympus. . . . .*"

"Classicism" in English, or shall we say "Greekism and Latinism" have moved by clearly marked stages. There is perhaps a good deal of Ovid in Chaucer. Gavin Douglas improved perhaps upon Virgil whenever the text touches the sea or the elements. He is perhaps never Virgilian. Chapman retained a great deal of the "surge and thunder," but it is extremely difficult to read more than a few pages of him at a sitting. It is possible that certain lines and passages in Marlowe's Ovidian Elegies are the first which successfully render in English the exact tone of the original. The eighteenth and late seventeenth centuries put the classics into silk stockings.

I find in a rather rare book of criticism, published in 1885, some remarks on the poet's "power of looking out of his own age, and of reaching the standpoint of another." The author of this book says that Shelley seemed to have had a foretaste of it. He then states that with Tennyson, Browning and Arnold, English poetry entered a new phase: "We could not say of the English poets, before these, that they had been interpreters of any age but their own."

Surely all this glory is Landor's. Surely no man has ever interpreted more different eras with sureness and thoroughness, whether it be in "Pericles and Aspasia," or his dialogues between Chaucer, Petrarch and Boccaccio, or in the Normanby dialogue, which is contemporary and almost a novel.

Surely also this statement in 1885 is typical of the way Landor is overlooked; he is not even mentioned in the essay.

The critic, an admirer of Mathew Arnold's, may defend the letter of his statement by saying that Landor, though a poet, did most of his "interpretation" in prose. But it is almost incredible that Landor should not even be mentioned. There is no need of opening the quibble over the "border line." Indubitably Landor never gave so complete a verse interpretation as "The Ring and the Book." There are, indeed, too many absolutely unanswerable questions aroused by any attempt to compare these two writers. Browning in verse is presumably the better poet; largely perhaps because Landor never learned to write a long passage of verse without in some way clogging and blocking the reader's attention. Yet Browning must constantly have envied him his perfect lines, his perfect commencements:

Tanagra! think not I forget
Thy beautifully-storied streets;
Be sure my memory bathes yet
In clear Thermodon, and yet greets
The blythe and liberal shepherd-boy,
Whose sunny bosom swells with joy
When we accept his matted rushes
Upheav'd with sylvan fruit; away he bounds, and blushes.

How incomparable if it had stopped at "Thermodon"; how fine we should think him if we had found the three and a half opening lines cut in a fragment of stone! How utterly it goes to pieces when we come upon "The blythe and liberal shepherd-boy"! And how "Browningesque" it turns with the "matted rushes"!

Landor's second strophe continues:

I promise to bring back with me
What thou with transport wilt receive,
The only proper gift for thee,
Of which no mortal shall bereave
In later times thy mouldering walls,
Until the last old turret falls;
A crown, a crown from Athens won,
A crown no God can wear, beside Latona's son.

. . . . .

Questions crop up as fast as one transcribes the quotation: Why is there so much more to be said for "Latona's son" than for "Apollo" in just this particular line; why is the effect of finish so given, by this utterly useless bit of mythical genealogy? And the "Browningism" in the former strophe, the particularisation which makes Landor's later work so much better than his early poems: does it come from the elder man or from the younger?

And Landor himself, the first useful critic, or the first analytical critic in English; the first man to go through an English poem line by line marking what was good, what was poor, what was excessive; the first person seriously to consider and write down this, almost the only, sort of criticism that can profit a later writer: can we put down any satisfactory comment on his ten volumes without taking at least two volumes to do it in?

IMAGINARY LETTERS

VI

(Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn)

Ezra Pound

MY DEAR LYDIA:

Levine is a clever man. Yes, "of course", of course I agree with you. He is a clever man. He is constantly being referred to, by the Cincinnati papers, as the "brains behind the single-tax movement in England", or the "brains behind" the neo-vegetarians, or the "brains behind" the reformed simple-lifers. Were he in France he would undoubtedly get himself referred to as the brains behind the Claudel pseudo-romancatholocoes. All things are grist to his mill. He knows the psychological moment: i.e., when a given idea or "form" will fetch the maximum price per thousand. I don't wonder William wants you to get rid of him.

There is no reason why William should see him, there is no reason why William should not punch his face in an orgy of sensuous gratification, there is no reason why William should not kick him down stairs. There is no reason why any one should see him, or hear him, or endure him. And there is no reason why I should not see

C297

C296 Continued

C297 Imaginary Letters. VI. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn). *Little Review*, IV. 7 (Nov. 1917) 39–40.

him. Besides he once procured me £12. I use the word "procure" with intention. It applies—temperamentally it applies to all of his acts: does he write, does he commission an article, it is all, in some way, procuration.

On the whole, I do not even dislike him. He has unbounded naïveté. I am civilized man; I can put up with anything that amuses me.

As for the french pseudo-catholicians, ages of faith, Jeanne d'Arc canonized, capitalized and the rest of it. They are a pestilent evil. The procurer is an honest . . . . and boastful . . . . tradesman in comparison. And they are on the whole rotten writers.

"But pray what sort of a gentleman is the devil? For I have heard some of our officers say, there is no such person; and that it is only a trick of the parsons, to prevent their being broke. For if it was publicly known that there was no devil, the parsons would be no more use than we are in time of peace."

Said the serjeant. Fielding would not have put up with their dribble. And he was quite as good as the Russians. The Russians and half Flaubert thrown in. And he is as modern as the last vorticist writers:

"First having planted her right eye side-ways against Mr. Jones . . . . "

Not having been at Rugby or Eton, I can take up anglo-philia as a decent and defendable bastion, and leave William to enthuse over moujiks. I believe there is just as much good. . . . no, dear lady, I forget myself, or rather I forget I am not writing to William, and that this is not the siècle de Brantôme. I "believe" there is just as much animal energy latent. . . . or patent in the inhabitants of your esteemed chalk hummock. At any rate I was born in a more nervous and arid climate.

De Gourmont is dead, and with him has ceased Monsieur Croquant, and I suppose the washy rhetoricans, this back-flush of dead symbolism, dead celticism etc., will have its way, their ways, south of the channel. There seems no one to stop it. The *"sociétés"* will be full of it. The french mystic is most footling of all mystics. France herself will go under. I mean France as the arbitress of our literary destinies, the light we look to, from our penumbra. Or perhaps Dr. Duhamel, with his realism of hospitals, and the brilliant, long silent Romains, the humane Vildrac will save us? Damn Romain Rolland. Ch. Louis Phillipe is excessive. Meritorious, doubtless, but excessive. Amitiés *WALTER.*

As Lewis has written, "Matter which has not intelligence enough to permeate it grows, as you know, gangrenous and rotten"—to prevent quibble, let us say animal matter. Criticism is the fruit of maturity, *flair* is a faculty of the rarest. In most countries the only people who know enough of literature to appreciate—i. e. to determine the value of—new productions are professors and students, who confine their attention to the old. It is the mark of the artist that he, and he almost alone, is indifferent to oldness or newness. Staleness he will not abide; jade may be ancient, flowers should be reasonably fresh, but mutton cooked the week before last is, for the most part, unpalatable.

The unripe critic is constantly falling into such pitfalls. "Originality," when it is most actual, is often sheer lineage, is often a closeness of grain. The innovator most damned for eccentricity is often most centrally in the track or orbit of tradition, and his detractors are merely ignorant. The artist is in sane equilibrium, indifferent utterly to oldness or newness, so the thing be apposite to his want.

The scholar, often selfish, will as a rule have little to do with contemporary letters. He plays it safe. He confines himself to what many have already approved. The journalist is left as our jury. He is often an excellent fellow, and, in that case, a scoffer at his chosen or enforced position. He says, "It is this that makes banderlog of us all." I quote his phrase quite correctly; he was speaking of journalists. He talked intelligently on many other matters, and he did not look in the least like banderlog. He looked in fact rather like the frontispiece to my edition of Leopardi. Within three weeks as many journalists—all successful and one of them, at least, at the "top of the tree"—have all said the same thing to me in slightly varying words. The journalist and his papers exist by reason of their "protective coloring." It is their job to think as their readers think at a given moment.

. . . .

It is impossible that Jules Laforgue should have written his poems in America in "the eighties." He was born in 1860, died in 1887 of *la misère,* of consumption and abject poverty in Paris. The vaunted sensitiveness of French perception, and the fact that he knew a reasonable number of wealthy and influential people, did nothing to prevent this. He had published two small volumes, one edition of each. The seventh edition of his collected poems is dated 1913, and doubtless they have been reprinted since then with increasing celerity.

He is perhaps the most sophisticated of all the French poets, so it is not to be supposed that any wide public has welcomed or will welcome him in England or America. The seven hundred people in both those countries, who have read him with exquisite pleasure, will arise to combat this estimate, but no matter. His name is as well known as Mallarmé's, his writings perhaps are as widely distributed. The anthology of Van Bever and Leataud has gone into, I suppose, its fiftieth thousand.

> Un couchant des Cosmogonies!
> Ah! que la Vie est quotidienne . . .

C298 Irony, Laforgue, and Some Satire. *Poetry,* XI. 2 (Nov. 1917) 93–98.

Et, du plus vrai qu'on se souvienne,
Comme on fut piètre et sans génie. . . .

What in heaven's name is the man in the street to make of this, or of the *Complainte des Bons Ménages!*

L'Art sans poitrine m'a trop longtemps bercé dupe.
Si ses labours sont fiers, que ses blés décevants!
Tiens, laisse-moi bêler tout aux plis de ta jupe
Qui fleure le couvent.

The red-blood has turned away, like the soldier in one of Plato's dialogues. Delicate irony, the citadel of the intelligent, has a curious effect on these people. They wish always to be exhorted, at all times no matter how incongruous and unsuitable, to do those things which almost anyone will and does do whenever suitable opportunity is presented. As Henry James has said, "It was a period when writers besought the deep blue sea 'to roll.'"

The ironist is one who suggests that the reader should think, and this process being unnatural to the majority of mankind, the way of the ironical is beset with snares and with furze-bushes.

Laforgue was a purge and a critic. He laughed out the errors of Flaubert, i. e., the clogging and cumbrous historical detail. He left *Coeur Simple, L'Education, Madame Bovary, Bouvard.* His, Laforgue's, *Salome* makes game of the rest. The short story has become vapid because sixty thousand story writers have all set themselves to imitating De Maupassant, perhaps a thousand from the original.

I think Laforgue implies definitely that certain things in prose were at an end. I think also that he marks the next phase after Gautier in French poetry. It seems to me that without a familiarity with Laforgue one can not appreciate—i. e., determine the value of—certain positives and certain negatives in French poetry since 1890.

He is an incomparable artist. He is, nine-tenths of him, critic—dealing for the most part with literary poses and *clichés,* taking them as his subject matter; and—and this is the important thing when we think of him as a poet—he makes them a vehicle for the expression of his own very personal emotions, of his own unperturbed sincerity.

Je ne suis pas "ce gaillard-là!" ni Le Superbe!
Mais mon âme, qu'un cri un peu cru exacerbe,
Est au fond distinguée et franche comme une herbe.

This is not the strident and satiric voice of Corbière, calling Hugo *"Garde Nationale épique,"* and Lamartine *"Lacrimatoire des abonnés."* It is not Tailhade drawing with rough strokes the people he sees daily in Paris, and bursting with guffaws over the Japanese in their mackintoshes, the West Indian mulatto behind the bar in the Quartier. It is not Georges Fourest burlesquing in a café; Fourest's guffaw is magnificent, he is hardly satirical. Tailhade draws from life and indulges in occasional squabbles. Corbière is hard-bitten, perhaps the most poignant poet since Villon, in very much Villon's manner.

Laforgue was a better artist than any of these men save Corbière. He was not in the least of their sort. Corbière lived from 1842 to 1875. Tailhade was born in 1854, and is still living. During the eighties he seems to have been writing Swinburnian verse, and his satires *Au Pays du Mufle,* now part of *Poèmes Aristophanesques,* appeared in

1891. Corbière's poems, first printed in 1873, were hardly obtainable until the reprint of 1891. Thus, so far as the public is concerned, these poets are almost contemporary with each other.

They "reached" England in the nineties. Beardsley's *Under the Hill* was until recently the only successful attempt to produce "anything like Laforgue" in our tongue. *Under the Hill* was issued in a limited edition. Laforgue's *Moralités Légendaires* was issued in England by the Ricketts and Hacon press in a limited edition, and there the thing has remained. Laforgue can never become a popular cult because tyros can not imitate him. Recent translations of his prose are held up because of copyright laws.

I do not think one can too carefully discriminate between Laforgue's tone and that of his contemporary French satirists. He is the finest wrought; he is most "verbalist." Bad verbalism is rhetoric, or the use of *cliché* unconsciously, or a mere playing with phrases. But there is good verbalism, distinct from lyricism or imagism, and in this Laforgue is a master. He writes not the popular language of any country but an international tongue common to the excessively cultivated, and to those more or less familiar with French literature of the first three-fourths of the nineteenth century.

He has done, sketchily and brilliantly, for French literature a work not incomparable to what Flaubert was doing for "France" in *Bouvard* and *Pécuchet,* if one may compare the flight of the butterfly with the progress of an ox, both proceeding toward the same point of the compass. He has dipped his wings in the dye of scientific terminology. Pierrot

Un air d'hydrocephale asperge.

The tyro can not play about with such things, the game is too dangerous. Verbalism demands a set form used with irreproachable skill. Satire needs, usually, the form of cutting rhymes to drive it home.

Chautauquas, Mrs. Eddys, Dr. Dowies, Comstocks, societies for the prevention of all human activities are impossible in the wake of Laforgue. And he is therefore an exquisite poet, a deliverer of the nations, a Numa Pompilius, a father of light. And to the crowd this mystery, the mystery why such force should reside in so fragile a book, why such power should coincide with so great a nonchalance of manner, will remain forever a mystery.

Que loin l'âme type
Qui m'a dit adieu
Parce que mes yeux
Manquaient de principes!

Elle, en ce moment.
Elle, si pain tendre,
Oh! peut-être engendre
Quelque garnement.

Car on l'a unie
Avec un monsieur,
Ce qu'il y a de mieux,
Mais pauvre en génie.

Laforgue is perhaps incontrovertible. John B. Yeats has written of the relation of art and "certitude" and we are perhaps too prone to connect "certitude" only with the "strong silent man" of the kinema. There are, however, various species. *Ezra Pound*

REVIEWS

WILLIAM H. DAVIES, POET

Collected Poems, by William H. Davies. Fifield, London, and Alfred T. Knopf, New York.

William H. Davies writes in a curious traditional dialect —that is to say in a language that is more or less the tongue of Burns and Blake and the Elizabethans; he puts his words "hind-side to" as the ancient writers were wont, and he says "did go" and "did sing" and so forth. *Sero te amavi,* etc. Also Mr. Shaw once introduced him as a curiosity and all these things put one off. Having found out this much, one has also found about as much fault as one can find with Mr. Davies, or at least all the fault that he would not find with himself.

I do not know that I can submit Mr. Davies' work to my usual acid test. Those who have caught my habit must put it aside for a time. Here is *Sweet Youth:*

> And art thou gone, sweet Youth? Say nay!
>   For dost thou know what power was thine,
> That thou could'st give vain shadows flesh,
>   And laughter without any wine,
> From the heart fresh?
>
> And art thou gone, sweet Youth? Say nay!
>   Not left me to Time's cruel spite!
> He'll pull my teeth out one by one,
>   He'll paint my hair first gray, then white,
> He'll scrape my bone.
>
> And art thou gone, sweet Youth? Alas,
>   For ever gone!—I know it well.
> Earth has no atom, nor the sky,
>
>   That has not thrown the Kiss Farewell—
> Sweet Youth, good-bye.

Now I suppose that lyric is not quite Elizabethan; in fact, I am sure that it is not. Lyric it certainly is.

I wonder what further concession we must make. Certainly Davies uses his verse as a vehicle for a philosophy as well as for communicating his mood. Certainly he does talk *about* things quite as often as he presents them, possibly more often; still he does now and again present men or things without comment: as, for example, a drunk who has done time watching school-house after school-house in the hope of finding his children:

> And "Balmy" Tom is near as bad
>   A-drinking ale till blind:
> No absent child grieves he, but there's
>   A dead love on his mind.

The poem is possibly sentimental. There are flaws in its technique. "But you know it's only about one thing in thirty I do that's any good," is the author's own summary criticism of his poems, so we may as well take the good with the flawed for a moment. Poet Davies is without any doubt, if one will but read enough of him for conviction. Despite the ancient speech, the speech that is at least as old as Tom Moore, there is here and there the fine phrase and the still finer simplicity. The last line of the above four, for example. I think I had better quote one poem which makes it necessary to "accept Davies" as a poet, after which we can at our leisure decide which verses we are going to hold as "good Davies." The poem is *A Lovely Woman:*

C299 William H. Davies, Poet. *Poetry*, XI. 2 (Nov. 1917) 99–102.
A review of *Collected Poems*.

