SEPTEMBER, 1915

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The Reader Critic

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Reversals

MARGARET C. ANDERSON

Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons.
It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth.—Whitman.

WHAT do you call the place you live in?

I will describe it to you. Perhaps you can find a new name for it. It is a place where men do not hold up their heads and look free. Where men dare not seek what they were born for: life. Where many men work and starve, and many work and turn into cabbages, and many steal and turn into rats, and a few own the land and turn into hogs.
Where nature is not as important as law.
Where law is cause rather than effect.
Where religion is faith rather than affirmation.
Where love is never as strong as things.
Where age is decay rather than more life.
Where art is encouraged but not recognized.
Where revolt is the strongest of emotions and the weakest of actions.

What do you call this strange place where it is immoral to take life deeply, and moral to be a half-thing?
Where it is beautiful to have theories of living, and ugly to apply them.

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Where it is right to dabble and wrong to realize.
Where ignorance is a virtue and knowledge a crime.
Where nature is obscenity and man's abuse of it purity.
Where philistinism is a habit and intellectual groping a "fad."
Where reputation is more vital than character.
Where sociability is a goal instead of a vice.
Where indirectness is known as unselfishness and self-direction as egotism.
Where thinking is only a sort of autistic stammering.
Where genius, "being youth and wisdom," is sent to school to learn—
(Never mind; I can't remember what).
Where impulse is assassinated before it can prove its worth.
Where one must achieve in gloom or be suspected of "lightness."
Where beauty comes only when one has struggled beyond the need of it.
Where sex is known as the greatest human experience, and experience in sex as the greatest human sin.
Where religion is known to be an unfolding, but experience in unfolding looked upon as irreligious.

What do you call this fantastic place where age that is weak rules youth that is strong?
Where parents prescribe life for children they cannot understand.
Where politicians and prostitutes and police and the press are despised but honored and great spirits are suspected of greatness but feared and cast out.
Where nations go to war for things they do not believe in and individuals will not go to revolution for things they do believe in.
Where those who know the rottenness in Denmark cannot think through to what caused it.
Where birds that fly are put into cages and men who soar are put into jails.

What do you call this incredible place where men go inch by inch to death in jails? Where they cease to hear and see and feel and smell and talk and walk and sing and sleep and work and play and think and be—not by order of gods or monsters but by order of men? What do you call a place where those who must cease to be are richer than those who are?
What do you call this awful place where every great spirit walks not only in rebellion and misunderstanding and isolation but in persecution? Where there are no heroes to make an end of horrors. Where even to live outdoors cannot clean men. Where there is no imagination and no faith. Where there is no silence.

Do you call it an asylum of crazed beings who annihilate each other? Not at all. You call it the world. You say it is "a good old world, after all." And you resent the "freak" who tells you your world is upside down.

Out of the loneliness of self-direction comes the only completion of life.—"The Scavenger."
Moods

BEN HECHT

I have heard the water beasts roaring in the night,
Leaping and howling,
Stung to madness by the tempest's might.
I have seen them splintering their heads in a furious race,
Plunging through the bellowing gloom
With a boom...boom...boom—
And from each torn face
I have watched their white blood
Sweeping in a foam across the night.
I have heard the water beasts snarling at the wild beating blows
Of the strong handed winds that tore them into rows
And churned their entrails into hissing snows.

The water is a restless smile soft as a woman's hair.
At noon it closes its vast blue eye and falls asleep.
At night as the swooning day gives birth,
The water is an opal glittering
On the gnarled black fist of the earth.
I have heard the water purring in the sun with its blue back arched,
And have seen the drowsy water beasts rising from their beds.
I have heard them chant as they formed and marched
With their green peaked hoods tipping rakish on their heads.

The water is frozen. Under its stiffened bosom
The beasts run blindly to and fro
And rising from beneath
Crunch one another with their frozen teeth.

It burns.
My soul is like water.
Sorrow

The night is a black poppy.
The moon weeps
Spilling a torrent of silver tears
Across the black petals.
The wind laughs.
The black face of the water
Glistens with rows of flashing teeth
Laughing back.
Always laughter.
Ho, the stars are little devils
And I am their master.

Humoresque

Faces. Faces.
Swimming like white fever specks away.
Faces. Coming close.
See the meaningless odd bumps on them called features:
A maniac crooning over lumps of putty fashioned them.
Look. Important faces!
And there—nice empty ones
(Yellow bits of paper blanks
Blown along the street.)
And look. Good God! A happy one!
Faces.
Crazy bumped and colored discs
Bobbing, bobbing,
Swimming, fading
Like white fever specks
I am one of them.

Rain

The rain is like laughter.
The black devils of my brain
Have leaped outside the window
And are laughing at me.
An Invitation to Cheat Posterity

(To W.)

Come, thief, an epic seethes within my brain
I will condense it to a sigh
And breathe it in your ear.

Come to my arms, the mad words start
There is a sonnet in my finger tips
There is a lyric bursting from my heart
I will condense them all into
A single kiss upon your lips.

My Island

You shall stand on a rock in the darkness
Naked and shining with beauty.
And I shall sit by the water and gaze on you
And as you come gliding through the mists,
Struggling out of the night's black mouth,
I shall rush to you and embrace the moon.

You shall lie on the rock like the crest of a wave
White and vague in the distance.
Your hair shall play over you like a sunbeam
And as I come running to you I shall embrace the sea.

You shall play on the wide sheets of sand
Golden against the blue water paint
Curling over the edge of the world
And your arms shall beckon to me until I shall go mad
And run to you to embrace the sun.

You shall lie, a silver jewel in the ebony arms of shadows,
Your breath stirring the white flowers of your bosom
You shall lie in the velvet depths of silence
Like a white stain on the night.
You shall call to me and I shall bend over you,
And that is all there is to life—
I bending over you in the darkness.
Soul-Sleep and Modern Novels

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

AN AMERICAN novelist who wanted sales, and who was willing to sacrifice all but the core of his character to get sales, found himself recently in a challenging situation. As he expressed it:

"Along about page two hundred in the copy of the novel I am on, the woman's soul wakes up."

"A woman's novel?" I asked.

"Meant to be," said he. "Study of a woman all through. Begins as a little girl—different, you know—sensitive, does a whole lot of thinking that her family doesn't follow. Tries to tell 'em at first, but finds herself in bad. Then keeps quiet for years—putting on power and beauty in the good old way of bumps and misunderstanding. She's pure white fire presently—body and brain—something else asleep. She wants to be a mother, but the ghastly sordidness of the love stories of her sisters to this enactment, frightens her from men and marriage as the world conducts it—"

"I follow you," said I.

"Well, I'm not going to do the novel here for you," he added. "You wouldn't think there was a ray of light in it from this kind of telling. A man who spends five months of his best hours of life in telling a story, can't do it over in ten minutes and drive a machine at the same time—"

"We're getting out of the crowd. What does the girl do?" I asked.

"Well, she wanted a little baby—was ready to die for it, but had her own ideas of what the father should be. A million married women have thought the same thing here in America—pricked the obscene sham of the whole business but too late. Moreover they're the best women we've got. There are—"

He actually shook the hat off his head—back into the seat at this point.

"There are some young women coming up into maturity here in America—God bless 'em—who are almost brave enough to set out on the Quest for the Father of the baby that haunts them to be born. . . . That's what she did.

"He was a young man doing his own kind of work—doctoring among the poor, let us say, mainly for nothing—killing himself among men and women and babies; living on next to nothing, but having a half-divine kind of madness to lift the world. . . . She saw him. You can picture that. They were two to make one—and a third. She knew. There was a gold light about his head for her eyes. Some of his poor had seen it. The young man himself didn't know it, and the world missed it altogether.

"She went to him. It's cruel to put it this way. . . . I'm not saying anything about the writing or about what happened, but the scene
as it came to me was the finest thing I ever saw. We always fall down in the handling, you know. . . . I did it the best I could. . . . No, I'm not going to tell you what happened. Only this: A little afterward—along about page two hundred of the copy—her soul woke up.”

“Why not, in God's name?”

He glanced quickly at me as a man does from ahead, when his car is pressing the limit.

“Ever have a book fail?” he asked.

“Seven,” said I.

He cleared his throat and the kindest smile came into his eyes.

“They tell me at my publisher’s that I slowed up my last book badly—by taking a woman’s soul out for an airing—just a little invalid kind of a soul, too. Souls don’t wake up in American novels any more. You can’t do much more in print nowadays than you can do on canvas—I mean movie canvas. Of course, you can paint soul, but you can’t photograph it—that’s the point. The movies have put imagination to death. We have to compete. You can’t see a soul without imagination—or some sort of madness—and the good people who want imagination in their novels don’t buy ‘em. They rent or borrow. It’s the crowds that go to the movies that have bright colored strings of American novels, as the product runs—on their shelves—little shiny varnished shelves—red carpets—painted birds on the lampshades and callers in the evenings. . . .”

There was a good silence.

“Do you know,” he said presently, “I’ve about come to the conclusion that a novel must play altogether on sensuous tissue to catch the crowd? Look at the big movie pictures—the actors make love like painted animals. . . . I’m not humorous or ironical. It’s a big problem to me—”

“Why, you can’t touch the hem of the garment of a real love story until you are off the sensuous,” I offered. “The Quest only begins there. I’m not averse to that. It belongs in part. We are sensuous beings—in part. But I am averse to letting it contain all. Why, the real glow comes to a romance—when a woman’s soul wakes up. There’s a hotter fire than that which glows blood-red—”

“I know,” he said quickly. “I know. That blood-red stuff is the cheapest thing in the world, but that’s where the great thing called human interest lives. . . . I’m sure of this story until her soul wakes up. She stirs in her sleep, and I see a giantess ahead—the kind of woman who could whistle to me or to you—and we’d follow her out—dazed by the draw of her. They are in the world. I reckon souls do wake up—but I can feel the public dropping off every page after two hundred—like chilled bees—dropping off page by page—and the old familiar battle ahead. I can feel that tight look about the eyes again—”
"Are you going to put her soul back to sleep?" I asked, as we turned again into the crowd.

I wasn't the least lordly in this question. I knew his struggle, and something of the market, too. I was thinking of tradesmen—how easy it is to be a tradesman; in fact, how difficult it is to be otherwise—when the very passion of the racial soul moves in the midst of trade.

"She's beautiful—even asleep," he said. "I'm afraid I'll have to give her something. I'm building a house. She's in the comprehension of the little varnished shelves—asleep."

"Doesn't a tight look come about the eyes—from much use of that sort of anaesthetic?" I asked.

"Let's get a drink," he answered.

A fairly widespread intellectual movement, though it be madness, has a profound and almost sacred significance. Primitive races believe that madmen are the voice of God. As much might be said of artists. Their madness is often wiser than the average wisdom.—Romain Rolland.
Poems

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Pastels

(In the city-square)

I
I think you are a masquerading nun
Who has been lavish with reds, thinking to obliterate herself
But you should also
Have placed a red cloth over your etched face.

II
Woman twirling a fan, burdened with many colors,
I salaam to you.
Your youth has gone, but you have made
An excellent effigy.

Thoughts
There is a white-jacketed old man, with eyes like milk-drops,
Who rakes leaves under hundreds of young low trees
With the arms of children and strong bodies.
When he has gravely raked them together,
He burns them and squats beside the fire,
And looks timidly, smilingly
He never squints up at the green leaves above him.

A Woman In the Park
She strives to braid her scant hair
And silence the bundled baby at her side.
(Her face has the cast of a frightened novice praying for deftness.)
Then she looks at the spinning-legged children in the wading-pool,
And the charcoal of her eyes has an odd after-glow, for a moment,
As though she half-regretted her tight grey clothes.
Richard Aldington's Poetry

AMY LOWELL

What a melancholy thing it is to have to admit that one of our national traits so often interferes with our appreciation of the fine arts, and therefore with the pleasure and profit to be derived from them! As a nation, we are dreadfully impressed by noise. The loud and compelling, even if the blatant, is sure to attract our attention. It is as though we were tone-deaf to all instruments save those of percussion, and colour-blind to all except the primary colours.

This is a particularly unsatisfactory condition, as we are really of a very welcoming temper. We are as anxious to make friends in art as in life. We have no quarrel with originality; on the contrary, it is decidedly pleasing to us. But our sympathies are bounded by our capacities, and our capacities are to a great extent limited to the perception of loud tones and crude colours. To teach the public to hear semi tones and see half-shades, perhaps that is one of the functions of the Imagist poets.

I suppose it is this preoccupation with what Walter Scott used to call "the big, bow-wow style," which has kept Richard Aldington's work from being as well understood here as it is in England. The very delicacy of it; its elusiveness, in which suggestions appear and disappear like a blowing mist; its faint, gradually changing colour; all these things confuse the average American poetry lover. While a few people find in Mr. Aldington's work poetry of a most exquisite and stimulating kind, the great mass of readers turn away bewildered.

This is inconceivable to me. How is it that we do not notice that a man is standing beside us unless he digs us in the ribs with an aggressive elbow? Our own country-woman, who writes under the pen-name of H. D., has had to contend with much of the same partial understanding, and it remained for an Englishman, Mr. Aldington himself, to write an explanation and appreciation of her work in an American magazine—this magazine. It is time that an American should explain to her countrymen the work of the Englishman, who is Richard Aldington.

Water and poetry have a quality in common. They both have a way of seeping—seeping, and without apparent flow, arriving. We are constantly finding fault with American publishers for permitting English firms to bring out the first books of our authors; it is to the honour of America that Richard Aldington's first book is to appear in the autumn, with the imprint of an American house.

Indeed, in speaking of the non-understanding of the mass of American readers and reviewers, I must add the paradox that the minority here is quicker to perceive excellence than the people of any other country. It is
our own magazine *Poetry*, with its far-seeing and daring editor, who first introduced Mr. Aldington to a considerable public, and her lead was quickly followed by *The Little Review*; an American firm, the Boni's, printed a number of his poems in an Anthology: *Des Imagistes*; and another American firm, Messrs. Houghton Mifflin, printed others in *Some Imagist Poets*. So Mr. Aldington's work has seeped little by little to where we can look at it as a reflecting lake. More sputtering brooks of poetry have brawled away and disappeared, but Mr. Aldington's output lies placid and arresting before us.

What is the quality of this work which makes it at once eluding and enduring? I think it is stark, unsentimental preoccupation with beauty. Mr. Aldington is in love with beauty. "Not," to quote Leigh Hunt, "in the little present-making style, with baskets of new fruit and pots of roses, but with consuming passion." There is nothing pretty about this poetry; it is not prettiness, but beauty, that the poet is after.

This naked beauty Mr. Aldington found in the Greeks. One feels that his youth was passed in a kind of painful homesickness, the nostalgia of a beauty which he could not then see about him. Greek poetry and Italian landscape gave him ease, and, solaced and flowering, his first work was under their influence.

I do not know which of Mr. Aldington's poems first saw the light of day in *Poetry*, and I have not the volumes here to refer to. But the first collection of his poems in *Des Imagistes* shows this preoccupation with Greek themes. All of the poems are Greek in feeling, many of them have Greek titles and are perfectly Greek in content. Take this one, for instance:

**Bromios**

The withered bonds are broken.
The waxed reeds and the double pipe
Clamour about me;
The hot wind swirls
Through the red pine trunks.

Io! the fauns and the satyrs.
The touch of their shagged curled fur
And blunt horns!

They have wine in heavy craters
Painted black and red;
Wine to splash on her white body.
Io!

She shrinks from the cold shower—
Afraid, afraid!

Let the Maenads break through the myrtles
And the boughs of the rohododaphnai.
Let them tear the quick deers' flesh.
Ah, the cruel, exquisite fingers!
Io!
I have brought you the brown clusters,
The ivy-boughs and pine-cones.

Your breasts are cold-sea-ripples,
But they smell of the warm grasses.
Throw wide the chiton and the peplum,
Maidens of the Dew.
Beautiful are your bodies, O Maenads,
Beautiful the sudden folds,
The vanishing curves of the white linen
About you.

Io!
Hear the rich laughter of the forest,
The cymbals,
The trampling of the panisks and the centaurs.

The objectors say that that is merely a copy. It lays itself open to that criticism, certainly, but how exquisite a copy! And how difficult to make such a copy! Try it and see! Mr. Aldington is a master of suggestion. His descriptions are never overloaded, and yet there is the picture. In the next stanza to the last, notice the blowing, rippling linen over the white bodies of the young girls.

A little of this goes a long way, you say. Yes, I think that is true, but Mr. Aldington has other strings to play. He has irony, a not-too-common trait in modern poetry. I know few things more beautiful, and more ironical than this:

Lesbia

Use no more speech now;
Let the silence spread gold hair above us
Fold on delicate fold;
You had the ivory of my life to carve.
Use no more speech.

And Picus of Mirandola is dead;
And all the gods they dreamed and fabled of,
Hermes, and Thoth, and Christ, are rotten now,
Rotten and dank.

And through it all I see your pale Greek face;
Tenderness makes me as eager as a little child
To love you

You morsel left half cold on Caesar’s plate.

That last line is a triumph of the disagreeable. Mr. Aldington’s beauty does not cloy; he knows how to spice it:
The Little Review

In the Via Sestina

O daughter of Isis,
Thou standest beside the wet highway
Of this decayed Rome,
A manifest harlot.
Straight and slim art thou
As a marble phallus;
Thy face is the face of Isis
Carven

As she is carven in basalt.
And my heart stops with awe
At the presence of the gods.

There beside thee on the stall of images
Is the head of Osiris
Thy lord.

Even in this first collection we see that the Greek awakening was a real awakening, and that once taught to see, the poet can go on seeing. The charge of copying is unfair. There is no "copying" in this:

Au Vieux Jardin

I have sat here happy in the gardens,
Watching the still pool and the reeds
And the dark clouds
Which the wind of the upper air
Tore like the green leafy boughs
Of the divers-hued trees of late summer;
But though I greatly delight
In these and the water lilies,
That which sets me nighest to weeping
Is the rose and white colour of the smooth flag-stones,
And the pale yellow grasses
Among them.

I think that is one of the best poems which Mr. Aldington has done. "The rose and white colour of the smooth flag-stones" almost sets me weeping too, so desolate are they, with the yellow grasses growing up between them.

I suppose the thing which is so satisfying in Mr. Aldington's work is the intense feeling which underlies the astringent utterance. With all his stern, uncompromising technique (for Mr. Aldington is a remarkable technician) goes a passionate violence of feeling. The Imagists are constantly accused of being inhuman, mere intellectuals. How strange it is that the feeling which merely turns white and makes no movement should go unperceived, while hysterical screams and lamentations, over in a moment, pass for the outpourings of true passion! What we have outgrown on the stage still holds in poetry, it seems.
Feeling there surely is in Childhood, printed in Some Imagist Poets. Yet, somehow, the poem is not as good as it ought to be. I suspect that Mr. Aldington has not yet quite mastered the technique of the long poem. Feeling is there, and we get the dullness of the little town perfectly, and the stale, salt smell of the harbour; and there are excellent descriptions—the public park, and the wonderful box in the attic—but the poem as a whole does not "get over." Necessarily more discursive than the shorter poems, it has not enough command of the dramatic to succeed. Having taught himself for years to say things in the fewest possible words, the length of this poem has weakened the poet's method. He must study the requirements of the longer poem a little more before he will be quite at home in it. Such as it is, Childhood is interesting as showing the broadening of its author's mind and interests. He no longer sees with the eyes of other centuries; he sees things about him, and as they are.