Now I can see what Helen was:
Men can not see this woman pass
And not be stirred; as summer's breeze
Sets leaves in battle on the trees.
A woman moving gracefully
With golden hair enough for three,
Which—mercifully!—is not loose,
But lies in coils to her head close;
With lovely eyes, so dark and blue,
So deep, so warm, they burn me through.
I see men follow her, as though
Their homes were where her steps should go.
She seemed as sent to our cold race
For fear the beauty of her face
Made Paradise in flames like Troy—
I could have gazed all day with joy.
In fancy I could see her stand
Before a savage, fighting band,
And make them, with her words and looks,
Exchange their spears for shepherd's crooks,
And sing to sheep in quiet nooks;
In fancy saw her beauty make
A thousand gentle priests uptake
Arms for her sake, and shed men's blood.
The fairest piece of womanhood,
Lovely in feature, form and grace,
I ever saw, in any place.

Frankly I do not think that most of Davies' poems are so good as the two just quoted. Yet sometimes he uses the "classic-English" manner to perfection. In *Dreams of the Sea,* for example, are lines and strophes which I think we would accept without quaver or question if we found them in volumes of accepted "great poets":

And I have seen thy gentle breeze as soft
  As summer's when it makes the cornfields run;
And I have seen thy rude and lusty gale
  Make ships show half their bellies to the sun.

Thou knowest the way to tame the wildest life,
  Thou knowest the way to bend the great and proud:
I think of that Armada whose puffed sails,
  Greedy and large, came swallowing every cloud.

But I have seen the sea-boy, young and drowned,
  Lying on shore and, by thy cruel hand,
A seaweed beard was on his tender chin,
  His heaven-blue eyes were filled with common sand.

And yet, for all, I yearn for thee again,
  To sail once more upon thy fickle flood:
I'll hear thy waves wash under my death-bed,
  Thy salt is lodged forever in my blood.

Robustezza! This verse is not in the latest mode, but compare it with verse of its own kind and you will not find much to surpass it. Wordsworth, for instance, would have had a deal of trouble trying to better it. The sound quality is, again, nearer that of the Elizabethans than of the nineteenth-century writers. The philologist will find scarcely a Latin word in the foregoing verses: "Armada" is a proper name, and "gentle" is so tempered by mediaeval French popular usage that one forgets its Latin derivation. I do not wish the reader to imply from this that the use of Latin words in English is taboo. Simply: certain effects are very often due to the omission of Latin words from the verse.

There is a resonance and a body of sound in these verses of Davies which I think many vers-librists might envy.

I am by no means attempting a full examination of Davies in this brief annotation. I think I have, however, quoted enough of him to show that he should be considered at least as much for his verses as for his better known prose, *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp.* *Ezra Pound*

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

XI.—THE BRIGHT AND SNAPPY.

INADEQUATELY, most inadequately, have I dealt with the moral fibre of the weekly called "Chambers' Journal." No moderate modern man could give any idea of this fibre. Still I have done my poor best. I have compared it to Nelson's column. Its gerants doubtless admired Carlyle.

A little more light may be cast upon it by comparing it with a younger weekly named "Answers"—the reader remembering in the meanwhile that we are searching for the psychology of the nation, and not seeking to advertise any paper to the detriment of the rest.

"Chambers" started a little before the accession of her late Majesty Queen Victoria; "Answers" anteceded her son by a few brief tremulous years. We are unfair to the great Victorian era unless we know a little of the mental atmosphere that preceded it. I open Mavor's collection of "English Classical Poetry" (pub. A.D. 1828); it is full of purposeless ululation. By its light one descries a reason for popular optimism, the optimism of Browning, the optimism of Ella. It takes at least a century for these reactions to drift through the public. I am not sure there is any "swing of the pendulum"; the idea, or the mood, seems to rise from one man or from a small group and flows out like mud or lava over the people, overcovering and making its strata upon similar effluvia antecedent.

Junius in his letters talks of the "melancholy madness of poesy." "The Family Herald" does the "Back-of-the-gloom-the-bloom" trick.

When the editor of, a "bright-snappy" weekly applied to me for a bright snappy obituary notice of Emile Verhaeren, I rashly mentioned the nature of Verhaeren's muse, and said the correct amount of bright-snappiness might be hard to attain. Answer: "What, eh gloomy cuss, wuz he? Oh, we'd better not touch it at all."

The fashion of this world passeth away. The contemporaries of Mrs. Barbauld would have "taken theirs" melancholy. As with mood, so with the fervour of morals; "Chambers" shows none of the listlessness of "The Nineties." The bright-snappy papers show none of the Lacedaemonian firmness of "Chambers' Journal."

The first page of "Answers" leads me to classify it, at least for the present, under the general heading "Bright and Snappy." By taking the Bright-and-Snappy at a penny I may be able to cover the ground in one article, whereas if I began at the bright and snappy more expensive (a shilling or thereabouts) I should have, later, to seek the bright and snappy for the masses. . . . .

The cover addresses me in these terms: "It will be a red-letter day for you when you receive the corsets, because it will be the beginning of new life. From the moment when you put them on a ceaseless stream of magnetism permeates the whole body from head to heel. The joy of New Life, of New Health. . . . You feel a different woman. Your outlook on life is different—brighter, happier, and more hopeful." Even before this we are told "it gives splendid health, tireless energy, and an attractive personality."

I cannot argue this upon facts; my reader must wait for the discussion in a future chapter on almanacks and religion. Power to win by refraining from blushing and trembling is advertised inside the cover. The snappy-and-bright proper begins on the first page of the text: The last blows of summer, the short skirt, the man who wasn't good enough for the girl, the boy who wanted to get dirtier before being washed, the author whose play aroused the house, all obtrude their unvarying faces, brisk as ever. Note the humour, not of disclosure, but of the "sharp" irrelevant reply; then comes the humour of the jest based on special or local knowledge. "Have we any Gerards? asks a contemporary. Try the telephone girl for an answer."

This is a periodical for "Home and Train." We are not really on the trail of a force; we are not digging up a basis of action, mass action; we are not getting at the understanding of a driving power, as we most certainly were in the reading of "Chambers." These things are not funny; all of these tones of writing are significant of the popular psychology. We must make a very clear distinction between writing which definitely shapes the reader, or tries to shape him, and writing intended only as a drug.

Note that the cheap tired mind, picking up its paper, apparently likes a couple of dozen of these pert paragraphs, snippets. The aperatif before supper.

Interspersed with these snaps are five longer paragraphs and a poem (more or less Kippled). The paragraphs deal with anthrax imported from China, the price of palaces, value of man-power, and wisdom of having children grow up strong. "As a nation, we need to see vividly, to appreciate vitally, to understand fundamentally, that when a child has reached the age of fourteen the chief opportunity of life is past." If these years are rightly utilised the rest of the life "can be trusted, as a general rule, to look after itself." "American baseball players will make good bomb-throwers." The most interesting paragraph is, however, at the foot of the first column. It concerns "Chlorophyll green." It is a brief lesson in botanic chemistry; three inches of science. Near the end of it we find the sentence: "If the chlorophyll contained in the plants were to perish with the 'fall of the leaf,' there would be an end to the vegetable kingdom, and 'man the biped' would also disappear."

This statement may, for all I know, be perfectly true. Its truth is not the interesting thing at the moment. The thing for us to observe, as anthropologists, is that it is the same thing, the same teleological wheeze that Mr. Bart Kennedy gave us at the end of his prose rhapsody about water. ("Chambers' Journal," September 1, 1917, page 592) sic: "A time will come to pass when the wine of the earth will have gone. And when it has gone, gone will be man and his works. Gone will be the trees and the grass and the flowers. Gone will be the beings who lived with man." ("Chambers" costs 9d. Mr. Kennedy can afford to be richer and fruitier than "Answers," 1d.) "The earth will be but a vast desert . . . ., etc. Man and his works, etc., . . . nothing gone nowhere. And the earth will roll a thing of desolation,

When gone is the earth wine."

As a matter of material science, putting both statements together, we deduce that both water and chlorophyll green are necessary to our preservation and comfort. As a matter of psychology we have hit on one of the simple devices of people who wish to stir the lay mind or wring the appreciative "Bah Goom!" from the yokel. It is the old question, "Where'd ye be if you wasn't?" The theologians have used it for ages; it is in the grip-sack of the popular exhortationists. With this one little implement in your possession you may sit upon any turnstile in the attitude of Rodin's "Penseur."

As the paradisiacal promise, such as that concerning the corsets, has always been used as a lure, so this wheeze about the horror of nothingness, the end of the world, the day of judgment, etc., has been used as a shake-up, as an hysteria-producer to weaken the will, and it has even masqueraded as an argument for believing or accepting or tolerating all sorts and conditions of doctrines.

There is, incidentally, nothing easier than this leap from an actuality into chaos. The shortest exact progress from known facts to a working conclusion, or to a workable theory, is infinitely more hard to attain. These swoops are probably primitive. Children think about the end of the world. They ask what will become of favourite toys after they are dead. One gropes in the void of the popular mind. What number of general concepts, or even what basis of "common

C300 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XI.—The Bright and Snappy. *New Age*, XXII. 1 (1 Nov. 1917) 10–11.
On *Answers*.

sense,'' can we expect to find in the general mind, or in the minds of the average or majority?

They tell me that Maxim Gorky's mother spent a great part of her life saying to her neighbours, " You should wash more. If you would wash more you would not have so many lice." We smile from the heights of our superior Hesperian cleanliness. Yet to judge from our periodicals the vast majority of our neighbours do not know enough science to keep their bowels open. I think there is not one paper of all those I have looked at which does not proclaim some cathartic. If any number of Hindoos practise the hygiene some few among them profess, travelling Asiatics must spend their occidental life in one large grin at this widespread ignorance among Europeans. The difference between a great man and a failure, pages on pages of reading matter, columns of auroral language poured out for decades to teach Europe this one simple fact. Any cathartic, at least almost any cathartic, would serve just as any soap or almost any soap is more or less effective against vermin (under non-war conditions). It is all very well for Mazzini to say " Educate ! " It is all very well for social theorists to explain systems for the distribution of wealth, etc . . .

We most of us believe, more or less, in democracy . . . But if man emerges from parental control at, let us say, fifteen, and if it takes him on an average of, say, ten years to learn this simple principle of hygiene and happiness, how long, etc., will it take him to learn to wield a vote, and decide on the most expeditious way towards the happiness of the race, the happiness of a multitude of various people?

AND what period will be required among a people so reticent, a people so bound by delicate periphrases of speech that the child of fifteen will not have been clearly instructed in these matters, but will, in most cases, be left to make the momentous discovery for himself with the aid of cathartic advertisements?

The other key paragraph on the first page of " Answers " is that about man-power, already referred to : " But sound men grow from sound children just as trees grow from good, straight saplings, etc. . . . horses from . . . foals . . . healthy vegetables from a well-tended, well-manured, rich-soiled, well-watered, sunny market-garden . . . we let our children grow like weeds . . . blown by winds of circumstance . . . conditions predestined to produce poor results. . . . Yet they are the nation's chief wealth—the wealth which will best repay preserving."

This is interesting. We had the Countess of Warwick anti-Malthusing in the " Hibbert," and even applying the argument emotioné, the pleasures of motherhood, in a tone not unlike that of Mr. Bart Kennedy proclaiming his orgy of water in "Chambers' Journal." We had "Chambers" bucking up the adolescent lower deck and instructing the young how best to become superior cannon-meat, how to bite through a three-inch board, and be stout defenders; we had the middle-aged mother, and some writer in, I think, " The Edinburgh," beseeching us to breed and overflow into the colonies.

The international view point is apparently not the same as that of the author, who beseeches us to produce wealth from our loins; no owner of slaves could, indeed, be more fervent, personal and explicit. The worst type of Socialist may have exhorted us to cooperate with the State to the point of self-annihilation, but this specific statement that the child is the property of the State (even after a recent judicial pronouncement that a man has no property in his wife) is interesting *as a symptom.* The garden will doubtless be manured.

Personally, I do not desire a revolution with violence, and idiocies of this sort therefore annoy me, even though they be only slips of the pens.

Children, for the first part of their life at any rate, should be consumers, not property; it is a dog's trick, this bringing them to tables ill-furnished. Still, the Countess was very much shocked when she found a working woman in the North of England who declared herself unwilling to do so. If, however, human beings are " wealth," a form of superior live stock, their owners should attentively listen to " Answers " and the advice about human conservatism, and his fattening of the child for the market.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

XI.—HASH AND REHASH.

A THING that strikes one in this descent from " Shaw and Nietzsche" ; in this descent from the authors who write for " us " to the authors who write for the people Wells and Bennett aim at and miss, is the " fine-cut " or hash system of presentation. I have not yet reached the nadir, the mediæval basis of stupidity and superstition upon which " the Empire rests " ; I am but half-way toward the reader whose food is " Old Moore " almost exclusively, and who does *not* "read the papers." But as I submerse myself lower and lower I note that the " article " diminishes ; that the amount of any given subject exposed to the single lectorial contact is slowly but surely diminished.

This diminution is not measurable by simple space ; the real diminution is much less than the diminution in the actual number of words devoted to any particular topic. Or, baldly : the " Spectator " would take a great deal longer to make any given statement than would " Answers " or the " Family Herald." The populace, the *popolaccio,* is in some ways much better served than the ex-intelligentsia.

Despite its almost incredible mendacity and its falsification-by-distortion, the Daily Press is a great educational force. In this series, however, I am avoiding the daily Press, I am deliberately avoiding any discussion which would involve the question of " news " or news-getting, or the value of news, or any question or paper in any way involved or complicated by a news-value. (The only points at which I can be said even to have grazed such an issue have been in the timeliness of the " Family Herald's " informative page *re* German municipal government, and in the possible news-value of the " Edinburgh's " reports of foreign authors relatively antecedent to their demises.) Our study is a study of contemporary psychological states and of the psychological aptitudes of various masses. Among these we find the necessity for the fine-cut.

The fine-cut is a dope. It is hedonistic. It is often sham-utilitarian ; that is, it possesses all the vulgarity of the utilitarian tone ; it professes to give "practical" information ; and it is a sop to the tired or ineffectual mind, to the vagrant attention or inattention, and is fundamentally useless.

You may study enough of a subject to become a specialist, or little enough to become a first-aider, or to fit you to do your own plumbing, or you may imbibe too little even to enable yourself to ask intelligent questions. It goes back even to schooldays, when a boy may study a language, which, if he learn it, will be all his life an almost extra sense, an open avenue for sensation and knowledge ; or he may read through a classic which will be a life-long possession ; or he may take a year's physics or chemistry, which unless he continue the study, unless he make one of these sciences his profession, will be out of date before he is twenty-five. (He may also receive so dead, pedantic and incomplete an impression of a Greek or Latin author that the said author will *not* be a " possession.")

C301

C300 Continued

C301 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XI [contd.].—Hash and Rehash. *New Age,* XXII. 2 (8 Nov. 1917) 28–30. More on *Answers.*

Even some of our least commendable but prominent writers have been taught by their forebears the value of a "subject." The *basso popolo* never learns the value of a subject; they accept fine-cut, and as long as they insist on, or take, fine-cut, just so long will they remain of the *basso popolo,* impotent, mastered. Believers in imperia will say: "let them be mastered." but unfortunately they serve to no purpose. The dominator but floats like Jules Romains' "drop of oil." And we have heard of the member of a mystical order who spent his whole life intriguing for the leadership of twenty second-rate souls.

There is a social determinism, and it is indicated when the Italian immigrant mother in America comes to school to say, "Jenny not study any more. Jenny not read book. She read book, it makes her sick." (Note: "sick" in American is used of other ailments beside simple nausea.)

Keeping this simile, we may say that a man's social ascent or descent is determined largely not only by how much he can "digest," but by how much he can "take in" or "hold" at one time. The number of people who can read Doughty's "Arabia Deserta" is decently and respectfully limited; so much so that the readers of that work tend to form an almost secret society, a cellule, at least, of an actual, if almost imperceptible aristocracy.

I see no reason why the perusers of "Answers" should be held inside any limit. There is no mind so flabby that it need quail before "A Ducal Farmer," "Hindenburg British Subject," "Princess as Typist," done at three or four to the ten-inch column. In the same column we learn that "Miss Brayton's 'dressing-room library' also contains some books on golf," "works on gardening and old china, in both of which subjects she takes a keen interest. She says that nothing soothes her nerves better than to read a book on one or other of these topics before going on the stage." This paragraph is headed: MISS BRAYTON'S LIBRARY. It contains a masterly phrase, or at least an implication, as valuable as that of the Admiral who suggested that the Navy was just the least shade photographic. The paragraphist who dealt with Miss Brayton has illuminated for us the distinction between a "subject" and a "topic." Between them there is an exceeding great gulf.