Here is a perfectly modern picture:

Round-Pond

Water ruffled and speckled by galloping wind
Which puffs and spurts it into tiny pashing breakers
Dashed with lemon-yellow afternoon sunlight.
The shining of the sun upon the water
Is like a scattering of gold crocus-petals
In a long wavering irregular flight.

The water is cold to the eye
As the wind to the cheek.

In the budding chestnuts
Whose sticky buds glimmer and are half-burst open
The starlings make their clitter-clatter;
And the blackbirds in the grass
Are getting as fat as the pigeons.

Too-hoo, this is brave;
Even the cold wind is seeking a new mistress.

How very well he has given the glinting of the sunlight! And that "Too-hoo, this is brave" is delightfully joyous and adolescent.

Of all the poems which Mr. Aldington has written, The Poplar is certainly the most generally liked. And I am not prepared to say that the public is not right. Perhaps it really is the best, I don't know. I am very fond of it.

The Poplar

Why do you always stand there shivering
Between the white stream and the road?
The people pass through the dust
On bicycles, in carts, in motor-cars;
The wagoners go by at dawn;
The lovers walk on the grass path at night.
Stir from your roots, walk, poplar!
You are more beautiful than they are.

I know that the white wind loves you,
Is always kissing you and turning up
The white lining of your green petticoat.
The sky darts through you like blue rain,
And the grey rain drips on your flanks
And loves you.
And I have seen the moon
Slip his silver penny into your pocket
As you straightened your hair;
And the white mist curling and hesitating
Like a bashful lover about your knees.
I know you, poplar;
I have watched you since I was ten.
But if you had a little real love,
A little strength,
You would leave your nonchalant idle lovers
And go walking down the white road
Behind the wagoners.

There are beautiful beaches down beyond the hill.
Will you always stand there shivering?

I wish I had space to quote many more of these poems. *The Faun Sees Snow for the First Time* is a charming bit of humour, and *Daisy*, very modern, aching, and inevitable. But I will give one more little piece which he calls an epigram:

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New Love

She has new leaves
After her dead flowers,
Like the little almond-tree
Which the frost hurt.
```

This is sophisticated poetry. How often have I not read that in the reviews, couched in terms of reproach! Why? Is it to be desired that the world should not grow? Is it a better art which appeals only to primitive instincts? The primary needs of satisfying hunger, preserving life, pro-creating life, are all very well, but civilized man has further preoccupations. Mr. Aldington's is a highly civilized—yes, if you like, a highly sophisticated, art. A certain mellowness of temper is needed to thoroughly appreciate it; crude minds do not react to such delicate stimuli. Admitting that, and admitting it as a feather, not as a rotten egg, we have in Mr. Aldington a lyrist of unusual achievement and fine promise.
Here amid the night-lights
Of the great city,
With the laughing crowd around me
I sit alone
In one of those strange hours
Walled in with solitude
That are my lot forever amid these lights.
Fronting the empty table before me
And its cortege of seven waiters—
Fronting the restless sea of unknown faces—
I mourn for you, boundlessly curious lady,
For you and for your esteemed consort—
But for you chiefly.

Presently persons will come out
And shake legs.
I do not want legs shaken.
I want immortal souls shaken unreasonably.
I want to see dawn spilled across the blackness
Like a scrambled egg on the skillet;
I want miracles, wonders,
Tidings out of deeps I do not know
But I have a horrible suspicion
That neither you
Nor your esteemed consort
Nor I myself
Can ever provide these simple things
For which I am so patiently waiting.

II.

Base people!
How I dislike you!

Some of you have come from Park Avenue,
Almost as you might go slumming.
Some of you have come from the suburbs,
Almost as you might go to heaven.
From Greenwich Village there are a few of you;
The Little Review

God alone knows why you have come.
And perhaps there are in your midst
A few incredible two-headed beings
From that mythical land of horrors,
Hoboken.
Also the traveling salesmen, mainly Hebraic;
And the wide-eyed yokels from the little villages of Illinois;
And the two young men-about-town
Conscious of their new evening-clothes;
And the three ladies
Who are trying to pick up someone for the night.
And the music,—Oh Christ and Mohammed and Buddha, the music!
. . . Base people!
How I dislike you!
Do you know why I have come here?
It will not interest you; nevertheless, I tell you—
I have come here to be alone.

III.

One night, long ago,
As at this table
I sat reflective,
A girl came
And took my hand
And sat beside me.
She was no creature of the roaring town,
But a woman of breeding
With young and delicate eyes.
I had seen her sitting
A long way off
At a large supper-table with many others—
Groomed men and richly dressed women
And an elaphantine dowager.
Now, between the dances,
She had strayed away;
And with a wave of her hand to them,
Signifying she had found a friend,
She sat down and looked at me.

We did not talk.
For I did not understand her coming,
And she seemed to desire no speech.
Then suddenly
She laid her hands upon mine across the table
And whispered—"I am so lonely!"
"I am so lonely!"
And after we had looked at each other a long time in silence,—
Silence of doubt, silence of comprehension,—
She turned, and left me.

And now tonight
I forget this sea of faces. . . .

IV.

In a remote corner
Sits tonight
One whom I know to be a poet—
A great poet, but keyed
In a pitch that is neither the world's
Nor that of other poets.
Once he was a keen knife of spirit
Stabbing dull hearts;
But now he is wearied out wholly
Save for the brief renascence of the midnight hour.
Across the table
A pale, flame-lipped, very exquisite girl
Looks at him with inscrutable eyes.
Then, as his lips move—
Then, as he leans forward—
I see, I divine, that he says:

"Light-foot whisperer over the dark abysses!—
Beautiful breast
Never to be forgotten!—
Evilly have you worked upon me!
Now the orange floods of afternoon
And the watery green depths of the midnight,
The vestal dawn
And the scarlet screaming dawn
Flicker with your passage!

"Glittering, gay, fantastic, unhappy child—
You seem as old as the oldest sin of the world
And as young as its newest rapture.
You are to me fresh April,
And the last days of October,—
Honey, and myrrh,—
The delicate dusk, and the stark dawn-light.
I have expected you a long time
With wonder and with terror;
And now, with your kiss upon my lips,
I await the miracle to result—
Corruption, or transfiguration."

And she, having listened
With eyes inscrutable and lips that were motionless,
Drank the champagne in her glass,
And looked curiously into the distance;
While he went on:

"You have brought me a lost wonder
And stirred in me a romance
I had forgotten.

"Now I again see landscapes
Clothed in their rightful mystery,
And the dusk is again holy,
And food is again sweet.

"Now I am alive
Who was dead."

But here lips did not move,
Not even with a smile.
And then he said,
While the violins sang with him:

"Lovely child—on your breast
Could a head find snowy rest?
Could the dizzy pulses cease
And the madness take release?
Yes! Yes! that I know—
For I dreamed it long ago.
But, child, on what breast
Shall your head find rest?"

She turned her eyes away from him,
nd her lips were as quiet as lilies . . . .
ed lilies of a garden in Cashmere . . . .
hen the dancers fluttered out
nto the pools of the spot-lights . . . .
nd she smiled.
V.

Last night
I saw these two,
Or two like them,
In the midnight streets.
But before they came
There came an apparition.—

It was a cab, worn, withered, and blighted.
A man like a moth-eaten
Archangel Gabriel
Sat on the box of the crazy thing.
Obviously it had been through Hell;
But its inside was musty and threadbare
As though companies of faded virgins
Had ridden in it for generations.
The horse, as you looked at him from the sidewalk,
Staggered with all four legs;
But to one sitting inside the cab
He must have seemed so thin of beam
As to vanish altogether.

The Archangel Gabriel was inclined to stoutness
And wore a well-preserved Derby hat.
He drove through the night incredulously,
With vague haltings,
As if ready to be struck dumb
Should passengers dare
To accept his ciceronage.

Ah, the passengers!
When they rushed
Out of a grilled doorway and across the sidewalk
Their white faces glimmered
As though they would have accepted anything
That could carry them swiftly or slowly
Away from the insupportable
Oppression of Here and Now.
They bundled into the cab,—
Four of them—
Two, whose glass throats were wound with wire and silver
Being destined for destruction
That the other two, with human throats,
Might inherit the Vita Nuova.
Then suddenly the Archangel Gabriel,
Leaving the Plaza and steering northwesterly,
Drove his precarious vehicle to the entrance of the Park
And straight down
Into the depths of the sea.
Through watery glooms
And swift gleams as of wave-light,—
Along alleys where vast forests of sea-weed
Aped the summer swaying of terrestrial foliage,
The silent cab moved on,
And the midnight ocean closed around it.
Huge branches of coral
Inky or amber
Lifted themselves in the gloom
Like processional lamp-posts;
And now and then a peering dolphin
Poised questioningly beside the path
Like a policeman.

Now they were gone beyond my sight.
Slowly I followed them;
But the sea retreated before me;
I could not enter the depths of their traversing.
And I walked as in a trance
Pursuing the receding waters
Down the avenues of lamp-posts,
Of foliage, of policemen.

Then, after hours, years, ages,
I saw my quarry returning;
And the sea drew forward with it
In a dark wave and swept over me.
There was the cab,—
And lo! of the two ghostly passengers,
One had become an undulant mermaid
And the other a surging triton—
And they swayed in hollows and foam-heights
Of the shaken water—
Knees, hair, arms
Tossed in confusion—
They were spilled out upon the deep
And the sea-birds shrieked above them.
I think that they went then
To the Sea King's Palace;
But this is all
That I myself saw.

VI.

Streets everywhere,—
Endless, labyrinthine, chasmy, crowded,—
All leading through the Egyptian night of ancient blackness
To these oases of tables,—
These howling dervish-tents,—
These feasts of lanterns . . .
Strange altars of the midnight!
Doubtful sanctuaries between wars!
Perilous tombs of forgotten goddesses!

VII.

I mark you well, my companions,
Though you do not mark me.

To which one of you shall I go
As the girl to me once came,
And take your hands, and speak
With silence across gulfs of silence?

Where in your mist
Is the friend who might be mine?
Do the pale blue veils of smoke
So utterly hide him?

Life, like a restless wave,
Has gathered us here together
As pebbles upon a remote shore—
Scattered when the next wave shall come.

VIII.

It is a chaos, this world.
Therefore it rests me.

For I have striven long
To create a world of my heart's desire,—
To erect pinnacles of dream
That should shine amid the sunlight,
Giving intelligible form
To the intentions of the earth.

And I am tired—
Tired of my pinnacles of dream,—
Both those that shine already amid the sunlight
And those that shall never be upraised.
And I descend
Into this chaos, this real world of waiters,
And it rests me.

IX.

I too have been here with my gay companions—
But I do not like it.
For I love my companions with an inexpressible passion—
I love them better
Elsewhere.

This is a place
Of desolation—
Of those who do not love
Or honor one another—
A purgatory, a hall
That is entrance to the Pit,
Whither many a one
Will go from here.

Now I will rise,
And taking with me the volume
Of George Santayana, on the back of which
I have been writing,—
Taking my black lacquer stick
That is now almost famous,—
I will pay the check,
Forgetting not the waiter,
And hie me to a friend, if I can find him;
Or failing that,
I will go home
And in the awed grey dawnlight
Read from Santayana's "The Life of Reason"
In five noble volumes.

For this is a place of madness,
And this city is doomed.
Emma Goldman on Trial

LOUISE BRYANT

JUST about the time that one Portland, Oregon, newspaper had smugly remarked, editorially, that Portland was far ahead of many other cities in its treatment of Emma Goldman in that it ignored her altogether, pandemonium broke loose. Within a few days, that paper and all the others in town gave Miss Goldman such front page notices and such flaring headlines that the war in Europe seemed quite an insignificant thing compared to the peril which seemed to be threatening the "Rose City" on account of her presence in our midst.

The apparent reason for this agitation was that one little, old woman by the name of Mrs. Josephine Johnson had heard through a friend, whose name she refused to divulge (even when so ordered by the court) that on the evening of the lecture on Friedrich Nietzsche somebody had distributed a pamphlet on birth control.

The real reason for the arrest was that the police wished to break up the meeting. They had previously sent Miss Goldman a notice that she could not speak any more in Portland on any subject whatever. This order could never have been carried out as we have free speech in Portland, so they used another method.

Miss Goldman and Dr. Reitman were arrested on the evening of August 6 just after the meeting began, and at 10:30 at night all bail except cash was refused, which is contrary to all idea of justice. But for the efforts of Mr. C. E. S. Wood, who has always been a staunch friend of all free-thinkers, Miss Goldman would have been thrown into jail in a city where she has been allowed to lecture every year for nearly twenty years and where her friends have come to look forward to her annual visits as we do to all the other good things that come to us, like the spring and the rain and the sunshine; for of just such healing and life-giving qualities are her inspirational messages.

There were two trials. The first was the usual sort and really is of small interest. At this trial held in the Municipal court, Miss Goldman and Dr. Reitman were found guilty of distributing obscene literature and fined $100 each. As a matter of fact, Miss Goldman knew nothing about the distribution of the leaflet, but she certainly would have approved of it if she had.

This sentence of the lower court was promptly appealed, and in the second trial, which took place in Dept. 5 of the Circuit court under Judge William N. Gatens, the case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

When we remember that one of our bravest rebels, Margaret Sanger, will soon have to face a trial on a similar charge we can only hope, vainly...
and wildly perhaps, that she will be fortunate enough to have a presiding judge as fair-minded as Judge Gatens.

Some of his remarks were so refreshing, coming as they did in such fine defiance of the usual attitude of those on the bench towards those who are accused, that they are worthy of quoting:

During the trial Judge Gatens said:

"The Court says the defendants are not here charged, as has been stated by the council, with creating anarchistic tendencies, or with being anarchists; they are here to be charged for the offense set forth in the information and for no other offense.

"Every person, when charged with a crime, should have the right to know the nature of the crime with which he is charged, meet the witnesses face to face, and be tried without prejudice; not to be tried on the ground that you don't like this person or that person because they have some view different from yours.