A "contributor" in the next col. of "Answers" "SUGGESTS THAT BROKEN HEARTS CANNOT BE MENDED WITH CASH." This subject appears to supply the whole column, but on closer examination we find the column divided into four sub-headed paragraphs. It contains an expression of opinion from Mr. Justice Low, one from Miss Lind-af-Hageby, and one from Lord Herschell in 1879; it touches on male and female breach of promise, and ends with a touch of the "new" optimism, sic: "*but perhaps after the war* our legislators may be prevailed upon to enact a law abolishing breach of promise cases altogether."

The next salient feature (for the topics in "Answers" are cut so fine we must confine ourselves to salient features) is called, I believe, on the American vaudeville stage, "the reel genn-u-ine sob-stuff." It is all about the "dark-haired soprano, and the men who softly join in the haunting refrain." It is, in part, anapæstic tetrameter. We are promised the next instalment in a single line at the foot of p. 279, sic: "A Pathetic Description of Our Graves in France, by Miss Hilda M. Love, next week." Miss Hilda is their special woman war correspondent.

As in a village one is surrounded by individuals, so in the metropolis we are surrounded by these agglomerate personalities. Only in cities, perhaps, do they become articulate and distinguishable . . . even though the outline be indistinct. One need not put oneself down as "unanimist" to be increasingly aware of their imminence, of their power, of their impotence. One may shut one's door in a village; one may shut one's letter-box in a city, and refrain from reading the papers, or from reading current publications of any sort; but one cannot wholly shut out the consciousness of other existences in one's neighbourhood.

Besides, even the attempt at anything like complete isolation is over-misanthropic, it is a mental and social constriction no more to be commended than the spiritual cowardice of the "Spectator." The modern Ulysses will recognise Miss Hilda as a very extensive agglomerality. Miss Hilda can "put over" "the sob-stuff." Her editor says in his little black-letter heading, "In her inimitable way she shows Tommy exchanging fighting for fun for a brief spell. No greater war work is being done than that by those clever people who enable our troops to forget the grim business of war by organising entertainments." "Sentiment and Humour" is the label upon her first sub-section. "Blue-eyed, with a mass of shining fair hair, a typical daughter of Britain is singing." "The sweet notes," "a thousand clear voices," "an audience such as only a war of this magnitude could produce." Miss Hilda's inimitability consists to some extent in the omission of certain verbs, and in a lavish use of the present tense in such verbs as she permits herself to retain.

In "Answers" next salient, "Taffy—Fighting Man," we are hallowed with the black-type heading: "The Welshman butts into battle like his native goat. He goes for the enemy at sight, and asks no questions. In this, the final article of the brilliant series on British nationalities, the Welshman is dealt with as faithfully as the writer has dealt with his brothers, John, Sandy, and Pat." This statement is comparative, and I have no doubt the comparison is most just. I have at my elbow no reference book which will reveal to me the precise meaning of "argumentum ad hominem," but I suspect that this statement concerning "his native goat" is "the argumentum ad hominem."

I have two other examples in my file: (a) The advertisement which says, "There won't be much the matter with the young chap who takes a good dob of X's mustard with every meal; (b) an incident by me observed, and as follows: The bard, once mentioned for laureate honours, had been with difficulty induced to read from his works. "Induced" is perhaps the wrong word. He had absolutely refused, but younger authors arising and reading, he seized upon the only method of keeping them quiet. He read from "The Purple East" with the emphasis and sweep of a Melancthon; he was very impressive. When he had finished his thunders, there arose the female sculling champion of the Orinoco, or some such river. She was what "Answers" would call "blue-eyed, with a mass of shining, fair hair, typical daughter of Britain." She had the *allures* of a prize-fighter, and approaching our un-Herculanean host, she demanded in a hoarse whisper (in what "Answers" might term the "throbbing notes of the contralto"): "Who'z that man talkin' against our country?" The host with greater deliberation responded (in tones such as are usually reserved for "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted," etc.), "That! . . . . is Mr. William . . . . Watson."

"Well, you tell Mr. Watson if he wants to-settle-this-thing-he-can-step-right-out-into-the-hall, an'-right-NOW."

Even long residence out of Albion had not altered her intrepidity.

My difficulty with the sentence about the Welshman and his native goat is that there are, metaphorically, native goats elsewhere. I am unable to see the statement as definition—the particular statement about the goat and other statements in the two columns following. It is not always clear that these statements apply, or are intended to apply, to all Welshmen, or to Welshmen exclusively; and if they do not apply to all Welshmen and to Welshmen and Welsh goats exclusively, their definitive value is open to objection; is, if we may so phrase it, inoperative, inefficient.

In fairness to the editor of "Answers," we must state that the editor does not claim for the article definitive or absolute value. He merely says that it is brilliant, and that the anonymous author has "dealt with" the Welshman quite as well as he had done with his brothers.

He goes on to a £500 prize, and thence to "Our Kiddies' Zoo." This consists in a small black and white picture of an animal not unlike a potato. Beneath it are the following lines:—

"The Spotted Ponk sits on the hill
While morning dew is wet,
And stays there patiently until
The evening sun has set."

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

XII.—THE EMBLEMATIC.

I HAVE been accused of living too exclusively among artists, among "my own generation," among unpleasing people engaged in altering the general state of affairs, or at least in tampering and making attempts. Desirous of getting not only out of myself, but out also of "a circle of art interests," out of "my world," my "generation," I said to my butcher: "What papers does your mother-in-law read—I mean what weeklies and monthlies?"

My butcher (pronounced "beutcher") is a man from Unst, or some such island. He hates the Scotch. His mother-in-law must be about sixty. She cannot be called *of* my generation. He said he did not know, but would ask her. He informed me in due time that the old lady liked "The Christian Herald," "The Sunday Companion," and the "People's Friend," but "*not* the 'British Weekly'—THAT'S Robertson Nicoll." He particularly cautioned me against this latter organ and its editor.

I set out in search of these weeklies. The first "news-lady" was firmly negative. I noticed the "Catholic Suffragist" on her counter. The next newsagent was without them. He had heard of them. I suggested that I was on a wild-goose chase. He informed me that the likeliest place would be the shop at the corner by Notting Hill Gate, wheretoward I proceeded, stopping in two shops by the way.

The female in the first treated the matter as a joke, she grinned, to the peril of her splendidly furbished complexion. (This shop also provides "minerals.") The next shop, also for the vendage of "minerals" was almost derisive. I purchased the "Union Jack," the "Penny Popular" and "The Marvel" to reinstate myself in their graces.

At the next corner a cleric was exhorting his auditors to beware of the wrath to come, of the last days; and beseeching them to get right with God, for "many terrible things are still to happen." His voice was rather apoplectic; the audience was perfumed with liquor.

At the Notting Hill Gate shop I found "The Sunday Companion," "The Christian Herald," "Ideas," and "Forget Me Not." Mackensen claimed 60,000 and 450 guns. I asked for the "People's Friend." No! Didn't stock it. I asked what it was like: "Just like these?" "Uumhn, nah! more like 'Tit-Bits' and 'Answers'; got no call for it.'"

On returning, I found the cleric had ended his rhapsody. A white-headed layman was saying, in a tired, trainy, and sympathetic voice, that the "blood of his blessed Saviour had taken them all away."

"The Christian Herald and Signs of our Times." "Attractive Autumn Number Next Week—New Serial Story." "This paper is an insurance policy of £1,000." "Largest circulation of any unsectarian religious paper."

It bears upon its smear-grey cover the representation of a young woman at a piano, a young man seated with child aged about two years on his knee, one aged about 3½ years perched in or on chair by his shoulder; further children, one male and one female, in right-hand corner. One and one-third of male adult's trouser-legs are pale grey, the remaining two-thirds being of the same colour as his coat. The mouths of female adult and of the four children are open. There is a potted and feathery palm plant in upper right-hand corner, and beneath the whole this inscription: "A NAVAL OFFICER HOME ON LEAVE: A Restful Sunday Evening with His Family."

Reader, pause! We are about to take a jump out of sanity and into the thick of a peculiar, a very peculiar, milieu.

Old Moore advertising a "Splendid Principal Hieroglyphic," to say nothing of minor displays, heads his March, 1918, page with a little lead-block portraying a kangaroo harnessed to an ordinary four-wheeler; a nude leg projects from the window of said four-wheeler; a notched sign-post, with no inscription, stretches above it; and behind it follow six apes bearing each on his, her, or its back an apelet. In the background a forest; at the extreme right edge of the picture the carcass of a pig is suspended by its hind feet. Old Moore says that the kangaroo, harnessed to the cab, "represents marvellous advance, not only in trade, but improvement all round, including art, literature and music. The mob of hairy monsters is emblematic of the undesirable section of the colony."

For July, Old Moore shows a ballet-dancer standing on a swift motor-cycle, pursued by cowboys. He says: "The spirited picture selected by the Prophet for the month of July shows us that the eternal feminine will be in great demand, especially in our colonies." (Note: We have heard about this colony matter before: "Hibbert" and "Quiver.") Moore continues: "The ragged tramp leading the lusty goat is by no means a good omen."

For February he shows . . . but why say what he shows? when he says that "The heading chosen by the Prophet for the month of February needs little or no explanation." Neither, in one sense, does it. We all understand the prophetic significance of a policeman watching a monk sharpen a carving knife; of a cat gazing on a stubby man with a feather in his bowler, drawing a skeleton on a black-board. The nude leg in the four-wheeler was, doubtless, Old Moore's conception of art, and, perhaps, also that of his readers.

The "Christian Herald's" "Sidelights on the War" tells us that "the Book of Revelation deals with the Protestant Reformation, not with the Mahomedan system at all, but with the Western Anti-Christ, the Papacy." (Note, this is unfair to the Papacy. The Kaiser has some claim, and I shall perhaps put in one of my own. And (sotto voce): What price the late "Boney" or N. Buonaparte?)

Return to the "Christian Herald" and remember the butcher's mamma-in-law: "And it will be remembered that when we were dealing with the seventh chapter of Daniel, we there met with the period of 'a time, times and a half,' and I pointed out that it referred to

The Western Anti-Christ,

and, hence, must be reckoned in solar years, because it is the habit of Western people to reckon by solar, and not lunar chronology. I noted that the Papacy reached the climax of its greatness in the year 663, because the Pope in that year enjoined that all the services should be in Latin."

(Note: Italian and braw Scots not being current).

"That year, therefore, is looked upon by competent historians as marking the full development of Latin Christianity."

C302

C301 Continued

C302 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XII.—The Emblematic. *New Age*, XXII. 3 (15 Nov. 1917) 48–49.
On "Old Moore" and the *Christian Herald*.

(Note: What price Thomas Aquinas?)

"If we reckon 1,260 years from then, we are brought to the year 1923; so that it seems likely that these years 1917 to 1923 will be most remarkable and momentous years in the history and decline both of the Papacy and of Mahomedanism."

("'Le Pape est boche,' dit M. Croquant").

"To return again to the tenth chapter of Revelation."

(Note: The "Christian Herald" has already told us that Daniel is an introduction to "Rev.").

"Angel swearing that time shall be no longer, and that the mystery of God is to be finished."

(Pauvre Père Eternel! He won't last out our grandchildren).

"Now a 'time' in symbolic prophecy always means a year of 360 days."

(Possibly a five days' reduction for good behaviour. "Time" and "a time" are subject to divergent interpretations).

Continues the heraldist! "Always means a year of 360 days. So that a year of 360 days symbolises a period of 360 years."

(Note: "A four-wheeler drawn by a kangaroo" = marvellous progress not only in trade, but with art, literature, etc., into the bargain).

"A period of 360 years. This is reckoned from the beginning of the sounding of the voice of the seventh angel."

(Clear as a bell!)

"Now, when did the seventh trumpet begin to sound?"

(Answer in next week's "Christian Herald." Leading prize winners £5, and three consolation prizes, in event of two correspondents giving same answer . . . ????? Not a bit of it!)

The author tells us that "the seventh trumpet begins to sound immediately after the Reformation."

(All clear!)

"Immediately after the Reformation. The question, then, is, When did the Reformation end?" Add 360 to 1563, and you get 1923.

(Note: 4—11—44, 23 skiddoo).

Heraldist continues: "Many people have added two and two together, only to be disappointed. But this we know: the nearer we come to the end, the more light we shall get. . . . The Lord comes as a thief in the night."

(Note: Most Bohemian of Him).

"But only to the world does He come as a thief; not to those who understand and wait for Him."

(In the latter case he rings the bell, and politely inquires of the butler?)

"Blessed are we who wait and come to the thous[and] three hundred and five-and-thirty days. If those y[ear]s do not witness His longed-for-coming, they wi[ll] at least prepare the way."

Let us go back in quiet to Mr. Moore and his almanac, to its little pictures of diminutive boys upon stilts stalking among huge exotic roosters; to coffin caskets with a whirl like a pin-wheel in front of them; to the man in a swallow-tail coat holding a clock while a fireman turns his hose on a blackamoor. Let us note that for twelve pages of "text" and some further pages thereof scattered through the ads., Old Moore carries twenty-four pages of ads. Sic: Nerve force, free to the ruptured, asthma, drunkard saved (18 pictures showing swing of the pendulum), rupture, magnetic girl, whooping-cough, fits, why be fat, pine-forest in every home, children's powders, message to mothers, don't wear a truss, life-pills, test horoscope, no more grey hair, grey hairs, gold watch free, eye ointment, drink habit conquered, neuraliga, free offer superior to steel and pennyroyal, ditto, infinitely superior to bitter apple, pills for women, kidney, renal pills, given away: information to the married, pills, pills, £5 notes for correct answer and stamp, free gift, without medicine, gold watch free, surgical appliance, lung tonic, Eno's.

And some ass has said that the age of Faith is dead!

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

XIII.—THE CELESTIAL.

"Ezra's next move was to make the priests responsible for the valuables, the silver, the gold, and the vessels which had been offered for the temple."—Mrs. M. Baxter in the "Christian Herald and Signs of our Times" for October 25, 1917.

The "move" narrated by Mrs. M. Baxter was, doubtless, most laudable; it is even quite credible that my august, more or less mythical namesake may have passed some such legislation, credible even that a flattering biographer might have claimed for it some degree of success. One permits oneself, however, to doubt whether the move or any such move, ever was or is wholly successful; and Mrs. Baxter may be accused of undue optimism when she heads the paragraph containing her statement with the heavy italics "*We May Do Likewise.*"

Adam Smith wrote some time ago: "People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices." The priest, or his modern Levite, the man whose livelihood depends on religion, be he secretary to a more or less religiose organisation, be he a writer for religiose journals—is of a peculiar and segregated employment. As we saw in "Old Moore's Almanac," vendors of the future flock together. Heaven or freedom from "bad legs" are both commodities immaterial and quite vendable. They depend upon supply and demand, and the demand depends upon the supply of credulity. Let us observe "COMING IN THE CLOUDS, a sermon by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon":

"'NEVERTHELESS, hereafter.'" I like the sound of those two bells together; let us ring them again. "Nevertheless, hereafter." The "Hereafter" seems in brief to say to me that the main glory of Christ lies in the future. Not to-day, perhaps, nor to-morrow, will the issue be seen. Have patience! Wait a while. "Your strength is to sit still." God has great leisure, for He is the Eternal. Let us partake of His restfulness while we sing, "Nevertheless, hereafter." O for the Holy Spirit's power at this moment; for it is written, "He will show you things to come."

"Hereafter!" "Hereafter!" Oh, when that hereafter comes, how overwhelming it will be to Jesus' foes! Now, where is Caiaphas? Will he now adjure the Lord to speak? Now, ye priests, lift up your haughty heads! Utter a sentence against Him now!

There Sits Your Victim

upon the clouds of Heaven. Say now that he blasphemes, and hold up your rent rags, and condemn him again. But where is Caiaphas?"

The repetition of this question naturally stumps the yokel. He looks under the seat, he looks under his neighbour's pew, and no Caiaphas! The simple answer is that Caiaphas is with the snows of yester year; that he as well as another; that he along with Cæsar and the golden lads might stop a hole to keep the wind away; that, in any case, he to no such aureate earth is turned that we wish him dug up again. But this simple answer does not occur to the yokel. He is stumped by the inquiry. He is beaten. Mr. Spurgeon

C303

C302 Continued

C303 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XIII.—The Celestial. *New Age*, XXII. 4 (22 Nov. 1917) 69–70.
More on the *Christian Herald*.

leaps upon his bewilderment: "But where is Caiaphas? He hides his guilty head; he is utterly confounded, and begs the mountains to fall upon him. And, oh, ye men of the Sanhedrim . . . etc."

Now, gentlemen, under which thimble is the pea? The yokel is utterly confounded. Where is Caiaphas? There is Caiaphas. The yokel being unable to state Caiaphas' whereabouts, or to perceive Caiaphas when said Caiaphas is postulated to be present, sinks into a state of coma (as desired).

Mr. Spurgeon goes on to Antichrist, and then turns up Julian the apostate, sic:

" *Julian, as He Died, Said*:
' The Nazarene has overcome me ' ";

Mr. Spurgeon overlooks the fact that Julian had had a difficult life, and that his nerves might have been undermined; he overlooks the fact that Julian died a long time ago, and that since that date of demise, numerous quiet gentlemen have died with no such confession of defeat on their lips. Mr. Spurgeon "would fain whisper in the ear of the sinner, fascinated by his pleasures,

Hereafter, Hereafter!"