"Now it seems to me that the trouble with our people today is that there is too much prudery. Ignorance and prudery are the millstones about the neck of progress. Everyone knows that. We are all shocked by many things publicly stated that we know privately ourselves, but we haven't got the nerve to get up and admit it; and when some person brings our attention to something we already know, we feign modesty and we feel that the public has been outraged and decency has been shocked when as a matter of fact we know all these things ourselves.

"I am a member of the Oregon Hygiene Society. We get out literature and place it in the toilets all over the state, telling people how to guard against the evils of venereal diseases and so forth. We do that for the uplift of humanity, to protect society from all those things, and the public does not seem to be very much shocked about it."
Poetry Versus Imagism

HUNTLY CARTER

I entirely disagree with Mr. Carter's point of view—as much of it as I can fathom. But I hope his article will provoke discussion that will lead to clearer understanding of the Imagist's art in a country where even poets are blind to it. Mr. Carter states his position briefly as follows: "The Imagists claim that the subjects with which they deal find a completer and more adequate poetical expression in the Imagist form than in any other. Granting that this is so, the question still remains whether this form is essential to poetry or whether it tends to exclude poetry. So one has to consider what poetry really is and what it implies. My article is designed for this purpose." How horrible!—to treat miracles like this!—The Editor.

A FEW years ago I went to the Falkland Islands to sheep-farm for a bare subsistence, and while living on a lonely station twenty miles from everywhere, so to speak, tending my flock, what time the half-breeds came and helped themselves to my humble belongings, I experienced a new emotion. Perhaps it would be more correct to say I became aware of the nature of an old emotion. I felt the currents of transcendent energy which I felt in my childhood. But I now felt them more frequently, and I saw that I was elevated by them beyond the normal course of every-day life. At such moments I forgot the sheep, the pastures and the marauding half-breeds. I even forgot the strong colour and form of nature. I saw something riding me of solid things and leaving nothing but a fluid universe. I saw distinct forms melting to formative motions. I had been caught in the midst of an intense current—a transforming current of livingness. Moreover, I was free to the current, with the result that I became a part of itself—fluid—unresistingly, and was actuated accordingly. For the time being, I moved as the fluid element most moved me. Later reflection showed me that I was moved by some ineffable thing which I believe to be poetry. It may be that the soul is made of poetry, and after the human soul has freed itself from the fetters of materialism it becomes re-converted to poetry; that is, a part of its own flow or motion. I do not think materialists will understand this. But it will be clear to the spiritual minded.

I am sure that the hypothesis, that poetry is simply soul-stuff, is a verifiable one. I am convinced that in my Falkland Island days, whenever I was raised by intensity out of my material self at a higher level than actuality, whenever such intensity annihilated time and space, obliterated that personaility which I call Huntly Carter, lifted me to the infinite and eternal and left me dumb, I was experiencing poetry. I know that the hypothesis in-
The Little Review

volves two assumptions. First, that poetry cannot be written. It can only be expressed in motion or action. And it can only be expressed by the person who receives it direct from its source or fount. Hence a significant poet is not one who writes verse, but one who lives poetry, is poetry. The second assumption is that every human being who possesses the smallest soul vibration possesses a poetry-sense, and is, in fact, a potential poet. Given absolute freedom, he, too, would become poetry, such is the power of conversion residing in the element waiting to operate upon him. Which is not absurd when we come to think of it.

I find I am not alone in the attempt to rescue poetry from the lumber heap of verbalism and verbalists, to say nothing of verbiage, and to restore it to the infinite. I remember reading in an early number of the London Poetry Review that life has a rhythmic origin and poetry resides first of all in the rhythms of motion and sound. Of course "sound" is redundant, seeing that sound is the result of motion. I read further that poetry ultimately finds its way into language as the vocal expression of the fundamental motion or rhythm. Could anything be clearer? We feel the motion or rhythm and act it. And we attempt to express it in words in the last resort. Perhaps, some day nearer the millenium, it will be discovered that language (verbal of course) is the last resort of the poetically destitute.

The gist of what I read was this: First, poetry is the transmutation of some natural element (motion, sound or what not) into simple emotion (motion passing into e-motion). Then as the generic emotions pass beyond the senses they are handled by the intellect. One knows what the intellect does. Being peculiarly constituted to submit everything to scrutiny and analysis, it seizes upon the vague and indefinable characters of the human feelings and attempts the impossible task of analyzing their composition and stating their quantity and quality with precision. (Note what great emphasis the Imagists place upon the value of precision.) In other words, the intellect sets to work to regulate poetry by form and law. (Again, note how the Imagists emphasize the importance of form and law.) I suppose only the poet who proceeds upon instinct and despises methodical verse-making, recognizes the stupidity of trying to express poetry in terms of intellectual states of mind. To him, the vision of poetry in terms of cerebralism can only have one effect, namely, to kill poetry.

After reading this explanation of poetry, I felt I ought to credit the writer with a desire to exalt poetry to the Infinite. First, however, it was necessary to determine what he meant by the process of "transmutation." If he meant the activity of the "thing" which I call poetry, and not the "thing" itself; if he was thinking of the change effected in the poet's soul after it has received the rhythmic element which effects the change; then poetry to him was clearly the operation and not the operating agent. Further, there was the individualizing meaning to be considered. Let us assume that the poet's soul receives rhythms or vibrations from the Infinite, which
it instantly converts into its own. Just as a magnetic needle receives its own currents and points aright. Where is one to look for poetry? Is it the vibrations themselves, or is it the act of conversion? I sought the answer in the writer's own words that "poetry resides first of all in the rhythms or motion," and I concluded that he was not making a precise use of the word "transmutation." So I was able to relate his explanation of poetry to one I had published somewhere in *The New Freewoman*. This was my explanation. There is a creative force underlying all phenomena. At an early period of the world's history when self-ownership was real—not a dream—man was provoked by this force into poetic action. The force operated by dissolving man into its own and thereby exalting him mystically. But as man became more and more intellectual, so gradually he lost the power of being dissolved, and provoked into mystical action. With the result that he invented words to take the place of action. And as this process of degeneration continued, so he evolved substitutes—paid actors, poets, painters—to do for him what he had lost the power to do for himself. Thus the verbal poet is simply a projection of man's lost capacity to poetize himself and for himself. That is, the power to obliterate himself physically. I need not go into this point further. If necessary, I could show that many human activities and most human institutions are symptomatic of the long drawn-out diseases of self-suppression and self-annihilation. Mind, I speak of the spiritual self and not that usually confused with a corporeal nature.

This rather long but necessary preface brings me to another and more recent attempt to recover the old emotion. I refer to my recent experience with *The Egoist* and the subject of Imagism in its relation to poetry. I suppose most intelligent persons are inquiring what Imagism and *The Egoist* have to do with each other. *The Egoist* is obviously, as its name implies, a journal devoted to egoism. And its sub-title informs us that it is an individualistic review. Of course, egoism is an entirely individualistic affair. It consists in putting on the armour of self-assertion and defending the special faith and interests of one's own. The power that one seeks to win is that of subjecting material conditions and exacting the utmost spiritual toll from everything. One pays no regard to the opinion of others, and refuses to play the part of a cypher, and at the same time refuses to play any part with others. To stand alone, and with a light heart to do the necessary bargain­ning with external influences for the possession of one's own soul—this, it seems to me, is the true ground of egoism. Opposed to this is the process of self-suppression, the process of making bundles of cyphers. When men obliterate not their corporeal natures but the spiritual part of themselves, by coming together and acting together, and so juggle the play tricks in order that they may gain the applause and reward of their fellows, they are cyphers, not egoists, and deserve to be treated as cyphers. Persons who take this view of egoism have naturally been watching for the appearance in the pages of *The Egoist* of numerous writers with aspirations beyond the group
or societal level and not seeing them appear have begun to ask what *The Egoist* "stands for." I believe this question of "standing for" is one which is hurled at every new and significant journal. One knows that it has been flung at *The Little Review*. There are two ways of answering it. A journal may show that it does "stand for" something, or it may confound its critics by claiming the high distinction of not "standing for" anything. Simply it does not exist in time and space. It exists by the grace of God, so to speak. As to what *The Egoist* "stands for," it is not my concern. The thing for me to note is that for some issues it has been affected by a very strong habit of Imagism. Now Imagism is not egoism. I do not think the Imagists themselves are egoists. To me they appear to be socialists by instinct and individualists by profession, just as Mr. Bernard Shaw is an individualist by instinct and a socialist by profession. He is an autocrat with a democratic lampblack rubbed over his face to commercialize his appearance. The Imagists are the reverse with the added difference that they use the polish to beautify rather than commercialize their appearance. In saying this I do not wish to appear to be attacking the Imagists. On the contrary, I am anxious to pay them every possible compliment. The fact that they are sinning against themselves must be its own punishment.

The tendency of *The Egoist* towards Imagism flowered in the May issue. This issue was in fact "organized" (if I may use a trade term) from cover to cover to provide an honest and profitable discussion of the so-called "new" thing in poetry. As if poetry can be new. I had an idea that God made poetry when the world was very young indeed. Well, I turned to the May *Egoist* in order to rediscover my emotion. I found the journal comprised an admirable treatise on the theory and practice of Imagism with some uncritical praise and a strong note of criticism thrown in. I read the prose with a good deal of interest, particularly Mr. Harold Munro's history, origin and criticism of Imagism. It seems Mr. Munro objects to Imagism on the general ground that it is not inspired by the High Muses. It is rather the work of poets on the way to Parnassus who have stopped half-way to chase hares. The fact of the matter is that if an Imagist has a passionate instantaneous impression to start with he does not end with it. He simply destroys it before he has got very far with intellectual or technical theories. In Mr. Munro's very words, "poets of the Imagist and other kindred modern schools are no longer visited by the Muses: they are not at home to them."

How far this is true one may learn from the Imagists themselves. Here are some extracts from their contributions to the said "Special Imagist Number:"

"Somewhere in the gleam of the year 1908, Mr. T. E. Hulme, excited by the propinquity, at a half-a-crown dance of the other sex . . . . proposed to a companion that they should found a Poets' Club. The thing was done, there and then. The Club began to dine. . . . In November of the same year, Edward Storer, . . . . published the first book of "Imagist poems." This statement that the Imagist movement was started by Edward
Storer and T. E. Hulme, was subsequently refuted by Mr. Allen Upward who it seems received the Imagist message in 1900 from "a poet named Cranmer Byng," who had received it from Professor Giles, who had brought a tablet of China from the East with all sorts of wonderful little poems painted thereon. Later, Mr. Ezra Pound made for Mr. Allen Upward the Imagist garland to deck his forehead in the Court of Eternity. To continue the extracts. "Mr. Storer . . . was in favor then of a poetry . . . described . . . 'as a form of expression, like the Japanese, in which an image is the resonant heart of an exquisite moment.'" "I (the writer) had been advocating . . . a poetry in vers libre, akin in spirit to the Japanese." . . . "A dissatisfaction with English poetry as it was then being written" led to a desire "to replace it by the Japanese tanka and haika." "He (Hulme) insisted on absolutely accurate presentation and no verbiage" . . . "used to spend hours each day in the search for the right phrase." . . . "We (the Imagist group) were very much influenced by modern French symbolist poetry." "The group died a lingering death at the end of its second winter." "He (Pound) had made Imagism to mean pictures as Wyndham Lewis understands them; writing later for T. P.'s Weekly, "he made it pictures as William Morris understood them." So much for the history of Imagism and the expansion of Mr. Ezra Pound according to Mr. F. S. Flint. One next learns with regard to Mr. Pound that "he will sincerely work over a few lines of vers libre." He "tried to cultivate a sense of style, a feeling for words" . . . "he began to try to make poetry out of the realities of existence." . . . "he is a 'bookish' poet." . . . "It is inevitable that the 'improved' and selected world which the Romantic poet creates should be composed, at least in part, of ideas, of declaration, of emotions derived from extensive reading." If the prizes of this world . . . were given to merit . . . that poem deserves the prize usually reserved for some not too revolutionary "honest craftsman." Thus Mr. Richard Aldington or Mr. Ezra Pound. Next as to "H. D." "The poetry of H. D. has been described as a kind of "accurate mystery" . . . "it has the precision of Goldsmith's work." "The things she (H. D.) has seen and the emotions she has felt have been transmuted in her mind into an unreality that reveals itself in images of an unsuspected virtue and in phrases that seem to owe nothing to common speech." . . . "A poet who will accept nothing that has not come to her direct." . . . "Her ceaseless scrutiny of the word and phrase." "A tendency to pare and cut too far." It is Mr. F. S. Flint who writes. From the next article one gathers that "every poet must seek anew for himself, out of the language medium at his disposal, rhythms which are adequate and forms which are expressive of his own unique personality." And again, "what will teach us most is our language and life." "He (Mr. Fletcher) is seen at his best where fancy, imagination, musical ingenuity, verbal magic, and a curious feeling for the landscape of Chinese painting are fused in an intriguing and quite beautiful lyric sequence." Mr. Ferris Greenslet is writing on the poetry of John Gould Fletcher.

I have quoted sufficient to indicate the history, aim, scope and methods of Imagism as set forth by the Imagists. Perhaps I should add an extract or two (also in inverted commas) from Mr. Harold Munro's contribution.

"Their (the Imagists') insistence on the necessity of an absolutely fresh start in poetry." They claim to have discovered "poetry as an Art." They devoted their energies solely to the cultivation of new form and the adoption
of a renovated language oblivious of the fact that Idea must primarily dictate both." "The forms they still felt they might use, the vocabulary that remained at their disposal, were extremely limited." They had thrown so much good material away "that they remained now almost unprovided with a language or a style." It looks as though they threw away the baby with the bath water. So they divided. "Some decided to tolerate the old subjects, but to discover a new manner of presenting or representing them; others, not so satisfied, probed nervously the psychological recesses of the New World and dragged out all the strangest rags of fancy they could find, exhibiting them solely on account of their whimsical colour and shapes. Further, "they do not profess to sing." (Neither does modern commerce). They swear by "the best of intellect." "Their minds are obsessed by the Town." They acclaim the "passing event." They suspect the 'beauties of poetry.'" "The method of the Imagists is to model little detached patterns of words." One of their principles seems to suggest "that if one first design a poem, then the idea will be present by reason of the design." This recalls the principle of certain theatre reformers that if one builds a new theatre a new form of drama will enter crowned with daisies. It is equal to saying that given a donkey's tail the donkey will be present because of the tail.

After reading the Imagists' theories I read their verse. Without, however, recovering my emotion. It left me cold. I asked myself if poetry had ceased to run through me. Was I no longer its agent? Had intellect interposed to censor it—with form? In other words, was my conception of poetry wrong? Was the Imagists' conception wrong? Then I remembered that when I first experienced poetry and became aware of what I experienced, and when I began to express what I experienced, I proceeded on the principle of not mixing with my expressed experience any intellectual elements of thought, idea, reason or what not. I simply allowed some element to flow through me, and myself to be actuated by the flow. To me poetical expression was really an abstraction of the individualizing features of a spiritual experience received and transmitted in an instant of time. It expressed a creative movement abstracted from a creative movement, just as a subconscious drawing externalizes certain vibrations received through a magnetic medium. This creative movement appointed me its receiver that I might impart a momentary outwardness and sensational reality to its external content. Actually I was saturated with this precious element as a sponge can be saturated with rich perfume, and like the sponge was prepared to saturate in turn. In my belief, poetry is this spiritually saturating element. I would say it is a unifying element, bringing a like element in each of us into a unity of Soul or Spirit-consciousness. That is, the consciousness of Soul states which transcend this sordid material life in which we are so deeply immersed. I can imagine a true poet saturated by this element having glimpses of a supreme and superb Being, and thus entering consciously into that state of Being. But I cannot possibly imagine such a poet finding poetic expression in pots and pans and tup'ny tubes, and the confused and meaningless odds and ends of material life. I know there are certain poets who claim they have poetry in them, and because of this, they
can poetize any object. Just, as I suppose, the bee can pour forth honey on any object, or wine can be used to adulterate water. But, of course, the honey does not change the object into honey, nor the wine turn the water into wine, any more than the poetry element poured forth lavishly can transmute a motor-car or any dead thing into living poetry. Indeed, all that poets, obsessed by the theory of poetizing town and kitchen stuff, really do, is to waste their precious possession. Actually they precipitate their sweet scent on a concrete floor. If such poets ever hope to take the Golden Road they must leave shrieking machinery alone and cease pouring the perfumes of Araby over cancrous civilization. They must leave perishable things to perishable minds and fit out an expedition to the Inner Self. Thereby they may hope to return wet with the poetic spirit. In other words, they will return with rich experiences lit by the flame of poetry. It seems then that the reason I could not feel the Imagist verse was because I was trying it by a law or principle which told me that poetry makes itself felt through the senses, not through the intellect. Furthermore, it makes itself felt not only by passionately initiating us into some mystery or other of reality, but by making us an active part of that mystery. The poet is a signature of poetic reality.

I do not say this is the ultimate test of poetry. It may be that poetry is so indefinable as to elude all tests. Again it may be that this very indefinableness is the test of poetry. The secret in its motion cannot be analyzed. One cannot explain it any more than one can explain the odor of a flower. One is aware of it—that is all. Yet, I may ask, how does the Imagist poetry stand my test? The first thing one notices in the poetry is its air of cerebrality verging on cerebralitis. Accordingly one discovers an inordinate love of the intellectual qualities of style, and consequently, a feverish quest for figures. So there are figures of every kind. Condensing and visualizing figures, figures of similarity, contiguity and contrast, figures describing and analyzing perishable things. There is in fact a profusion of figures having one characteristic in common, namely, a straining after novelty, originality and freshness. If for the sake of argument one admits that poetry can be expressed in words, of course one admits that poetry can be expressed in images or figures of speech. But this is not to say that figures of speech are consequently poetry. Otherwise every bit of foolish verse that has ever been written could lay claim to the imperishable Garland. Every tup'ny box would be entitled to arrest each passer-by with a cry of "Behold the poetry in me."

Turn where we may in the wide-flung Garden of Verse and fruitful figures face us. Here are some gathered at random:

"He came like night." (Homer describes Apollo's descent from Olympus.)  
"Soft as the fleeces of descending snows." (Ulysses' eloquence.)  
"With lockes crull, as they were laid in press." (So Chaucer pictures his Squire.)
"Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-top with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green."
(Shakespeare.)

"Her voice is but the shadow of a sound." (Young.)

"The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head." (Pope.)

"Some true, some light, but every one of them
Stamped with the image of the king." (Tennyson compares Arthur's Knights with coins.)

"Hair in heaps lay heavily
Over a pale brow spirit—pure—
Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,
Crisped like a war-steed's enclosure." (Browning describes a lady's hair.)

"What says the body when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Strength on it? No more says the soul." (Browning describes the paralyzing effect of a wrong accusation on a highly sensitive mind.)

"Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of Vapours." (Shelley seeks to raise a resemblance between the closing night of an eventful year, and the dome of a sepulchre.)

"Stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like Cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween
The marks of that which once hath been." (Coleridge describes a break in friendship.)

"There was silence deep as death." (Campbell.)

"There was silence as of death." (Macaulay.)

"Earth turned in her sleep with pain
Sultrily suspired for proof." (Describes a summer night's thunder.)

"Long shall Comala look before she can behold Fingal in the midst of his host; bright as the coming forth of the morning, in the cloud of an early shower." (Ossian.)

"In short the soul in its body sunk like a blade sent home to its scabbard."
(Browning describes suddenly suspended animation.)

I could quote thousands of similar figures. I do not, however, accept them as poetry, simply because they do not give me poetry. I dare say the Imagists would refuse to accept them as poetry, but on a different ground. No doubt they would say that many of these figures have been manufactured in the wrong place. They have been made in the cerebrum instead of in the Imagist quarter, the cerebellum. They are in fact suffering from cerebritis whereas nowadays the proper complaint is cerebralitis. So the Imagists would complain that such figures do not conform to their conception of poetry as an Art. The ideas in them are not expressed as they would express them. There is an absence of clarity, precision, novelty, freshness, originality and so on. Change the form from cerebriform to cere-
braform, clip the words, remove the clichés, stop the singing, bring the image up to the quick-lunch standard and most of the figures would pass the Imagist test. All this is very pretty. But when all is said I do not see why some of the figures may not pass the test as they stand. When Mr. Hulme wants to describe a nature experience he does it in this lengthy fashion:

A touch of cold in the autumn night
I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge,
Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to talk, but nodded;
And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.

The similitude of a "red-faced farmer" does not raise the subject to heights. It is entirely lacking in dignity, is commonplace, and suggests ludicrous associations. For instance, much beer and a hot game of skittles.

When Browning does it he gets to work in a businesslike manner:

The sun looked over the water's brim
And straight there was a path of gold for him
And a world of souls for me.

I quote from memory, but I believe I quote correctly. The image is expressed with brevity, clearness, and dignity. Keats's way of expressing the experience is:

I who still saw the universal sun
Heave his broad shouder o'er the edge of the world