These black italic headings set current in the text are a feature of the "Xtn. Herald."

While scarcely including myself in the category of "sinners fascinated by pleasure," Mr. Spurgeon might pause to consider my reasons for not proclaiming myself to be Antichrist.

First, if I found myself entertaining the idea with any seriousness I should suspect megalomania; I should try to tone the thing down; I should not wish to be the victim of megalomania, of obsession, of an idée fixe, however decorative or delightful.

Second, I should feel that I was abrogating my integrity as an artist; that I was degenerating into a religious teacher or founder; that I was becoming a fumiste; that I was swinging too large a megaphone.

Third, it is too old a game; there are too many candidates—Leonardo, Napoleon, the Kaiser, our old friend the Papacy. *On s'encanaille.* One does not wish to be confused with Mrs. Besant's little black gentlemen.

But if I overcame these objections and proclaimed myself Antichrist, I should not expect the fortnight or the æon after my death to be one jot more uncomfortable. Being Antichrist is an employment like another, like taking the City Temple, or exhibiting at the Leicester Gallery, or getting elected to Parliament. It would be less difficult than painting a really good picture, or writing a masterly novel.

A few weeks ago, someone was clamouring for the new revelation or new religion. As Antichrist one's doctrine would be simple:

CREED OF ANTICHRIST.

Intellectual Honesty, the Abolition of Violence, the Fraternal Deference of Confucius, and Internationalism.

A man calling himself, to-day, Antichrist, and proclaiming this doctrine in four parts, might well be stoned to death by a Chauvinistic mob, or by a mob of Christian fanatics. This creed has all requirements of religion; the first clause has the difficulty, it is the via ardua et exigua; the second and fourth clauses have the requisite present impracticality; and the third contains all that is sound in the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi. Without wishing to assume any undue celebrity, without robing myself in the mantle of Antichrist, I do not hesitate to proclaim this religion (to the abolition of Spurgeons, Talmages, Benedettoes). I do not ask a yearly "screw" for proclaiming it. I do not offer bribes to believers.

Let us examine the tone of the "Xtn. Herald":

" ' He died trusting in his Saviour and mine. Mona, he left you in my care. Will you give me the right to love and cherish you?'

And Mona did not answer him in words. She just raised her face to his, and gave him her lips."

We have here the bacillus of contemporary religiose fiction. Marriage in this life and heaven after demise. Mahomet offered houris in the future. Protestantism will "have nothing of that sort" in its heaven. The Rev. Geo. Twentyman of the Christian Police Association will be there to prevent it. Mahomet has in the interim gobbled the more torrid districts of the planet.

The "Christian Herald" for the present goes on maintaining the mental attitudes of credulity. One picture shows a man waving his arms at a lion, the letterpress stating that he scared off the lion by yelling at it. Another picture shows "A converted African and His Bible"; another picture is labelled, "A Romance of the Battlefield" (a driver, R.F.A., picked up a photograph . . . married quite recently). Beneath this begins: "Mud and Marble, New Chapters from the life story of Joe Wentworth, the Summerton Humorist." The same page displays, "I cure Skin Disease," "War—Worry—Headache," "Instant toothache cure." We turn to the reverse of the sheet: "War—Consumption," "Dandruff," "A child doesn't laugh and play if constipated"; and still further proceeding: "Why wear a truss, Free book of amazing bargains, Let me build up your normal weight, cough elixir, three children with ringworm, girl of fourteen as church organist, hair-grower, pimples, freckles, blackheads, eruptions, £1 a week all the year round at home, fits, epilepsy, pomade, Heart and nerves, Box Free five days' supply, varicose, ladies who value their health." There is nothing about bitter apple.

XIIIA.

One should perhaps devote a whole chapter to the Rev. Joseph Hocking. "The Pomp of Yesterday, A story of the present World-Crisis" is, we are informed, "A Famous Author's Great Story of the War."

No words of mine; nothing, in fact, but the reader's own power of computing the infinite, of holding the inexpressible in his grasp, of presenting to the eye of his own imagination the unseeable and unimaginable, can possibly convey to the reader the exact shade of inevitability, the exact weight of overwhelming fatality with which it is fatal and inevitable that the Rev. Jo. Hocking should in this given number of the "Xtn. Herald" be writing of "The Present World Crisis." Nor is the conspiracy of the Three Parcæ, of Predestination (Hebrew), or Foreordainedness (Protestant), less apparent in this story in the "Xtn. Herald" being a "great story" from the pen of a "famous author." The realm where literary values are subject to disputation, the realm wherein the critic is diffident, wherein he balances the merit of one author against the merits of other authors is far, afar from us. It is as far, afar from us as the realm wherein subjects can by force avoid being topical. It is, let us say, briefly, fatal and natural and inevitable that the Rev. Hocking should be writing a "great" tale of the War.

The first col. of this final instalment begins with black letter as follows:—

" 'She'll be Mine Some Time '—When the War will End—A Tremendous Change—The Pomp of the Kaiser—Alone with Lorna—The Sealed Letter—' I Knew he was a Bad Man '—The Victim of a Plot—An Unexpected Interruption—A Long Walk and Its Result."

This little black-letter summary is possibly presented to us lest we should remain too long in doubt as to the contents of the ensuing five columns—which are broken and diminished by a lead block labelled, "THE QUEEN PAID A SURPRISE VISIT to the men of the Coldstream Guards at a Y.M.C.A. hut at Windsor while the men were engaged in writing letters, playing billiards, and reading. Not long since her Majesty had presented a gramophone to the hut, and the men were anxious that she should hear it. Two records were, therefore, given before the Queen left." Picture shows Queen, Chaplain and Officer standing at attention, man at gramophone, billiard table, etc. It is in no way connected with the story by the Rev. Hocking.

C303 Continued

The next interruption to his five cols. is :—

"..................Please cut across here.................. NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR A GREAT SPIRITUAL REVIVAL Believing that Jehovah........ etc. PLEASE ENROL ME AS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY PRAYER LEAGUE;" blank space for signatures and addresses, also instruction to paste the printed heading at top of sheet of foolscap, and "get all your friends to sign."

To cut out this piece of "Xtn. Herald" would irrevocably damage the text by Rev. Hocking on reverse of the sheet. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the summary of his contents is given at the head of his chapter, which summary is, we may say, not printed on the reverse of anything to be "cut out."

His five cols. are again diminished by picture of "Jack Barmouth leaped over a stile into the lane where we were walking." Rev. Hocking's text is also enlivened or reinforced by having certain phrases, fourteen, to be exact, printed in heavy italics, and set out to look like sub-headings. I do not know whether this idea originates with Rev. Hocking, or whether it is imposed upon him by his editors, desirous of having his pages uniform with the other pages of their paper. His text appears somewhat as follows :—

" 'To-morrow? I say, old chap, has—has she written to you?' I nodded. 'No, her letter contained nothing that would interest you,' I continued, as I noted the look of inquiry in his eyes. 'Why don't you go with me? It would seem quite natural, seeing you are off to the Front so soon,'

He Hesitated a Second

and then shook his head. 'No, old man,' he said; 'she'll send for me if she wants me.'

" 'That's not the way to win a girl. How can she send for you?' 'I seem to have lost confidence since my memory came back,' he replied. 'When I told her I loved her, although I didn't seem to have the ghost of a chance, I felt confident, serene. Now, I'm sure of nothing.' 'Nothing?' I queried. 'Do you mean to say that—that your faith in God is gone?' "

Let us glance at the other heavy headings. Sic :—

"You said we were not fit for victory.

What are your Views Now?

....

"Just so long as England remains in a state of religious indifference, just so long will the war continue."

"I Don't Understand," I said. "Empty-Headed Society Dudes." "Russia Becoming a Republic?" "Talking with Her Alone." "You Must Know the Truth." "Oh, I have been Mad." "You Must Trust Me," I replied. "You Love Each Other." "He Made Me Believe It." "You Followed Us," I interjected. She Looked at Me Shyly.

The final words of the story are: "I'm going to beard the lion in his den. I'm going to have a serious talk with Sir Thomas. Will you look after Lorna till I return?"

Rev. Hocking tells a marvellous lot in five columns. (46 inches of 3 inch.)

Art Notes.

By B. H. Dias.

AT HEAL'S.

The preponderant weakness, or, rather, the manifest sign of weakness, in the more rampant modern art movements is the rapidity with which they melt into stereotypes. The London Group has given, perhaps, twelve exhibitions, the schools to which its artists belong are none of them ancient, and yet anyone whose memory serves him, and who has been constant in attendance at picture shows, will agree that he has seen this exhibition before. He will feel that he has seen it at the Alpine Gallery and later repeatedly at the Goupil, and that it now appears deprived of several of its more startling and once prominent members.

The remaining members may have illuminated or deluminated each other, but the composite effect is unchanged. Let us in charity allow for the augmented cleanliness of the "atmosphere," due, perhaps, to the new spic-and-span gallery with the fortunate obscurity of its alcove. With this allowance and due pleasure therefore deducted, we find the familiar patchiness, blurriness, stickiness; or, in detail, we discover that No. 52 is a sticky blurr; No. 53 a blurr (greasy); 54, a blurr (muddy); 55, blurr pure and simple; 56, blurr (sticky); 57 is a sectionised blurr, a rather soggy, sectionised blurr leaning to the left and to Picasso; 58, a still muddier blurr; 59, a blurr with a glare on it; 60, patches; 62, a poster effort for Chu Chin Chow, inexcusable, but tempered by the kindly chiaroscuro of the alcove. And in this manner we might continue.

The old tendency to apply a convention of foliage which Gauguin found convenient for conveying cacti or other tropical foliage, is here, with less felicity, turned upon more northern orchards. Mr. Atkinson, as is his custom, obliges with the wonted homage to William Roberts; he has the inventiveness of the inlay workers of Naples and Capri, though the cunning workmanship of their knife-blades is perhaps more durable than the fruits of his brush. Miss Sands displays love of beautiful colour. No. 65 portrays dirty weather. No. 33 is romantic. Mr. Bevan has discovered that leaves either are, or, of a right, ought to be, little pasteboard "planes in relation," or whatever the new-fangled call them. His trees are Christmas-trees, entirely covered with box-lids. The spirit is that of the early Impressionists, the pictures not unpleasing (if one likes one's trees with this dressing). S. de Karlowska seems either to have led, or followed, or accompanied him into the paradise of this verdure. No. 43 is a blurr; No. 51 is a blurr, called "The Wash-out." No. 1 is a tin and oil composition; No. 6 approximates the texture of the pre-Victorian antimacassar, and represents, we presume, the London Group's longing to return toward the primitive. No. 21 is pale Bevan; No. 14 a bad imitation of Pryde, by an artist who exhibits three pictures imitative of as many different modes, which are, none of them, worth commending.

Messrs. Heal's cordial invitation to Visit the Furnished Flat offers temptations, and the layman may be justified in accepting it before he inspects Mr. Kauffer's melted ice-cream (42), or his painted ice-cream (47). The texture of these may be compared to that of the ceiling at the native "American Fountain," near Oxford Circus. There is some pretty blue paint to be found on canvas 17. 16 is simply bad.

Despite all this the show, on the whole, is not completely displeasing. The effect of cleanliness may not be wholly due to the newness of Messrs. Heal's Gallery. Some, at least, of the painters have made almost imperceptible, perhaps even imaginary, advances in technique. If there is no single picture as well painted as Chas. Shannon's portrait of Mr. Ricketts, shown in last Spring's "Academy," there is here and there in the general mass of the London Group a sign of improvement; of greater care in the use of the brush. 73 is a drawing of promise. Mr. Nash is amusing. His 75 is "modern," in the sense that it shows artificial flowers under a dome of glass, a steamboat of the 1875 pattern, and a young man (outside the window) wearing a bowler. 49 is one of several companion pieces to the public poster, "Is this worth fighting for?" 105 has been hung on its side by some hanger zealous for non-representation, and for a greater new-fangledness than is encouraged by the

C304

C303 Continued

C304 Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. At Heal's [and "Leicester Gallery" (on Jacob Epstein)]. *New Age*, XXII. 4 (22 Nov. 1917) 74–75. The first of Ezra Pound's critical articles for the *New Age* signed with this pseudonym. They continue at intervals until 8 Apr. 1920.

slightly timorous, hesitant revolutionism, which is the keynote of the Group. For the group is ceasing to be the art-student group, little by little. As the Chelsea Arts Club, with its air of fly-fishing, of "just back from the Derby," is gradually absorbed by the Academy, so the London Group drifts on insensibly toward the Arts Club, a little more sober than its once jaunty predecessors. Mr. Bevan, indeed, is almost ripe for Academy work. Impressionism is being received, and Mr. Bevan is at heart an Impressionist. He has trimmed up the edges of his leaves, but one must allow certain latitude.

Mr. McIntyre is amusing. The roguish lady in the mud-puddle (88) is much less entertaining. Mr. Kauffer's 78 is clean paint, at any rate. 31, a nude lady stepping over a dog, is, to my mind, without merit; 71 almost clean. One is inclined to wonder why this group, an essentially imitative body of men, have not chosen other models for their emulation. They manifest an unnatural desire for personality, or origination, yet they have none of them the inventiveness even to pitch upon a type of picture a little out of the common; they are all caught in the mode of the moment, or, rather, in the set of modes advocated during the last few years by French and German art critics. We have had books on Gauguin. El Greco's astigmatism has been exploited to the limit. The one characteristic common to all mild revolutionaries, and to nearly all revolutionaries is that they so seldom pitch upon a difficult mode. De Hooch, for example, or Mieris, for example, has never been made the point of departure for any artistic insurrection, yet their works are quite as different from the painting of contemporary academicians as is the work of El Greco. All the outcry about Matisse and "pure colour," has not produced any colour better than that of Perugino, who, in his turn, has produced no artistic-Sloboda.

LEICESTER GALLERY.

Mr. Epstein has left his quondam colleagues, and exhibits alone at the Leicester Gallery, seven pieces of sculpture: three portrait busts, left over from the larger Leicester Gallery exhibition; a wretched and rolling-pin travesty of his original and impressive mating pigeons; the ubiquitous bronze head of an ailing infant, which has been part of every Epstein exhibit for the last six or eight years; a portrait of Miss Keane, which does not much improve on her posters; and, lastly, a bronze idealisation of Mrs. Epstein worthy of any national museum; a masterpiece of no school and no period, not as portraiture, for the beauty is dependent in great measure on the narrowing and pointing of the face from cheek-bones downward, but a beautiful bronze demanding no dogma for its acceptance.

Mr. Epstein has left his abstractions, his Assyrian oddities, his South Sea grotesqueries; he has suggested the nomadic Arab type in this visage, or, perhaps, the Romany type in accord with his celebrated confrère of Chelsea. But this head is not simply an advertisement that Mr. Epstein can do pretty portraits; in fact, the accusation is made null by the accompanying head of the professionally pretty Miss Keane, which is, in his bronze, lacking in interest. The head of Mrs. Epstein has the beauty of antiquity, without, however, being Hellenic, without suggesting, as did one of the masks at Epstein's earlier show, that he was seeking Hellenic models. It will be a great comfort to Mr. Epstein's numerous admirers that he has shown himself capable of this mastery, unaccompanied by any peculiarity, or by any pronounced archaism, or exoticism, or by that misguided and excessive modernity which has never had any true place in his character.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

"Bugges with hundryd heades." Phaer's "Aeneid."

XIV.—PROGRESS, SOCIAL AND CHRISTIAN.

Ibsen has made at least one pertinent remark about the phantoms of one's own subjectivity. Choice sampies are spread before us; the "Family Herald" has trotted out the Papacy-Antichrist, along with its abracadabra from the sacred and prophetic book of Daniel, than which no modern psychological novelist is so muzzy-headed as not to write better. I do not in the least wish to diminish the historic horrors of the Papacy, its history of intellectual suppression, preceding and following its periods of intellectual enlightenment as under Nicholas V. or Leo X. Nor would I have anyone forget for half an hour that the inquisition was re-established in 1824; and that burning for heresy occurred so late as 1751. The degradation of French intellect at the hands and pens of the Claudelo-catholico present movement is but a re-irritation to brandish these facts with new vigour.

Let us remember, then, that there are co-inhabitants of this planet, still living, and even in command of sufficient education to write complete sentences, who still believe in Antichrist and the application of Hebrew almanacists to the current affairs of Christian internecine sectaries. I myself know one rather fine old relic who believes literally that the "Church of Rrrome" is the "Scarrlet Woman of RRevelation." I am not saying that the Church is one scrap better or worse than the fictitious lady in question, or that she is any safer or more trustworthy a companion for the "Allies"; in fact I am not trespassing on questions of the moment. I am simply stating that human beings can be found (and in no scant number) who still identify the creation of one Hocus pocus, with the continuing creatrix of a great deal more Hocus pocus, i.e., the "Church" and "The Scarlet Woman," and that this identification is deplorable in a literate country. Even granting that the Roman Church is so perpetually perilous as to need more than an intellectual barrier to keep it out, any barrier would be almost preferable to this barrier of blind stupid bigotry, and more efficient.