The similitude of "heaving the shoulder" is open to the same objection as that of a "red-faced farmer." It is undignified. It calls up a vision of the sun shooting coals down the front cellar.

Again, when the John Gould Fletcher wants to describe umbrellas in a new way he refers to them as:

Bending, recurved blossoms of the storm.

And a special movement of rain is exactly described as:

Uneven tinkling, the lazy rain
Dripping from the eaves.

The ingenuity of these comparisons takes away Miss Amy Lowell's breath. Writing in *The New Republic* she uses the term "absolutely original." And she tells us how well the first figures "makes us see those round, shining umbrella-tops," while the second is "a marvel of exact description." I dare say Miss Lowell is right. And yet the description, "The news was
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a dagger to his heart," was just as original when it was written long, long ago, and is certainly as vivid and intense in its way as anything by Mr. Fletcher praised by Miss Amy Lowell.

Comparing the new with the old in this way, one may well inquire whether the new-fashioned Imagists differ so very much from the old-fashioned ones whom they seek to destroy. For my part, I have no hesitation in asserting that the subject of the old order of verse does not differ from that of the new order. If present-day Imagists are bringing a number of contemporary facts and incidents into figurative employment; if they cut their particular capers In a Tube, or in My Backgarden, or in a Bath, or at The Breakfast Table, or amid Slaps, or in Chicago, or in the Pine Trees' Tops, or After the Retreat, they are doing precisely what the everyday Imagist has done with contemporary facts ever since the world began. So the truth is that subject for subject they are no nearer the Parnassian height than the merest babbler of driveling verse. And if they are really mounting the peaks, if as they claim they are making an absolutely fresh start at poetry, they are being pushed there by expression or technique, not poetry. In their view the mere curling and combing of words is sufficient to elevate them above such common poets as Shakespeare and the rest, and to entitle them to a seal among the really elect in the poetry business. But, of course, the bare fact that the Imagists are out for a revolution in form does not prove that they are out to give us a taste of real poetry. It only proves they are out for a revolution in form. And if one examines their form carefully, I believe it will be found to prove that there are poets among us suffering rather severely from the modern cant disease of culture. They "know" so much rather than feel anything, and because they know so much one meets them in every nook and corner, talking incessantly about the necessity of other poets knowing what they know, and doing as they do. Indeed they regard the production and advertisement of their particular kind of goods, which have become a sort of cult among a large number of persons who believe in hard study and discipline, rather than in spontaneity and livingness, as the beginning and end of earthly existence. But if one come to the bottom of the whole business it really amounts to no more than this. Tennyson and Kipling turned their attention to verse-making. They did not write poetry. They wrote doggerel, because what they wrote was in doggerel form. The Imagists have turned their attention to verse-making. Perhaps it should be versicle-making. They do write poetry. They write poetry because what they write has a poetry form. In short, the difference between Tennyson, Kipling and the Imagists is one of form. If the former had used present-day Imagist form they would be supreme poets. There is nothing to prove that Tennyson and Kipling could not have cultivated Imagist form. Therefore Tennyson and Kipling could have written Imagist verse. They were potentially supreme poets. How anyone can reasonably pretend that mere form transforms a subject into poetry passes my understanding. How anyone, moreover, can suggest in cold print that such form
is helping to make an absolutely new start in poetry is a point best left to
the decision of mental experts. Still, on reflection, one finds it is all part
of the modern “game” of confusing content with form. One must be grate­
ful to the Imagists for one thing. For some time there has been a move­
ment among poets of a certain school to shift the interest from poetry to
themselves considered as deputies. The errors of the Imagists, who, ap­
parently, are mistaken in their conception of poetry and the business of
poetry, enables one to shift the interest from these poets to poetry itself.
One can say to them, “We are not interested in you, but in poetry. To tell
us that you are deputy receivers and recorders to describe your aims and
methods, to take us to museums and to invite us to study the fossilized re­
mains of ancient literatures, is not to help us to enjoy your verse.” Poets
do not get any nearer to poetry by setting up new rulers and standards.
Poetry does not take us farther afar field into speculating on form and tech­
nique, but farther from them. Poetry tends to shift the interest from the
poet to itself, from the solid instrument of transmission to the world in
solution. Indeed it tends to obliterate the poet in the physical sense. As
I said it converts him into poetry. Now the reason why Imagism fails as
poetry is precisely because it shifts the interest from the world in solution
to a group of too, too solid poets. My conclusion is obvious. Before the
Imagists can claim that they are making an absolutely new start in poetry,
they must learn to obliterate their corporeal natures. The moment they do
so obliterate themselves, that moment one can safely say “Now we are
coming to poetry.”

I intended to show that one cannot write free-verse unless one is a free
poet. I must return to the subject.

The New Idol

GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER

A

N OLD philosopher—Aristotle, of course—called man a political being.
By this he meant that man was naturally endowed for society, and,
further, that society could find its full fruition only in the state. To the
old Greek, this political vocation of man seemed great and sublime. Only
one will ruled in the state. This one will synthesized all the individual wills,
no matter how powerful and diverse they were. And this one will made
all the distributive wills strong, and demonstrated its superiority to the
totality of all such wills. The one will wills more than it can do, on that
account becomes a statesman, that is, widens out his will to a state-will. Thus, the one will wins a new and wider sphere for its abilities and activities.

But it was the modern—post mediaeval—state which was the first to set the thought of that impersonal, unemotional philosopher in its true light. The modern state has brought to consciousness the whole gigantic weight of the world's political unfolding of force. The modern state is related to what the ancient Greeks called state, the Hellenic city-community, much as one of our mighty industrial machines is related to the primitive tool of a day-laborer, or a modern machine-gun to the sling and bow of an ancient warrior. Our states are indeed machines. All their parts fit into each other with the utmost precision, and work with astonishing accuracy. Our states are also huge weapons with numberless barrels, but employed by a single will, unloaded at the word of a single Commander.

It was the first chancellor of the German Empire who once asserted at a meeting of the Reichstag that politics ruined character! This of course put a damper on all the ardor that lauded to the skies the greatest invention of modern times, the new miracle of the state. This assertion clangs like a first elegiac note—like the intimation of an interior fatality, deep-seated already in the organism of the modern political and cultural life. This word utters no sentimental fanaticism which, with all sorts of romantic scruples and moral standards, observes the course of the immense evolution of folk life. This brave word comes from a man whom the whole world of his day celebrated as the foremost master of the art of politics. In his hands, the political machine underwent an unheard-of development of power. And what this statesman expressed only provisionally perhaps in an ill-humored, unguarded moment has been meanwhile developed by earnest men to a conscious, serious concern for men of a new and growing culture. These men have preached that men should turn aside from political life; they have seen in spirit a coming day in which state-less, unpolitical man shall have reached a purer higher stage of life than was at all possible under the banner of a political culture. Anarchists we today call these warriors against the state. What they fight, these warriors, is not this or that particular form of state, not this or that particular institution, but the state in every form, state in general. But because the word anarchism is ambiguous, because it is not simply an ancient theory, but occasionally signifies a quite tangible praxis, we must distinguish between the ideal, the spiritual champions of anarchism, and the preachers of a propaganda of bloody deed. While, at best, the latter would only drive out the devil by Beelzebub, the former would have a noble faith in the victorious power of the idea. Theirs is the high faith that the might of ideals is mightier than the might of force. They trust that humanity will overcome the political malady through spiritual development and inner strength, and will mature in the direction of an anarchistic culture. And in the rank of these idealistic anarchists, who contemplate the state as the most grievous hindrance to a noble and pure humanity—a Prince Kropotkin, a Count Tolstoi, a former German army
officer von Egidy—Friedrich Nietzsche also belongs, aye, he leads the van of all the poets and thinkers who espy the future task of humanity in the negation, the overcoming, of the state.

Anarchism, even in its most ideal form, seems dismal enough to most men. Yet it is understandable—even a natural necessity—in the evolution of modern life. It is with the spiritual currents of life as it is with the vibrations of the pendulum. The stronger the movement toward the one side, the further the rebound toward the other. As a matter of fact, the political pendulum has been far removed from the line of equilibrium. The cultured peoples of Europe—and it was these, not the American people, which Nietzsche had in mind,—had worked themselves into a political debauch in which there scarcely seemed to be any other interest than that of politics. What the Church was to the mediaeval man the state became to the modern man—God manifest on earth! Men believed in this state as their Christ. All power in heaven and on earth seemed to be given to it, too. What was preached in the name of the state was a gospel to its believers. To these believers it even seemed a sin to doubt the wisdom of the state at all. It was blasphemy to contest the state's claim to omnipotence. Once when it was said: Rome has spoken! all the rest of the world grew dumb in deferential silence. Later it was said: Paris, Petersburg, Berlin, has spoken! and a voice from heaven could not have been hearkened to more sacredly than did political souls take heed to such state edicts. Good? What is good if not that which benefits the state? Truth? But where is there truth apart from the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the state? The political sanctifies any means—makes anything good over which men would be otherwise enraged, stamps anything as true which would be otherwise branded a lie in the world.

Nietzsche hit the nail on the head when he stigmatized the state, in the sense of his time, as the new idol, and made it say in a Zarathustra discourse; "On earth there is nothing greater than I: it is I who am the regulative finger of God"—"everything will it give you, if ye worship it, the new idol." And this culture of the state was brought into a system by the philosopher; it was preached in the pulpit; prayed at the altar. Numberless were the offerings which were brought to this new idol—of beings, of human happiness and of human life, aye, of human reason and human conscience! For whoever serves this idol, whoever would truly serve it, may no longer have regard for himself, may no longer consult his own judgment. He is the better fitted to be priest of this state, the less he is burdened with scruples of his own conscience. He is all the more serviceable a scribe, the more smoothly he can adapt his well-oiled theology to reasons of state. Truly, they were not the worst spirits who rebelled against such idolatry. They were prophets of a new culture who took martyrdom upon themselves, and no small martyrdom at that, to unhorse a belief in the omnipotence and omniscience of the state. For this belief oppressed men. Out of men with living souls, it made ciphers to be added to one so as to give that one worth.
Politics needs masses, herds. The individual, the personality, who does not surrender himself to the masses, who does not think like an animal in a herd, is troublesome. Therefore, it passes as supreme wisdom of the state to uniformize all men, to discipline and drill men to whom the sight of a uniformized mass arouses the feeling of sublime beauty, to whom a thousand-throated hurrah sounds like the loveliest music. How much tender feeling, how much inner life, has been stifled in the day's political alarum—who can tell? "Yea," says Nietzsche, "a dying for many hath here been devised, which glorifieth itself as life: verily, a hearty service unto all preachers of death!