"Old Moore" has his bugaboo also. The following are headed "Predictions":

"The ubiquitous constable seems to be making careful inspection of the busy tinker. This small group means that extra special care will have to be exercised throughout the land to cope with and stamp out any signs of rebellious conduct on the part of the Socialists."

"We may expect some strange, not to say disturbing, news reaching us toward the end of the month from Petrograd."

"Death of noble duke . . . beloved of all classes."

"We shall enjoy during the most wonderful year 1918" (refer back to the "Christian Herald" on annos mirabiles) "a feeling of security and satisfaction which can only be built up by true religion and brotherly love. OLD MOORE can see with certainty permanent changes—changes for the betterment of us all. The so-called upper classes will remain and mix with their least fortunate fellows who are styled the poor people. The upper middle folk will become a thing of the past."

(Ah, ah, that's where the wind blows! Duchess marries a chimney-sweep, trading classes annihilated.)

In the same mad month as the last citation

"OLD MOORE can trace in secret meetings, which will be held in several cities at once, the black hand of the bloodthirsty Teuton."

(Brotherly love, sense of security, Guy Fawkes and Co. all on the old vaudeville!)

"Outbreak of influenza . . . John Chinaman is no fool."

C305

C304 Continued

C305 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XIV.—Progress, Social and Christian. *New Age*, XXII. 5 (29 Nov. 1917) 89–90. On the *British Weekly*.

Let us move on past May day:

"It is more than probable that towards the end of the month a raid will be made by the police upon the premises of what was thought by the public to be a social club, but which proved to be the meeting-place of many desperate and hot-blooded Socialists. Much literature will be impounded, and several arrests made, bail being refused."

(So our friends in Tothill Street should beware of the weeks following the ides of May in 1918.)

Old Moore also in his calendar calls to our attention the anniversaries of the births of Trollope, of the Princess Royal, of Alfred Austin, George Washington, Lord Haldane, Tho. Hood, of the death of Hugh Conway, of the birth of Sir A. Sullivan, of "Spenser Perceval assass., 1812. He says: "Trade will be good and cash plentiful" in December, all England shocked by terrible crime, alarming news from Ireland, "outbreaks and riotous conduct among a dangerous and reckless body of the Commonwealth," and, I think, the birth of an heir in some noble family, but I cannot stop to verify this citation.

On my own and unaided initiative I do not hesitate to predict the births of heirs in *at least three* families of title; and I venture to predict that at least two tiara'd mothers will have photos by Swaine reproduced in one of the leading Illustrated Weeklies, and I predict that several noted politicians will be discontented with the Government, and that several new appointments will be made, and that there will be religious protests against sanity in divorce laws, and that grey hairs will appear on the occiputs of more than one well-known politician, and that rain will fall in the London district during the month of April, and that the sun will rise more or less in the East.

The British Weekly.

I was, as the more slavishly attentive among my readers may recall, warned against the "British Weekly" by my butcher. I wish I had heeded the warning. The rag is twice the size of the "Sunday Herald." It contains more Joseph Hocking. And, moreover, my butcher was kind enough to tip me the wink in that all-embracing phrase: "*That's* Nicoll, that's Robertson Nicoll."

I know nothing personally of this Sir, Dr., or whatever he may be, Nicoll, save that he was once seen talking with Mr. Shorter in the hallway of the Royal Societies Club. I have heard no other rumour of his living and fleshly presence. Of his spiritual presence, I am told "The Bookman" is a constant and eloquent witness. In a more enlightened community such a statement might be considered as libellous. I do not, however, find his name in the "British Weekly," and have no better assurance for connecting him with it than the stalwart speech of my butcher, and a few lines in a reference book. I do, however, find a name præclarus and well accustomed—it is the name of Claudius Clear.

On coming to England I heard this name somewhere, and supposed the owner was some connection or other of Smiles. However, the "British Weekly" has still got him. And, what is more, I find him reviewing some sort of book or criticising some sort of Victorian Essayist, of doubtless irreproachable morals.

In the cols. next him, someone signing himself, "A Man of Kent," says that Conan Doyle's "His Last Bow" appears to him "one of the most agreeable and entertaining of all the inimitable Sherlock Holmes series." It is always nice to find these people criticising something one has read. The gentle peruser may turn back to No. V of this series for an analysis of the title story of this Conan Doyle volume. He will then get the full idiomatic savour of the words "agreeable," "entertaining," and "inimitable," as current in Sir R. Nicoll and his publications.

This is as brief a summary of contemporary journalistic criticism of contemporary books as I am able to offer. The "British Weekly" is "A Journal of Social and Christian Progress"; at least, so we are told on its cover. The subscribers are told where to subscribe; the advertisers, that "the 'British Weekly' has by far the largest circulation of any religious newspaper published in this country—Church or Nonconformist."

And I by my choice of subject have got myself into a position where I am morally and socially bound to read or read at the sheets of the issue before me, numbered 89 to 108, and measuring 13 by 19 inches.

The Rev. Principal Alex. Whyte, D.D., had a reverie on a raid night (alliterative). He wrote: "With the instruments of death hurtling over my head, I said to myself—let me now lay hold of the right handles, and thus work out my salvation, even in the moment of death; if that moment should come to me during this midnight." The fine old Anglo-Saxon alliterative measure seems coming back to its own, the exact position of the "handles" must remain metaphorical.

On the next page we learn that ten prizes of ten shillings each are offered for the best paper on "MY FAMILY BUDGET" sent in by a minister's wife or housekeeper.

Hocking is here, as we noted. "Synopsis: Captain John Penrose, D.S.O., is staying at the home of his friend Teddy Onslow, in Hertfordshire, when a telegram arrives from Athens to say: 'Athene mysteriously disappeared. No trace. Fear foul play, etc.' " etc., and as usual. It is quite clear wheretoward Xtn. and Soc. Progress is progging.

Three generals talk about God. The Sayings of the week are full of pep. sic: from the "Xtn. World." "If shortly after twenty years of age a human face has not acquired certain mental and spiritual qualities, its very beauty becomes a defect." "Church Times": "It has come to this, that nothing the clergy do, or leave undone, is right."

The "B.W." in the rest of its vast and gloomy extent seems Christianly to have progressed to about the same status as the other Sunday weeklies we have inspected. The Ladies' Column addresses "Dinah" in these words: "I cannot tell you the reason of your hair falling out, etc." "Inquirer" receives the following: "Since your letter has reached me, I have been making inquiries, but cannot learn of anyone suitable."

Their one distinguishing feature, apart from the illustration of "Ficolax" is the "WHAT TO DO, Problems of Conduct" column.

670. Young man on leave marries in haste (I condense their phraseology à la synopsis of Hocking), he returns to front, lady unsatisfactory, declines to work now she is married, overdraws his bank account: What shall he do? "A copy of 'In the Northern Mists,' by a Grand Fleet chaplain," will reward, comfort, and enlighten the well-constellated emitter of the successful solution.

Let me close with a citation from the International Lesson:

"When he heard the tidings, he had sat down and wept, and had mourned for several days."

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Il ne manquait que ça. "With Sorrow in his heart it was difficult for Nehemiah " to foresee the day when he should be copyrighted at so much per col. " to the north under Sanballat and the Ammonites to the east under Tobiah"

(All rights reserved)

" to Jerusalem and a grant of material for the work."

" And he also provided him with a military escort "

(All rights reserved).

Sermon on the Mount lately patented and issued with each pair of boots.

C305 Continued

ELIZABETHAN CLASSICISTS

By Ezra Pound

IV

MEDITATION after further reading, during which I found nothing of interest:

(1)

Beauty is a brief gasp between one cliché and another—in this case, between the "fourteeners" and the rhymed couplet of "pentamenter;"

(2)

"C. M." was a poet, likewise Golding, both facts already known to all "students of the period." Turbeyville, or Turbeuile, is not a discovery.

(3)

Horace would seem to confer no boons upon his translators. With the exception of Chapman, the early translators of Homer seem less happy than the translators of Ovid. Horace's "Satires" are, we believe, the basis of much eighteenth-century satire. The earliest English version of any Horace that I have found is headed:

A Medicinable Morall, that is 2 Bookes of Horace his Satyres, Englyshed according to the prescription of saint Hierome (Episto. ad Ruffin.) Quod malum est, muta, Quod bonum est, prode. The Wailyngs of the Prophet Hieremiah done into Englyshe verse also Epigrammes, by T. Drant. Perused and allowed according to the Queen Madiesties Iniunctions, London, 1566.

The mutation of the satires is not inviting. The *Ars Poetica* opens as follows:

A Paynter if he shoulde adioyne
  unto a womans heade
A long maires necke and overspread
  the corpse in everye steade
With sondry feathers of straunge huie,
  the whole proportioned so
Without all good congruitye
  the nether parts do goe
Into a fishe, on hye a freshe
  Welfavord womans face:
My frinds let in to see this sighte
  could you not laugh a pace?

In 1625 the Miltonic cliché is already formed. It is perhaps not particularly Milton's. Sir T. Hawkins is greeted by John Beaumont, but I do not find his translations very readable. I turn back, indeed, gratefully to Corinna (*Amores*, i, 5) in a long loose gown.

Her white neck hid with trellis hanging downe
Resembling fair Semiramis going to bed
Or Layls of a thousand lovers spread.

"C. M." gets quality even in the hackneyed topic:

What age of Varroes name shall not be told,
And Iasons Argos, and the fleece of golde,
Lofty Lucresius shall live that houre
That Nature shall dissolve this earthly bowre.
Eneas warre, and Titerius shall be read
While Rome of all the conquering world is head.
Till Cupid's bow and fierie shafts be broken,
Thy verses, sweete Tibullus, shal be spoken.

As late as 1633 Saltonstall keeps some trace of good cadence, though it is manifestly departing.

Now Zephyrus warmes the ayre, the yeare is runne
And the long seeming winter now is done,
The Ramme which bore faire Hellen once away,
Hath made the darke night equall to the day.
Now boyes and girles do sweet Violets get,
Which in the country often grow unset,
Faire coloured flowers in the Meddowes spring,
And now the Birds their untaught notes do sing.

Tristia, xii.

Turberuile in the 1567 edition of the Heroides does not confine himself to one measure, nor to rhyme. I think I have seen a misstatement about the date of the earliest blank verse in English. These eight lines should prevent its being set too late. The movement is, to me at least, of interest, apart from any question of scholastic preciosity.

Æmonian Laodamia sendeth health,
And greeting to Protesilaus hir spouse:
And wisheth it, where he soiourns, to stay.
Report hath spread in Aulide that you lie
In rode, by meane of fierce and froward gale.
Ah when thou me forsookste, where was the winde,
Then broiling seas thine Cares should have withstood,
That was a fitting time for wrathful waves.

His *Phaedra* has the "fourteener" measure.

My pleasure is to haughtie hills
  and bushie brakes to hie:
To pitch my hay, or with my Houndes
  to rayse a lustie crie.

But there is an infinite monotony of "fourteeners," and then there is an infinite plethora of rhymed ten-syllable couplets. And they are all "exactly alike." Whether they translate Horace or Homer they are all exactly alike. Beauty is a gasp between clichés.

For every "great age" a few poets have written a few beautiful lines, or found a few exquisite melodies, and ten thousand people have copied them, until each strand of music is planed down to a dullness. The Sapphic stanza appears an exception, and yet . . . Greece and Alexandria may have been embedded knee-deep in bad Sapphics, and it is easy to turn it to ridicule, comical, thumping.

A LETTER FROM REMY DE GOURMONT

Ezra Pound

AT A TIME when most of our now vocal and prominent American bellifists were still determined that the United States should take no part in saving civilization, I desired to found a magazine which should establish some sort of communication between New York, London and Paris .To that end I asked the assistance of Mr. Yeats, who is without question the greatest living poet of these islands; of Ford Madox Hueffer, founder of *The English Review* (and in no way connected with the present management of that periodical); and of Remy de Gourmont. None of these men refused. Other complications delayed the project. The present arrangement with *The Little Review* is the ultimate result of the scheme. If DeGourmont had lived he would now be among our contributors. His last letter concerning the project is therefore of personal interest to our well-wishers. It is of far wider interst, in so much as there are few amiable and dispassionate critics of America, and that DeGourmont's few words on the subject are not without some enlightenment.

Cher Monsieur:

J'ai lu avec plaisir votre longue lettre, qui m'expose si clairement la nécessité d'une revue unissant les efforts des Americains, des Anglais, et des Français. Pour cela, je vous servirai autant qu'il sera en mon pouvoir. Je ne crois pas que je puisse beaucoup. J'ai une mauvaise santé et je suis extrêmement fatigué; je ne pourrai vous donner que des choses très courtes, des indications d'idées plutôt que des pages accomplies, mais je ferai de mon mieux. J'espère que vous réussirez à mettre debout cette petite affaire littéraire et que vous trouverez parmi nous des concours utiles. Evidement si nous pourions amener les Américains à mieux sentir la vraie littérature française et surtout à ne pas la confondre avec tant d'oeuvres courantes si médiocres, cela serait un résultat très heureux. Sont-ils capables d'assez de liberté d'esprit pour lire, sans être choqués, mes livres par example, elle est bien, douteux et il faudrait pour cela un long travail de préparation. Mais pourquoi ne pas l'entreprendre? En tous les pays, il y a un noyau de bons esprits, d'esprits libres, il faut leur donner quelque chose qui les change de la fadeur des magazines, quelque chose qui leur donne confiance en eux-mêmes et leur soit un point d'appui. Comme vous le dites, il faudra pour commencer les amener à respecter l'individualisme française, le sens de la liberté que quelques uns d'entre nous possedent à un si haut point. Ils comprennent cela en thèologie. Pourquoi ne le comprendraient-ils pas en art, en poésie, en littérature, en philosophie. Il faut leur faire voir—s'ils ne le voient pas déjà—que l'individualisme français peut, quand il le faut, se plier aux plus dures disciplines.

Conquérir l'Américain n'est pas sans doute votre seul but. Le but du *Mercure* a été de permettre à ceux qui en valent la peine d'écrire franchement ce qu'il pense,—seul plaisir d'un écrivain. Cela doit aussi être le vôtre.

Votre bien dévoué

Remy de Gourmont.

C307 A Letter from Remy de Gourmont. *Little Review*, IV. 8 (Dec. 1917) [5]–8.
Reprinted, in part, in "Remy de Gourmont, a Distinction."

"The aim of the *Mercure* has been to permit any man, who is worth it, to write down his thought frankly,—this is a writer's sole pleasure. And this aim should be yours."

"Are they capable of enough mental liberty to read my books, for example, without being horrified. I think this very doubtful, and it will need long preparation. But why not try it. There are in all countries knots of intelligent people, open-minded; one must give something to relieve them from the staleness of magazines, somthing which will give them confidence in themselves and serve as a rallying point. As you say, one must begin by getting them to respect French individualism; the sense of liberty which some of us have in so great degree. They understand this in theology, why should they not understand it in art, poetry, literature."

If only my great correspondent could have seen letters I received about this time from English alleged intellectuals !!!!!!! The incredible stupidity, the ingrained refusal of thought !!!!! Of which more anon, if I can bring myself to it. Or let it pass? Let us say simply that DeGourmont's words form an interesting contrast with the methods employed by the British literary episcopacy to keep one from writing what one thinks, or to punish one (financially) for having done so.

Perhaps as a warning to young writers who can not afford the loss, one would be justified in printing the following:

50a. Albermarle Street, London W.

22 October, '14

Dear Mr. Pound:

Many thanks for your letter of the other day. I am afraid I must say frankly that I do not think I can open the columns of the *Q. R.* — at any rate at present—to anyone associated publicly with such a publication as *Blast*. It stamps a man too disadvantageously.

Yours truly,
G. W. Prothero.

Of course, having accepted your paper on the *Noh,* I could not refrain from publishing it . But other things would be in a different category.

I need scarcely say that *The Quarterly Review* is one of the most profitable periodicals in England, and one of one's best "connections", or sources of income. It has, of course, a tradition.

> "It is not that Mr. Keats (if that be his real name, for we almost doubt that any man in his senses would put his real name to such a rhapsody)"—

wrote their Gifford of Keats' Endymion. My only comment is that the *Quarterly* has done it again. Their Mr. A. Waugh is a lineal descendent of Gifford, by way of mentality. A century has not taught them manners. In the eighteen fourties they were still defending the review of Keats. And more recently Waugh has lifted

C307 Continued

up his senile slobber against Mr. Eliot. It is indeed time that the functions of both English and American literature were taken over by younger and better men.

As for their laying the birch on my pocket. I compute that my support of Lewis and Brzeska has cost me at the lowest estimate about £20 per year, from one source alone since that regrettable occurence, since I dared to discern a great sculptor and a great painter in the midst of England's artistic desolation. ("European and Asiatic papers please copy".)

Young men, desirous of finding before all things smooth berths and elderly consolations, are cautioned to behave more circumspectly.

It is a far cry from these schoolmaster tactics to Remy de Gourmont, and of course no Englishman or American would write as DeGourmont has written. Nor does the generation that preceded us care much whether we understand French individualism, or the difference between the good and bad in French literature. Nor is it conceivable that any of them would write to a foreigner: "indications of ideas, rather than work accomplished, but I will send you my best."

To the phrase "Ils comprennent cela en théologie" I may take, later, exception. My present comment was intended solely to show De Gourmont's attitude toward our endeavour to publish an enlightened periodical in English. Concerning "concours utiles" from Paris, I hope to make definite and interesting announcements before much more time has elapsed.

That Boston Paper Again

London Office:

One of the younger Irish essayists has just been in with yet another prize tale of *The Atlantic Monthly.* It seems that one of the Garnett family had delivered himself of a more than usually typical article in that pipe organ of Massachusetts kultur; our Irish contemporary wrote to them outlining a reply and rebuttal of Garnett. *The Atlantic*, ever priceless, *The Atlantic* replied to him that they thought his idea a good one, *and would entrust it to one of their regular contributors*,

C308

C307 Continued

C308 That Boston Paper Again. *Little Review*, IV. 8 (Dec. 1917) 22.
An unsigned note from the "London Office" concerning the *Atlantic Monthly*.

THE READER CRITIC

Longfellow's "Birthplace" is ~~in the act of~~ being preserved to the nation. The White House, the two living ex-whitehouses, the State of Maine (prohibition), the Senate (not dry by any long extended tradition), various governors, *not* including those of North and South Carolina, have spotted up their selected dollars, or perhaps being vice-presidents they have not been asked to spot up, for the reservation and preservation of the "rare old colonial mansion" inhabited by Longfellow before the birth of his whiskers. The house wherein this eminently moral and eminently proper and eminently "suitable for the school-child" luminary mewled and peuked, is to be taken on as national shrine, by the "International Longfellow Society", and the mortgage on it removed.

It is not proposed that the house should be made an official residence for some living Longfellow, some worthy, elderly, more or less broken-down emeritus; for let us say, Edwin Markham, who would, of course, ornament any shrine with a venerable and befitting appearance.

It is in fact an eloquent tribute to the popular lust after some place where they can leave orange peel, and feel that they have "shown reverence", without troubling their cerebra with such detail as standards of literature.

Longfellow was the ideal poet for a prohibitionist state. It is however interesting to note how the diverse pieties have gathered about his remains.

Cardinal O'Connel writes: "To all who love beautiful sentiments admirably expressed, the works of Longfellow are dear; but they are especially dear to the hearts of Catholics. At a time when the Church was little understood and less appreciated, Longfellow, with true religious insight, placed before the reading public the fervor of the Church's spirit and the lofty idealism of its mission. His beautiful poems help to make our faith better understood and appreciated." ("Fervor" is," of course," le mot juste).

The United Society of Xtn. Endeavour writes: "I spent seven very happy years in Portland........ The site of this old home, and memories which it will arouse, will be an inspiration to many young people in all the future years, to live a worthy poem if they cannot write one." Faithfully yours, *Francis E. Clark.*

Rabbi Enlow writes: "My admiration for the work of the poet makes my appreciation more keen. Longfellow, like Browning, was one of the poets who were alive to the grandeur and heroism of Jewish history, as is witnessed by several of his best-known poems. This has added to his popularity with Jewish readers."

(News Item: A point of similarity between Browning and Longfellow has at last been ~~descried~~ discerned on the horizon.—E. P.)

C309

C309 The Reader Critic. *Little Review*, IV. 8 (Dec. 1917) 55–56.
On Henry W. Longfellow. With a two-line "News Item," signed: E. P., p. 56.

Advice to a Young Poet

The following letter may interest many aspiring poets:

"The opening sentence of your note shows a lamentable unfamiliarity with the work of Homer, Villon and Catullus . . . . not to mention such lesser lights as Dante, Gautier, Cavalcanti, Li Po, Omar, Corbiere, or even Shakespeare (to cite a familiar example). You are evidently ignorant as Ham of both prose and poetry. You appear to have read next to nothing. Stendhal, Fielding, Flaubert, Brantome,—what have you read or studied anyhow?

How do you expect to make yourself interesting to men who have hammered their minds hard against this sort of thing?

And as for what is called "knowledge of the human heart"? It needs intellect as well as intuition.

If you knew more of what had been done, you wouldn't expect to make people fall before you in adoration of what you take to be "new and colourful combinations", but which people of wider reading find rather worn and unexciting.

You began with a certain gift, a sort of emotionée decorativeness, vide small boy by brick wall, impressions of scenes, etc. That's all very well, and very nice, but what the hell do you know or feel that we haven't known and felt already? On what basis do you propose to interest us?

There's plenty of this decoration in Spenser and Tasso, etc., etc., in French of the last half century, 1850—1900, etc. AND one is fed up with it.

If you could persuade yourself to read something, if you could persuade yourself really to find out a little about the art you dab at . . . . you might at the end of five years send me something interesting.

The fact that you like pretty things does not distinguish you from 500,000 other people, young impressionist painters still doing not-quite-Monet, etc., etc.

Lewis, Joyce, Eliot all give me something I shouldn't have noticed for myself.

You won't better your art by refusing to recognize that at twenty-four you haven't knocked the world flat with admiration of your talents. You simply haven't begun the process by which the young person of temperament hammers itself into an artist (or into nothing, depending on the capacity for being self-hammered inherent in the personal substance).

You might begin on Aristotle's *Poetics,* Longinus "on the Sublime, Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquio.* Scattered remarks of Coleridge and De Quincey, and the early elizabethan critics would do you no harm. You also need to educate yourself, as said above, in both prose and poetry.

Because the native American has nearly always been too lazy to take these preliminary steps, we have had next to no native writing worth anything.

Mastering an art does not consist in trying to bluff people. Work shows; there is no substitute for it; holding one theory or another doesn't in the least get a man over the difficulty, etc., etc

Poetry has run off into Gongorism, concetti, etc,. at various times, odd words, strained metaphors and comparisons, etc., etc. We know perfectly well all about that. At twenty I emitted the same kind of asinine generalities regarding Christianity and its beauties that you now let off about poetry."

C310 Advice to a Young Poet. *Little Review,* IV. 8 (Dec. 1917) 58–59.
From a letter to Maxwell Bodenheim; unsigned. Under the heading: "The Reader Critic."

Music.

By William Atheling.

LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO.

No feeling is more typical of the conscientious Englishman, and few feelings are more annoying than the feeling that if one does not take a hand in things actively, the constituted authorities will make a mess of them. This feeling and its inevitability have perpetually ruined our artists and musicians, and drawn them away from their work, for they, too, are English, and subject to personal human infirmity.

I write this note in annoyance, on returning to London and finding the opera officially over, that is to say, I write on November 20 with the announcement staring me in the face that the opera will end on the Saturday of this week. All things considered, this is a rather serious indictment of the London public and of the London musical critics. It means either that the critics are stupid and have not urged the audience, or else that they have ruined their credit with the public by a long period of weak criticism, and are no longer believed.

It is not intelligent to blame the war for the lack of public support. The aristocracy turn out to patronise basket-work and peasant-industry, dilettante pottery, and that sort of thing, during the war, and music is no less important, and the number of people employed in the opera have as much claim to be supported, to be allowed to support themselves, as have the weavers of embroidery. The less commendable theatres on Shaftesbury Avenue can go on giving the same third-rate plays month after month, year after year, and every night in the week. I have never fancied myself as a critic, and have preferred to sit quiet in my seat, but if the existing musical critics can do no better for both the opera and the public, they will have to endure my presence amongst them.

In any other country in Europe the intelligentsia would have gathered around and supported the Beecham production of "Figaro." Even those among them who had no musical sense would have been drawn by the free spirit of the piece, in a time when the liberties of the Press are in danger, and when the traditional reticences of Victorian speech are in danger of being revived, and when the eighteenth century virtues have been pushed into a corner. The wit of Beaumarchais is more fresh than the jokes of the music-hall, and is to-day quite as full of significance for any one who will hear it. The time is as appropriate for a restoration of "Figaro," not only to the pride of its original libretto, but for incorporating in the libretto more of the original Beaumarchais. "It is not necessary, my Lord, but it is customary." Beaumarchais' play was performed in Spanish costume, and the English version has now been rendered in French costume of the late eighteenth century, in which the singers look rather better than in any other costumes they have worn. For all sorts of costume do not become opera singers.

We owe a debt to the Beecham management that the freedom of English speech, and allusions to the droit du seigneur, are restored. With the realities of war about us it is high time that the Victorian hypocrisy should depart.

These things are not the essential matter; but only general reasons why the "Mariage de Figaro" should have drawn to it a section of the public not specifically interested in music. But to a musician, to one who has for long watched the opera with a sort of despairing hope, the Beecham production of "Figaro" is historic. For years the idea of opera in English has been derided. English musicians who have attended any concerts save their own will remember the Beecham beginnings; they will remember the old days at Queen's Hall with Henry Wood conducting with a sort of Teutonic sloppiness; they will remember why ten years ago we preferred to listen to continental conductors; they will remember the new note of exactitude when Thomas Beecham first appeared with the baton, his energy, his most talented feeling for rhythm, and his precision which seemed at that time foreign. In one man at least the English heritage from Purcell was not extinct. Nevertheless, in 1909, the white-headed and grey-headed English writers on music still sneered at "Master Tommy." During the succeeding years he trained an orchestra. A few years ago we began to have the seasons at the little Aldwych Theatre. Robert Radford had a voice, and Mr. Mullings the power of acting. That was all that felicitous accident seemed to have given by way of assistance to the leader and creator of the company. Mullings, despite his unwieldy appearance, was impressive in "Tristan," and his very hugeness and the shortness of his arms and his stillness helped in the effect. One felt the man, the fictitious man of the play, the victim of fate, the immobile mass of humanity, beaten by blow after blow, unable to shield himself. This also again in "Othello," again the victim; but this time an hysterical victim, adding, not only at the Aldwych, but even more on the large stage of Drury Lane, magnificent motion to his other theatrical attributes, as, for example, the way he used all of the stage, rushing full across it in an access of frenzy.

Mullings' acting was memorable, but it by no means made the opera wholly satisfactory. Verdi had indeed dramatic sense, and the drama held one's attention, and even distracted one from the music. The English libretto lost the magnificent line of the Italian, the complete tragedy of the fall of voice in:—

> E come sei pallida
> E tacita
> E mor-ta.

Even Mullings was unable to cover the defect of the English at this particular spot. In the "Tristan," whatever one had felt in the first acts was a little worn away in the last act; the Jæger of Tristan's dressing-gown distressed the eye; and then the opera is not built right. However, I cannot at present go into the whole problem of the virtues and defects of Wagner as a musician.

I am thoroughly convinced that the better musician a man is, the more fully convinced he is that the opera belongs to the Mozart period. In "Don Giovanni" and "Figaro" we have the stage and the music sharing the art in the right proportions. I would have all opera done in the costume of this period and in the form of this period. Even in the "Seraglio" and the "Magic Flute," which are not, to my mind, anywhere nearly so fine as "Don Giovanni" and "Figaro," the musical form is right. Whatever one has felt about the individual passages, the gradual sweep up to the finale of each act gives a major form to the opera, and this can but be effective in a way not shared by opera in which the major form is the form of drama, not that of music. The proof of this is that one can sit through these Mozart, or musically formed, operas time after time, whereas in a dramatically formed opera, as in the Wagnerian, which has an emotional rather than musical structure, the effect of the piece diminishes the more often one hears it.

The historical thing is that Sir Thomas Beecham has in a remarkably short space of time accomplished the impossible. He, in English (though that is in some ways a minor matter), has put on an opera that is æsthetically satisfactory. He has, with little or no exceptional assisting talent at his disposal, without either star singers or performers, so welded together his cast and his orchestra, so imposed his own sense of the fitness of things on all the component parts of his huge machine, that the "Marriage of Figaro" has been a work of art, not merely an evening's entertainment; and those who have seen it will remember it as they remember other works of art. The scenery was not remarkable, but it was adequate; it did not thrust itself between the audience and the piece, either as an annoyance or a distraction. It was reasonably plain, as scenery should be, for costumes should be elaborate and interesting, thus to concentrate the eye on the actor, the moving figure of the action. Mr. Nigel Playfair is to be congratulated on the whole arrangement of the stage, and the singers on their acting, in which nothing grated on the audience. (Of what opera for years can one say this?) If I criticise the one performance of last week in lieu of a series, I only refrain from calling it a perfect performance because no one will believe such absolute words. The flaws were too slight to mention; Licette grew tired toward the third act; the programme calls attention to the aristocratic manner of the count, and this was not on the stage sufficiently contrasted with the manners of Figaro; but neither of these flaws was perceptible until one had said to oneself, "this is a perfect performance," and then tried to find a possible flaw. Has anyone considered the difficulty, well-nigh the impossibility, of

C311 Music. By William Atheling. Le mariage de Figaro. *New Age*, XXII. 6 (6 Dec. 1917) 113–15.
The first of Ezra Pound's critical articles for the *New Age* signed with this pseudonym. They continue at intervals until 6 Jan. 1921.

controlling such a complicated machine as a stage and an orchestra all together? The mastery of these difficulties is to Sir Thomas Beecham's credit. We all know he can lead an orchestra, that he alone in these years has broken us of the habit of thinking we must have foreign conductors. Who else, in the "Figaro," would have given the pianissimo with such delicacy, with such exact articulation, would have preserved in the huge Opera House the fine charm, as of chamber music? Who else so plays the whole orchestra, reaching the instruments, all of them, through the performers?

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

XV.—A NICE PAPER.

THESE dreary and smeary penny weeklies seem innumerable; they stretch about the inquirer as the dismal grey-yellow brick of the dingy houses one sees in S.E. London coming in on the Dover train. The statistician will explain to you that the multitude of these papers is not infinite; but for the purposes of psychology they are infinite, and the mentality they feed is unknowable. It is translatable in colour effects, like the quasi-volcanic appearance of Islington, *morne*, desolate; the grey soot-covered mud appears to have pushed itself up into rectangularish hummocks of houses; the grey soot-covered hummocks seem to have spawned into grey sootish animalculæ, and for this grey sootish compost, grey sootish periodicals are provided, and hope is deferred till post-mortem, and the landed classes plead that religion be left as a comfort, and that contentment is advisable.

Heaven has been moved off Olympus, and as astronomy pushes it further and yet further from us, it is natural that new and more tangibly formed, sensuous heavens should arise in place of Milton's loathsome conception for the perpetual boredom of the blest. The non-conformist has so denuded his paradise, he has so stripped the deity of all charm, that some substitute has to be provided for the pagan, catholic, and Mohammedan temperaments. The early heavens of mankind are only their novels of luxury, the "Forget-Me-Nots" of their day.

For "Forget-Me-Not" I have little but praise. Any intelligent person would probably prefer to move among well-natured, well-mannered people, in surroundings of comfort, than to envisage eternity set down opposite Dr. Talmage or Moses. Even the perpetuity of the antediluvian heaven has ceased to be an attraction; and no area spatial, temporal, conditional, or infinite even, can seem so commodious as to make one wish to be boxed up in it for ever with nothing but Christians. The harp, the crown, and the other properties of the Hen. Irving, period are wholly inadequate. We can do better at the Ritz.

The gleam of sense in the populace has shown itself in the semi-conscious perception that it could do itself better at the Ritz; that nice-natured people with relatively considerate manners are a far more paradisaical periphery than harsh-voiced, wheezing fanatics, brandishing remnants of disguised fire-worship, reminiscent of people who sat over smoking oil-wells and thought the earth was on fire for their special post-mortem envelopment. Olympus and the sylvan imagination befit a more temperate climate; it is natural that a Northern people should imagine a heaven, if not indoors, at least with houses one can get into during the inclement weather. The novel of luxury is the natural celestial creation or fairy tale, or perhaps we should say "terrestrial paradise" of the English, as was Olympus a natural and terrestrial paradise of the Greeks, just a wee bit out of reach in both cases. A people must have been to their heaven, or seen it, or know someone who knows someone who . . . The saints once supplied this gradation and the well-dressed intellectual wittol is still rumbling on in the Sunday papers, debating this after-death business. The populace, or its sincerer and more practical sections, desire gods that appear, at least now and then, and with an exciting infrequency—even if only in "The Sketch."

Old Moore is going to get rid of the intervening stratum, and have only people and gods. The young men from Oxford are sceptical concerning the reality of the divinities. Current Church of England theology, ever trimming, has, as I wrote before, gone in for the democratisation of heaven.

Note that in the theoretic heaven and in the theoretic earth there is apparently no choice between some sort of Kaiser, and some sort of glorified House of Commons. And despite this, people go on making luxurious heavens, from Olympus to the Carlton as imagined, and peopling them with Gods, and with saints and protectors who have a kindliness for all sorts of peccadilloes, as, for example, a god or a saint to help thieves. It is pleasant among smeary grease-printed papers to take up "Forget-Me-Not," the pleasure is sensuous, not intellectual, it reaches one through one's finger-tips. The paper is printed for people who prefer keeping their hands clean. It is religious and moral, i.e., it is religious in providing a paradise, sic: a country house, a picture gallery, etc.; it is moral in that virtue is rewarded. It has even some literary merit, I mean solely that part of the complete novelette which forms the number before me must be well told, even though it is not well written.

I feel that I am cruel and captious to point out in this tale certain wens. I feel about these dainty little romances very much as the landed class feel about religion: "Why destroy it, why attack it, what are you going to put in its place? It keeps so many people contented." This feeling is, of course, in the present case, sheer sentimentality. The reader would be neither more nor less happy if the flaws were removed.

Chap. I throws in gratis a *whole* ex post facto detective story. Cf. the construction of the "Iliad."

"The girl was tall and most divinely fair."

"Broken in health, but with his name and honour stainless, Mr. Orpengray had been released."

His son, however, refuses to appear under his own name, lest the widow of the ruiner of his father, should feel under an obligation to him. He is also wholly indifferent to £20,000.

Chap. II. "Tall and most divinely fair," thought Mr. N. O. "The girl was dressed in black, and carried a bunch of scarlet roses. She moved quickly but gracefully, pausing to pin one of the roses in her blouse. She glanced over her shoulder, and laughed again. . . ."

"Her hand was on the electric-bell. The summons brought the butler." (cf. Aladdin and his lamp. Butler very withered and wrinkled.)

"Miss Garton spoke to him with an air of quiet authority in the most musical of quiet voices."

(Note this when addressing the butler.)

"She glanced at Mr. Neil Grant. She had eyes, pure and clear."

(Note this when glancing at Don Fulano.)

"Neil bowed and followed the butler. He knew, having consulted the will at Somerset House, that Mrs. Ricksdale was a woman of wealth."

(Note this when bowing and following.)

He has just reached his room, noted the pleasant quarters, wondered how he stood, when:

"A subdued knock called him to the door. It was Miss Garton."

Next, villainess is brought on, looking less than her age. Hero decides that he does not like her; nor her slick son. Heroine tells him (heroine being naturally person of delicate feelings, employed as old lady's companion) that he need not dress for dinner.

"Evidently they did dress, etc. . . . Luckily Neil had brought a suit of dress clothes, though he had come to despise such garments."

C311 Continued

C312 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XV.—A Nice Paper. *New Age*, XXII. 7 (13 Dec. 1917) 129–30.
On *Forget-Me-Not*.

Note that it is not "*his*" evening clothes. It is "a" suit. I don't know that this matters. One must consider very carefully the ratio between his real position, his despisal of evening clothes, and the number of evening suits at his disposal; also the number usually "brought" by curators of private collections.

Possession of supposedly several of these adornments has not, however, trained him to get into one with great ease. The butler assists him with his tie.

Hero "seldom drank intoxicants."

Note that villainess has violet eyes, and heroine (old lady's companion) enters "still in black, with a string of small pearls clasped round her throat and a solitary rose pinned to her breast."

("Great elegance," as Li Po has remarked. The exact size of the pearls is left to the reader's imagination. Value at moderate estimate £800? They were possibly a treasured heirloom from some noble ancestor. Passons!)

Hero says: "One seldom puts on too much weight in the army. . . . I can speak from experience."

Eventually, the villainess sews her diamond bracelet into the kimono of the heroine (or has it sewn in by her (villainess's) maid), kimono is locked in drawer of heroine's wardrobe—key hidden under carpet, where police find it. Note: This is a bit daring, as it is part of notorious swag villainess has lifted elsewhere. This point does not seem to have presented itself to the author.

Religious feeling shown in depiction of police (cf. guardians of the law, divine messengers, angels with flaming swords in earlier and more cumbrous religions).

Police never for a moment suspect innocent heroine. Hero thinks that villainess shook hands with him graciously *just* before bracelet disappeared in order to make him a witness to the fact that she had the bracelet up to the last possible moment before its disappearance, but he omits to mention this detail to the police. Author does not note this omission by a word of his pen, even though police bring recovered bracelet into hero's room to be photographed. The real celestiality of the police is, however, displayed to our inner gaze when the chief cop, some days after the death of the victim and the departure of the villainess, is seen riding up the "carriage-drive in the teeth of the rain." He had sent the photos to London, and says, "Very likely you remember the big jewel robbery at the Drexington Hotel just before the war, perhaps."

The chief cop was certain he had read a description of that there particular bracelet. And the London cops were now looking for Mrs. Fullbridge-Hart.

The other characters then remember that there had been a robbery in the hotel where Mrs. F.-H. had stayed with the victim. Let us pass over the superluminous intellect of the local cop. The reader may have met local cops before, both in the flesh and in fiction. "Mr. Brigsand" is a man of big possibilities. I dare say the subscribers to "F.M.N." will hear of him in the future.

"And you'll come and tell me? I shall be in the rose-garden."

(Beside the Shalimar, shaded lights, and low music.)

"He was desperately anxious."

"Dear boy of mine, I'll try hard never to disillusion you."

"Amber depths," "first kiss," "nestled"; the tender words fly and flutter about one in a very aurora, beating upon the heart of the peruser.

("Beside the Shalimar, shaded light, and low music.")

C313

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

XVI.—APHRODITE POPULARIS.

WE have, in this series, observed the affairs of the spirit; we have noted the tendency to make other-worlds, paradisaical retreats from reality: the unattainable, or the with difficulty attainable Ritz glitters as a new Jerusalem before the truly spiritual mind which will have no earthly content in the Regent's Palace. For the genii in contemporary faith we find Sherlock Holmes or (in "Forget-Me-Not") the policeman, half genii, half angel-guardian.

The captious praiser of acted time may complain that the religions of antiquity gave us a mythology with emotional values: as in the tale of Pyramus or that of the daughters of Mineus; while the contemporary mythology is lacking in these notable values. Compare the emotional value of Cardinus with the emotional value of Sherlock, who has as much moral force as you please.

In contrast to paradises and mythology, which are the decorations of a religion, we find the prophets (and the interpreters of Sibylline books).

Mr. Zadkiel's "Almanac and Ephemeris for 1918" (a much more serious work than Moore's "Vox Stellarum Almanac") bears on p. 67, these lines of footnote "See page 77 of Z.A. for 1917. Unfortunately, the last figure of 1918 was printed as 7. As one degree measures to one year of life the arc 53° 2′, etc."

Mr. Zadkiel in his 1917 number was forecasting that "British and Allied forces will achieve a great victory and dictate terms of peace before Midsummer Day (1917)."

The readers will agree that this misprint of a 7 for an 8 as the last digit of the date was most regrettable. He will also sympathise with Mr. Zadkiel whose almanac appears only once a year. Mr. Bottomley with his more felicitous frequency of appearance is able to attend to such little errors with much greater promptitude.

The mathematic detail, the stellar paraphernalia and terminology of Mr. Zadkiel compare as favourably with the mumbo-jumbo symbology of Moore as does the hard commonsense tone of Mr. Bottomley with the utter silliness of various other weeklies.

Mr. Bottomley's hard commonsense fairly bulges out of his paper. In the one number I have read minutely, I found only one slight slip, so tiny that it would be mere pedantry to take note of it. He is as self-consistent as the theology of Aquinas, and about as much use.

It is perhaps beyond the scope of this series to assail all the Church Fathers at once; dogmatic theologico-philosophy is so imposing an edifice. Still the printer may amuse himself by copying the following figures:

$$0 \times \frac{996}{423} \div \frac{\sqrt{777}}{463} \times \frac{441}{663} \div \frac{1077}{9} =$$

If I pick up that line of figures somewhere in the middle I can get a substantial answer. I can obey all the laws of mathematics. I might even add three to the end or beginning of that little strip of figures. My results, if I take all of my first line of figures, will be either zero or the three I have added.

But supposing I do this in the presence of a yokel I can both bewilder him by taking up the final terms of my equation, and by the accuracy wherewith I divide, let us say, $\frac{441}{663}$ by $\frac{1077}{9}$; I can assure him that this accuracy is science and dialectic, and that he is foolish to combat it with ignorance, and that he had better leave such transcendental questions to the scientific mathematician. I can even surprise him by the swiftness with which I get an answer whenever I add or subtract a simple number to or from my first complicated array of fractions; but the value of my first line of fractions remains the zero it started. If I substitute infinity for my first zero, the answer for my whole line of figures will not be a computable number. Neither from an unknowable god can we deduce a precise code of morals; or a precisely known "will of God."

I do not imagine this will greatly disturb the editors of the "Tablet" (a most mathematical organ) or of the so polite and kindly "Stella Maris," or the "Messenger of the Sacred Heart."

These people are a constant and unheeded lesson to the "Church" and Nonconformist papers, both in their tone and their internal coherence. The two latter do not advertise hair-restorers or "bitter-apple." (I dare say the "Tablet" doesn't either. I haven't time to procure a copy at the present moment of writing.)

C312 Continued

C313 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XVI.—Aphrodite popularis. *New Age*, XXII. 8 (20 Dec. 1917) 148–9. On *Nash's Magazine*.

When it comes to manners in contemporary press-work I am inclined to think the Catholics the least objectionable of all Christians. In fact, all their surface is preferable to that of their opposed and contentious off-shoots. All denials of them in detail is, I believe, purely useless. If one cannot land on the initial zero or infinity, and land with a reasonably heavy shell of knowledge, historic and otherwise, one had better keep off the question. Their dialectic survives from a period of worthy robustness, and the smear of contemporary "Church" theology and modern impressionist thought comes off very badly in any incidental combat.

This gets out of hand. I must return to the flesh, i.e., to "Nash's." (En passant let us deny that any-body knows anything about "heaven" in the Christian sense of that term; let us deny the authenticity of any despatches from any post-mortem Petrograds, flaming or otherwise).

I shall not settle the Roman Church in five minutes, though I recall a modern "Church" (of England) writer who actually seemed to think he had added to our knowledge of The Trinity by six pages of writing, the logical deduction from which was (for anyone save himself) that the Trinity was shaped like a plover's egg. Let Catholicism stand for theoretic theology; for the mediæval mind still persisting. The contemporary religion "of the people" we have touched on in our observation of its lasting predilection for genii, paradises and prophets. I want to leave these spiritual matters and complete my survey of contemporary mentality. Farewell, spirit, for the page! Let us turn our attention to "Nash's" (which must stand here for the "Flesh").

This sensuous and carnal production greets us with a paradisaical cover (Venusburg, Tannhauser, etc.). It is the November number, but the scene is from some summer far away, or from some happier clime. Against a verdurous background we see the head and shoulders of the Young Apollo type. Below his roseate features leans the head of a damsel with coral lips; and, with crow-black hair. Her head and forearms are bare, the bosom covered by white linen (or some such fabric), as is that of the youth. She lies, as much of her as is portrayed, in a hammock, upon a cushion covered in cretonne. The youth holds in his right hand a green sprig of forky grass, and with this he tickles, or appears about to tickle, the aforesaid coral lips of the young lady, whose eyes are closed in sleep either actual or pretended. (The face shows none of the contractions which occasionally occur in sleep; the mouth has not sagged open. If she sleeps she sleeps delicately. The susceptible beholder will almost feel the light pressure, the diaphanous titillation of the grass tip brushing his (or her) own surrisent lips. Across the foot of the enticing portrayal we read, "New Serial, by MARIE CORELLI."

In this life we find certain perfect adjustments.

Who, for example, could have dreamed of finding a poem by E. W. Wilcox, a serial by Miss Corelli, a poem by Chas. Hanson Towne, a tale by Gouverneur Morris, another by Robt. W. Chambers, another by Stephen Leacock, and "Beyond" by John Galsworthy, together with sundry actresses' limbs, *all*, *all* assembled in the one set of covers, all surrendered to one for 8d.?

Christian and Social Progress has found no more happy equation; for what, in Zeus' name, could be more Christian than Miss Marie Corelli, or more social than Mr. John Galsworthy? And how united the tone, how beautifully, how almost transcendentally all these people "belong"; what utter and super-trinitarian unity thus binds them together in Nash's! The face on the cover almost recalls another celebrity.

Even the actresses are united; without altercation their heads, backs, legs, ruffles are potpourri'd on to the pages. The head of one projects from the hip of another, the fingers of the lady with the hair-brush jut from the upper arm of a third, the sleepy head of a fifth reposes on the bosom of the sixth who appears colossally larger. A ninth with one luxurious arm has her little oval in a corner.

One is fairly bewildered by the opulent charms of this magazine. The chronicler knows not where to begin. Shall we, O Quirites, dwell first upon the portrait of Miss Corelli, taken from a photograph, presumably of some vintage, that hath been cooled a long age (from 1878 at least) in the deep-delved cubby-holes of the editor? Shall we turn first to the metrical triumphs of Ella Wheeler whose protagonist exclaims:

"My sins and derelictions cry aloud. . . . ." "The world loves to believe in Man's depravity and Woman's worth; But I am one of many men upon the earth Whose loud, resounding fall Is like the crashing of some well-built wall, Which those who seek can trace To the slow work of insects at its base.
Be not afraid, The alimony will be promptly paid."

(It has become so much the custom to reprint vers libre as if the original were written as prose, that I have done a similar violence to Mrs. Wilcox's publication, preserving however the capital letters with which the lines of the original commence; thus the reader may reconstruct the metric if he chooses).

The actual works of Corelli, Chambers, Galsworthy and Co. are perhaps too familiar, and are certainly too voluminous to be discussed in this place. (If the energy remains with me I may elsewhere set out upon an exploration of these individual writers who so miraculously mirror their time. For who is there among "us" who has not read something by at least one of these authors?)

We judge from the ads. that *charm* is what these people (writers, publishers, entrepreneurs of Nash's, etc.) "go in for"; they are neither malthusian, nor yet fanatically set on the fecundity plus overflow into the colonies propaganda. We find maternity gowns, and everything for mother and baby filling hardly more than one quarter page; the prevailing tone is: Your hair; Macassar Oil; Eyes Men Idolize; The Kind of beauty that men admire; Add a pleasure to life; Protective Knickers; Author's Manuscripts; Somebody's Darling; A sweet little set, beautifully hand-made and picot edged; Irresistible; What does your brain earn; Good Pianist; Asthma; Daisy; don't let pain spoil your good looks; Why People Marry; King of Hearts; Autumn Beauty; Neptune's Daughter; Beauty pictures; Soap; Safety-filler; the cure of self-consciousness; Lovely Eyelashes; Add to your income; Power: scientific concentration; Height increased; Healthy Women; Esperanto; Makes straight hair wavy and lustrous; YOU can PLAY the PIANO. In the smaller paragraphs we learn that "'LOVE AND LOVERS' is a wonderful book of 'Hints to both Sexes,' profusely illustrated"; also that "handsome men are slightly sunburnt."

Art Notes.

By B. H. Dias.

THE LOAN EXHIBITION AT THE GRAFTON.

THE Loan Exhibit at the Grafton Gallery centres about, we might almost say consists of, two magnificent Degas: one is a dancer; the other in the harder style of this master has for its subject two washer-women; and both canvases are of his best, both of them above praise. The effect of durable paint, the hardness of detail in the finish of one of the washer-women's faces in its relation to the broadly done back-ground, are so fine, so beyond any hasty critical sentence, that I am at loss whether I ought not to defer notice of the exhibit until I can muster a suitable homage. But, after all, this is only a chronicle. No art-lover will miss this show, bad as is the great bulk of it. The clean hard surface of the one Degas, and the roseate blurr of the other are worth the trouble of going to Bond Street, they are worth coming up from the provinces to look at; and no one need dwell on the rest of the paintings.

About thirty of these latter, nevertheless, repay inspection. Beneath the Degas hangs a small Whistler, as perfect in its rightness, in its quite unostentatious perfection, as are the former in their positive and assertive qualities. It is of four figures, one holding a parasol, done apparently at the time when Whistler

C314

C313 Continued

C314 Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. The Loan Exhibition at the Grafton [and "Serbo-Croatians" (including Mestrovic)]. *New Age*, XXII. 8 (20 Dec. 1917) 152–3.

was making his Hellenic studies, and having in its grace and its pallor nearly all of Condor's qualities, but having, as Condor never has, a very delectable firmness and surety. The tiny white Whistler to the left is not to be passed unmentioned, despite scant "acreage," for it is about the size of a cabinet photograph.

The Degas fan is not his best, though it was probably impossible for him to paint without making something of interest. The poise of dancers' feet, the effect of the stage seen through the wings, one figure particularly happy in its pattern value, where it is cut into by the scenery, lift the fan out of the commonplace.

Next in interest are "Max's" caricatures of Mr. Rosetti, his friends and his pictures (these latter rather better than the originals). There is shown a good Brabazon; and a rather good Sickert. Mr. Sargent's water-colours present technical interest, as does also one water-colour by Mr. Steer (the one on which he has written a word which looks like "Bilter" or "Bilten").

Mr. McEvoy is too much with us. From the first dribble of his "promise" to his last unfortunate efforts, he covers, or obscures, a great deal of wall-space. It is all remarkable that the admirers of this painter did not hit upon Kirchner, who would have satisfied *all* their æsthetic desires.

Mr. Strang's "No. 3" is deplorable. Mr. Philpot shows a Spanish subject, a sort of compromise between Boldini and Castelucho. He shows also a symbol of, we presume, a Labour movement, abortive. Harrington Mann has, perhaps, the distinction of having created the worst of the paintings present, but this distinction is hotly and multitudinously contested. Mr. Sims, for example, shows a Cupid sitting in the branches of a tree; it would not have seemed out of place in Pears' annual for 1887. Watts' effort for the poster of "The Incoming Tide," has the finish of some Victorian textile. It might have served as a lambrekin, and one would not be surprised if one found it covering a Surbiton sofa, or draped upon a Clapham piano.

Monticelli always contrives to be interesting with his mastery of his own particular, rather unintelligent little business. The pictures here shown are not his finest, but they are worth a moment's attention.

The lenders of the few fine pictures have been most generous in risking them at this time, while the lenders of others may have their motives suspected. Still, the Gothas have avoided the Tate Gallery so far, and one can leave something to them.

Serbo-Croatians.

The Serbo-Croatian artists at the Grafton Gallery are divided into three parts: Rosandic, Racki, and Mestrovic. On entering the first room, which is devoted to Rosandic, the spectator thinks he is looking at the new work of Mestrovic; that Mestrovic has been wise in confining himself for the most part to wood-carving; that he has been more careful than usual about his compositions, and their formality, but that he has lost in some degree the excellent wood-carver's "trade" work or technique, which showed in his earlier wood-cutting.

Rosandic's work is of uneven merit. "Mother's Treasure" is excellently formal. "Woman's Sorrow" is technically excellent. "The Grandmother" betrays his paucity of formal invention, for the same rectangular composition is used to better advantage in "Mother's Treasure." "The Vestal Virgin" is rubbish, with a few meritorious cuts; No. 13 is the old Mestrovic story; we saw it some time ago at S. Kensington. "A Girl" has merit. "Ecce Homo" is merely skinny. "Salome" is silly post-Beardsley. "The Little Shepherd" is extremely interesting. On the whole, Rosandic's work is hopeful, and I should be more inclined to trust him than his better-known confrère.

The painter Racki is uninteresting, a mixture of Dulac and Slavicised Millet, with some undigested Puvis and Goya thrown into the *olla*, from which emerge also various Mestrovician visages.

It is Mestrovic whom the visitors come for. When his illumination first burst upon the chiaroscuro of fad-ridden London, while thankful, as usual, for any relief from Sims, Frampton and Co., of Piccadilly, we noted certain defects in Mr. Mestrovic's talent. He had practically no feeling for stone. This is a very sad thing for a sculptor. He had very little feeling for form; his emphasis was got by purely literary means, and those of the crudest. The shape of his "Serbian Hero" mattered very little, the "terribility," or whatever it was intended for, was supposedly given by presenting the hero in the act of biting through an imaginary plate of sheet-iron. Other works were embellished with weakly barbaric symbology. The energy of Mr. Epstein's flenite figures was not to be found at the South Kensington exhibition. On the other hand, Mestrovic had an irrefutable wood-carver's technique, the fruit, we were told, of more than one generation. The wooden figures and the plasters taken from, or intended for wood, were executed with no mean talent.

The charming archaic-restoration of his imitation Greek vases gave us the key to the matter. We had in them the real Mestrovic, the Mestrovic as he would have been if left to himself; but no, he had been inoculated with an idea of being Victor Hugo, or someone of that sort. He had contracted the milkman's itch to be the eighty-third Michaelangelo, instead of simply the gentle Mr. Mestrovic, delighted with the refinements of Vienna. Turning his back upon the tea-cup of modernity he set out to be the Croatian Colossus. He constructed an idea of Serbian nationality, with the result that is known to us . . . and he would have made such exquisite snuff-boxes had he lived in the time of Louis XIV!

When a man's mind is so fundamentally uninteresting and uninventive as the mind displayed by Mr. Mestrovic in his sculpture, he would do well, as in the case of Monticelli, to stick to the matter of his craft, for we can get excellent art from men who have but one idea every ten years, on condition, be it stipulated, that they do not try to act as a megaphone for current notions. This megaphoning is the function of politicians who do it, perhaps, better than artists.

However, Mestrovic still inclines to "telling a story" instead of asserting a verity. (Note how utterly absent the narrative element is from Epstein's flenites, or from Egyptian sculpture, however memorial it may be, however many inscriptions there are to tell you all about Rameses or Amen Hotep.) Mestrovic's present exposition contains no surprises. What one thought at South Kensington, one is constrained to think again at the Grafton.

The influence of the archaic or Gnossian wave-pattern (as in the pre-classic bas-relief of "Venus Rising from the Waves"), is still active in Mestrovic's work (and in that of Rosandic). There is no objection to this pattern in itself. Mestrovic has seen John; he has encountered, possibly in Mayfair, a female twisting a shawl round her person, so as not too greatly to obscure certain salients. And he has, alas, taken less care in the actual cutting of his wood.

His pièce-de-resistance is a crucifix, not carved better than many of the nine-and-ninety million objects of this sort that sprang from the ages of faith. The crucifix at best is a displeasing and eminently (and, I dare say, intentionally) unæsthetic object. As a fetich it lacks notably the energy, the horrific energy, of African and Mexican fetiches; it had the Greek æsthetic to contend with; the ideas concerning Adonis were constantly getting mixed up with the idea of sacrifice. The two ideas neutralised; they were very nearly incompatible.

C314 Continued

Mestrovic's crucifix met me first in a reproduction in "Colour." This reproduction made me slightly ill. I had a definite qualm in the stomach. Any sheep in a butcher's-shop might have so yawed at the mouth. I mention this as a protest against bad reproduction, or rather reproduction obviously taken from some point of view from which the original statue will not be seen.

This unpleasantness is absent from the head as one sees it from the floor of a gallery, looking up at the figure. (Must we still go on quoting Aristotle?)

Mr. Nevinson, who resembles the pre-Raphaelites in that his work gains by being seen in reproduction, is represented also in "Colour" by a picture of wind. In this picture he has, as the editors of that periodical quite rightly claim, added something to his subject. I doubt if Mestrovic has added anything to his crucifix, unless it be a few extra inches of fingers and pedal phalanges. The question remains, Is this "Christ" any more effective than the usual Christ of the everyday crucifix? Do we get a new religious emotion from being asked to believe that He had prehensile toe-nails? And is this symbol, of an age of faith, this symbol of a religion having now mainly a suburban interest, this symbol of individual sacrifice, particularly impressive at a time when every newspaper is throwing upon our daily imagination the vision of fields covered with dead, of hecatombs, and of calamities? Has it even the merit of being a psychological record? The chromos of Christ and the boy-scout, Christ and the dying soldier, are narrative, and do record the state and quality of contemporary people's thought. Does Mestrovic's crucifix do this? Or is it really more historic, does it represent the last gasp of Christianity, the last attempt by extraneous means, by distortion and exaggeration, to put some last life into a fading and irrevocable belief? If so, it is perhaps good as a record.

Studies in Contemporary Mentality.

By Ezra Pound.

XVII.—THE SLIGHTLY SHOP-WORN.

"Do them, they'll only feel hurt if you don't." In response to this friendly advice, I can answer but "*Quare?* For what cause, and to what effect?" The "Saturday Review," "The Athenæum," "The Nation," the etc., are in about the same format. What, under heaven, should I find there worth my sixpence? Concerning these papers I have already an impression —and not the least curiosity. My impression is that no one of the least consequence has written in these papers during the last ten years; that no active ideation has celebrated itself in their columns; that no critic whose mind is of the least interest has therein expressed himself in regard to literature or the arts. Books have in them been reviewed, and essays (by courtesy) printed, and these have, I think, been fashioned in accord with some half-forgotten editorial policy formed by the editor before the editor before last. Not one of their writers has looked upon literature, or painting, or even politics, for himself; they are a limbo of marcescent ideas: ideas that, when they are too worn out even for "The Athenæum," are passed on to Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton and their clerks to be re-sentimentalised, to be fitted a little more snugly into glucose christi-inanity, and later to appear in the "Bookman," that treacle and margarine composite. Life is too short to wade through the pages of these periodicals to see if my statement does any slight injustice. If the editors of any of them can remember the work of any man of distinction which they have printed, they may reply and point out my possible error. (N.B.—I know there was once a man named Henley, and that Symons wrote his "Spiritual Adventures," and contributed to the "Saturday Review," before the present administration had been weaned. I am concerned with the twentieth century.)

C315

We find also the type of author who is printed in Bangor, Maine, U.S.A., on japanese vellum. A few excerpts from a recent article of criticism by him of a sober contemporary will perhaps throw light on his darkness. He says:—

"'This poet,' says Miss Sinclair, 'hath a devil.' I go further. He is a devil."

Let us adore this theological vigour.

Continue:—

"He is more calmly horrible than Tchekov or Reinhardt, or any of the slimy reptiles that used to shimmer in the Russian Ballet."

"There you have the cold pride of the devil—the utterly inhuman pride."

"Devilish, most devilish! Let us be thankful that we are not devil-worshippers. We prefer the jungle."

After three-quarters of a col. of this sort of thing, the reader can only wish that Mr. James Douglas *would* retire to the suitable habitat which he mentions, therein to heave cocoanuts with his hind paws rather than remain here to push a pen with his front ones. Concerning De Bosschère's style, De Bosschère's sense of the human tragedy, he has said nothing at all. The author whom he "criticises" has committed the satanic sin of seeing some things for himself. He even describes how a man going on a long journey lent his house to a friend, and, on return, found the house no longer his own:—

"Pierre a pris le cœur de ma maison."

However, I must not turn aside to a question of literary taste. I only wish the reader to note the theological tone of Mr. Douglas' denunciation. We find him at the old jig about kind hearts being more than coronets, a contention long since granted, but not relevant to the question of M. De Bosschère's literary attainment.

In fact, this old jig about the kind heart and the coronet is the sum total of all the literary (alleged) criticism that has appeared in England for a decade, in "Punch," in the "Bookman," in whatever of these old puddings you will. It is all they have had to say about the novel, or about poetry, or the drama. They say such-and-such a character . . . etc. . . . but we all know what they say and what they do not say. Passons.

They have even tolerated the exuberance of the Russian novel, because someone was crafty enough to whisper that Dostoievsky was kind-hearted.

There has been the critical kind heart, as well, or perhaps we should say the kind stomach, the "of-course-I-can't-slate-him, you-know-he-once-asked-me-to-dinner, and-I'm-no-longer-young" attitude. But this is common to all ages and eras, and no needful part of our subject. Still, it *is* time that English criticism shook off the hand of Polonius.

Even mixed staffs like that of the "Times" might drop all men over sixty and all women over forty, with no great detriment to themselves, and all English weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies more than twenty years old might cease this morning, and the world of thought be no poorer.

I am not saying this in any contempt for old age, and I have, I think, not been tardy in expressing my respect for old men when they were worth it, or while the great ones were still among us. Even so the aged have never, I think, been acute critics of what came after them. The great critics have usually contented themselves with an analysis of their predecessors, or at most, their contemporaries. It has been the rarest

C314 Continued

C315 Studies in Contemporary Mentality . . . XVII.—The Slightly Shop-Worn. *New Age*, XXII. 9 (27 Dec. 1917) 167–8. On various periodicals, plus the *Church Times*.

thing in the world for an old man to know good from bad in the work of succeeding decades.

The creative faculty may, and often does, outlast the critical. On the whole, about all an old critic can do, if he is to stay in the ring, is to use himself and his position as a megaphone for some younger man's ideas, a course where his conceit usually prevents and forestals him.

A few doddards should, of course, be preserved, to run wode when the wind blows; to act as a sort of barometer for the energy of new work. People like Waugh, Dalton, James Douglas might be collected in one place and used as a sort of composite instrument. They have at least the virtue of *animus* which is lacking in the hee-haw and smart-Elic varieties (Douglas can belong to this last also, on opportunity). Still, I would separate these people from Austin Harrison, and G. K. Chesterton, and the writers in the "Bookman," for whom there is, so far as I can see, no extenuation whatever. They are not even daft seismographs. C. E. Lawrence is, perhaps, even lower in the scale, not being even offensive.

I know that I differ violently from the Editor of THE NEW AGE, in believing that Mr. G. K. Chesterton has definitely done considerable harm to contemporary letters. I give him the credit for having been sufficiently effective to do harm.

Harrison's insult to literature and the harm he has done has been purely negative, and has consisted in getting hold of the "English Review," and expressing his mentality in it after it had been edited by an abler man who honestly cared for good writing, and was usually able to detect it. The difference between that "Review" before and after his advent is a matter of history, and anyone who cares to do so may verify my statement by reference to the files in the British Museum. The act was, of course, shared by abettors and sponsors. There is no reason to forget this, or to condone it.

Let us turn our attention to Christians.

THE CHURCH TIMES in its address to prospective advertisers claims to have "the Largest Circulation of All Church of England newspapers." On page 483 current the following people protest against a reform of the present English marriage laws, against the tempering of this at present mediæval institution (as contrasted with the forms of matrimony practised with great comfort and convenience under the so orderly and comparatively civilised Roman Empire).

Randall Cantaur :	Parmoor.
Cosmo Ebor :	W. H. Dickinson.
A. F. London :	Laurence Hardy.
Handley Dunelm.	Walter Runciman.
Edw : Winton :	Edmund Talbot.
Francis Cardinal Bourne.	W. K. Robertson, General
W. B. Selbie.	Thomas Barlow.
J. Scott Lidgett.	Alfred Pearce Gould.
F. B. Meyer.	Mary Scharlieb.
J. H. Shakespeare.	Margaret Ampthill.
R. S. Gillie.	Adeline M. Bedford.
Northumberland.	Louise Creighton.
Salisbury.	May Ogilvie Gordon.
Beauchamp.	Constance Smith.
Selborne.	Emily Wilberforce.

As it was, so to speak, a streak of luck that I should hit on the very number of "Nash's" which had "all of them in it," all the gang of wash-fictioneers, so also I count it a stroke of luck that I should find the plumb centres of British bigotry so neatly and beautifully in tabulation.

When you consider that the only force sufficiently powerful to combat this set of log-heads, is a gang of people who desire to repopulate the Empire to a repletion such as will keep a vast number of people within the borders and purlieus of, if not slavery, at least something near it; you may judge the misfortunes of England.

It has been said that all our real liberties are surreptitious. Surely good customs and enlightenment must also be surreptitious.

When you consider that England is, on the whole, of all countries, the most comfortable, and the one wherein there is, or has been, the most individual freedom; that America is now boasting of the efficiency of her secret police, and the facility wherewith she can suppress publications, you may, in some measure, gauge the misfortune of the world; you may consider what terrible cunning is required for any man to exist with intelligence.

One is driven back upon Remy de Gourmont's half ironical questioning :—

"*Demain on fera la chasse aux idées*": "*Nul libraire ne sera à l'abri d une haine confraternelle.*" And as for remedy there is presumably only the slow remedy as Mazzini perceived it : Education. But by what, and through what? Through the schools? Through the weekly or daily Press? Through the Universities of England? which have had several centuries start; through the universities of America which, according to newspaper account are now waking, out of Chauvinism, to the evils of Teutonisation, which no amount of intellectual perception unaided by a world-war, would have roused them to looking into?

"Renan avait bien raison : la bètise humaine est la seule chose qui donne une idée de l'infini." And it is perhaps well that we should have some idea of "The Infinite."

FOOTNOTE.—E pur si muove? So far as I can make out from the florid columns before me, the association of American professors who have set out for "un-Germanisation" has not yet got to the evil bacillus of philology; they have only done a day's flag-waving. I have several times in these columns dwelt on the effects of this bacillus, and ten years ago I made myself very much persona non grata by perceiving it in my own university. The particular college president who is "talking for the Press" in the example before me has not apparently gone into the nature of "germanisation"; he treats the matter not on intellectual but wholly on national lines. God help the lot of 'em!

C315 Continued

CONTENTS
of the Series

VOLUME I

1902–1914, C0 – C167

VOLUME II

1915–1917, C168 – C315

VOLUME III

1918–1919, C316 – C521

VOLUME IV

1920–1927, C522 – C699a

VOLUME V

1928–1932, C700 – C904

VOLUME VI

1933–1935, C905 – C1279

VOLUME VII

1936–1939, C1280 – C1527

VOLUME VIII

1940–1954, C1528 – C1741

VOLUME IX

1955–1971, C1742 – C1933a

VOLUME X

1972–1982, C1934 – C1989

VOLUME XI

Addenda and Index