"The state, I call it, where all are poison-drinkers, the good and the bad: the state where all lose themselves, the good and the bad: the state, where the slow suicide of all—is called 'life.'"

The sin of the schoolmaster against man as he piles dead history in the image of the ugliest man upon the present, and blocks his future—all this has first attained to power and recognition through the political system, and has thereby become a fatality, an extremity of the cultural life of old Europe. So Nietzsche saw and said as he looked abroad over the lands and peoples of his day. Out of the spiritual formation of the individual, the state made a mechanical drill of the masses. Out of the teacher and educator of the people, there came to be a master of a school, a slave of a rule, of a method. The state laid its hand on head and heart—then it needed the historian to manipulate and adjust history for political purposes. The state took science into its service—and conquered praise from the mouth of the artist himself!

To seek salvation from political sickness, this is now the redemptive service of all the men and women to whom man is higher than the state—to whom the ideals of humanity and of personality are alone sacred and supreme. The remedy today is what it once was in old Rome: secession, migration of the spirit to the holy mount of freedom, where the soul breathes no state air, where it is not suffocated and oppressed by the iron bars of the state. Secession in art—that means unpolitical art, an art which knows higher tasks than the glorification of political power, than the erection of shafts of victory, than promenades of victory! Secession in science—that means a free university whose teachers, says Nietzsche, do not receive their appointments through superannuated militarists and ministers of state, a high school of the spirit, in which there are no political honors and insignia, but also no state discipline and non-age—a school where everything is said and taught which an earnest inquiring soul can receive from the world of nature and of man in earnest responses of his spirit. Secession in religion—that means, finally, a free church, in which faith is not an official dictation, but a firm conviction of the inner man, a church where worship is not an inherited rule and custom, but the heart's and life's free expression in ways of its own. Who will deny that the best and highest which our day has to show in every sphere of the spirit's life, must be considered
everywhere as a work of secession, of rebellion; that all this has an anarchistic vein, an unpolitical, antipolitical, yes, a superpolitical stamp? Over all finer natures there have come a bitter depression and indignation at all political doing and dickering; they would rather stay and work at home where no one strives nor cries, than walk the streets so full of the uproar which politicians make. All souls, turned to within, the clairvoyants of the spirit and the fine tasters of life agree of course with Nietzsche, that "where the state ends, there man begins"! The state has its pattern and uniform for the "many too many," for the superfluous who in great choruses bawl of the most superfluous that there is for man. Great souls seek sites for lone ones and twain ones, they seek them beyond the many too many—there they sing the songs of that which is necessary for man, the single and irreplaceable melody, through which man jubilates along to his higher existence. The state has killed and crushed the peoples, it has summoned into the world the great lie: "I, the state, am the people." But there is only one redemption and convalescence from the state on the part of the people, a flight "to people who do not understand the state and hate it as an evil eye and sin in custom and law; which speaks its own tongue of good and evil and makes its own language of custom and law." Thus is secession the emigration from the state into the people; the culture of the future is the overcoming of the state through the people!

To be sure, it is with mixed feelings that we penetrate and interpret the preaching of the anarchist Nietzsche. The catalogue of sins which, on a deeper observation of life, we have to charge to state cultus is indeed great, and hence there is an anarchistic side to the heart of the modern man, as soon as he thinks of his own rights, as soon as he requires light and air for the free unfolding of his personality. We know that the state does not possess eternal life. The state is only a special form in which human social life can exist, not human society itself. There have not always been states. They came to be in the long course of the evolution of a people's life! What comes to be must pay its toll to Father Time. The state will change—and pass! Hence it is indeed folly and superstitition, it is idolatry, when we attribute eternal worth to transitory phenomena, and accord them an unconditional dominion over us.

But, for all that, there is the state still; and although we may not say with Hegel, the special hero of state omnipotence, that all that is real is rational, yet never is anything that really is, entirely irrational. The state is still the soil on which we stand and which we till, that it may be able to receive the seed of the spirit—the state is an evolutionary stage of human culture. It is a vessel for the reception of the life of the human spirit. It is one of the conditions of life through which present man must make his way of necessity, if he is to fulfil his highest destiny. Therefore it is also folly and superstitition, an idolatry of one's own ego, and of one's own personality, if a man thinks he can unfold the wealth of the human by turning aside from the state. Where the life interests of man solidify to political
tendencies, there remains something for the solitary man to see and to learn, to do and to achieve; and it is a subtle and dangerous temptation when a man in his solitudes proposes to find his satisfaction in the enjoyment of his books and in the world of his own thoughts and feelings without concern for the weal or woe of the political body of which he is a member. Politics is raw to refined natures. But so is all the material with which man labors, and out of which he fashions what is fine. Let creative spirits make out of the state a human society in which all human greatness can grow.

The idolatry of the state is, like any idolatry, a poison in popular life. But the antidote which anarchism administers to the present generation, sick of the state, namely, dominion on the part of the ego, the cultus of the Ichmensch, does not make the matter better, but perhaps only worse. The personality of man is indeed his summum bonum, his soul and life; but only the whole, free, full personality, which feels the pulsations of the common life of humanity, of the world—only the man to whom, as old Terence said, nothing human is foreign, because he is in a position to read in all the human the language and revelation of the eternal. This man is a political being, but not a political being alone. He has his own soul which he affirms against any claim of politics and preserves from injury. He lives in the state, but also above the state. He knows well-springs of being without which the state would be a desert and dry ground. He is a religious personality who falls down and supplicates no majesty, because he knows God whom alone we ought to worship and serve!

Book Discussion

Egomania


You have surely come across that ubiquitous individual who immortalizes his travels abroad through innumerable "Kodaks," to be rubbed into your eyes on every opportune and inopportune occasion. He bores you ad nauseam. Why? You are offered an opportunity to observe the majestic Mont Blanc, the smoking Vesuvius, the respectable Eiffel Tower, the San Marco, the Brandenburg Gate, the Westminster Abbey, and the rest of the hackneyed wonders. Yet you are nauseated. Your individual has caused the Kodak to utilize the magnificent views as backgrounds for his own central figure; you are compelled to seek the Schlangenberg behind the back of the complacently smiling tourist. A curious rooster strolling over a map is harmless, until he gets an inspiration to add something of his own.
With what impatience I have awaited Frank Harris's *Contemporary Portraits*! Not that the name of the "painter" appeals to me tremendously; I am rather uneasy about the cleverists and the renegades who of late have found refuge on the hospitable pages of Mr. Viereck's monthly pamphlet. But will you consider extravagant my expectation that any portraitist would reveal exciting things about such unique sitters as Whistler, Wilde, Verlaine, Swinburne, Maupassant, Maeterlinck, Rodin, France, or about such remote, semi-legendary personages as Carlyle, Renan, Burton, Browning?—The book gave me a slap in the face.

The very first chapter annoyed me. I could not make myself believe in the veracity of Mr. Harris's conversation with Carlyle, which took place some time in 1877 during a stroll. Mr. Harris is not a bad fiction writer, but as a hero of his own fiction he appears clumsy. The interview presents a study in black and white; the black is the crude, narrow, obstinate Scotch­man, while the white is, of course, the brilliant, witty, condescending Mr. Harris. This is the leitmotif of the whole book. The "Portraits" are used to emphasize and accentuate the superior features of the "painter"; the "sitters" are familiarly patted on the shoulder, pulled by a string-like marion­ettes, and made to talk "nice" by whim of the ventriloquist. Defenceless dummies!

In one place Mr. Harris spontaneously exclaims—about the only time he gives the impression of spontaneity: "What a pity St. Paul did not write a 'Life of Jesus!'" Frank Harris would. He would surely not miss the opportunity of capitalizing such a "contemporary portrait." What a pity Mr. Harris has not met at a dinner given by Lady-and-So Mr. Socrates, or Mr. Moses, or Mr. Adam! What a loss of a good seller.

An editor of a brave magazine, which allows its contributors the free use of the first personal pronoun, has rebuked me for my too-subjective animosity towards Mr. Harris's book and for my failure to see its other, better, side. I find my justification in Mr. Harris's own words: "I put these portraits forth as works of art." In the same measure as the artist is allowed—or rather, expected—to present that which seems to him most intrinsic and striking in his subject, so am I, the appreciator, to have the liberty of criticizing in a work of art those features that appear to me most salient and conspicuous. As a matter of fact I enjoyed reading Mr. Harris's characteristics of the persons he has met; he doubtless has an artistic touch in his pen-and-ink portraits; his criticisms on Mathew Arnold, John Davidson, Richard Middleton, are interesting. But it is the leitmotif of the book that gives you a general impression. The impression it made on me I have told in the preceding paragraphs. The pages on Whistler, Wilde, Verlaine, Renan, and others, are malodorous; the persons whom you admire or love appear blurred and maimed, for in front of them spins the annoying little figure of the portraitist, who preaches good behavior to Oscar, who is char-
itable to Jimmy, who tells silly anecdotes about Paul, who condescendingly smiles at old Renan, and journalistically interviews Anatole France and Maeterlinck.

Pot-Boilers


It does make you feel sorry. Sorry for a big talent corrupted by the omnipotent Huhn-Public. During the Russo-Japanese war Andreyev wrote his _Red Laughter_, a rough affair, yet powerful in its horror. This pamphlet is nothing but an editorial from an anti-German newspaper.

A test of man's well-being and consciousness of power is the extent to which he can acknowledge the terrible and questionable character of things, and whether he is in any need of a faith at the end.

——_Nietzsche._
The Poets' Translation Series

The object of the editors of this series is to present a number of translations of Greek and Latin poetry and prose, especially of those authors who are less frequently given in English.

This literature has too long been the property of pedagogues, philologists and professors. Its human qualities have been obscured by the wranglings of grammarians, who love it principally because to them it is so safe and so dead.

But to many of us it is not dead. It is more alive, more essential, more human than anything we can find in contemporary English literature. The publication of such classics, in the way we propose, may help to create a higher standard for poetry than that which prevails, and a higher standard of appreciation of the writers of antiquity, who have suffered too long at the hands of clumsy metrists. We do not deny that there are many good translations in English of classical writers—Lang's Homer and Theokritos, Mackail's Anthology or Aldington's Apuleius, for instance; but too often such works are lonely and austerely expensive.

The Poet's Translation Series will appear first in The Egoist (starting September 1st) and will then be reprinted and issued as small pamphlets, simple and inexpensive, so that none will buy except to read. The translations will be done by poets whose interest in their authors will be neither conventional nor frigid. The translators will take no concern with glosses, notes, or any of the apparatus with which learning smothers beauty. They will endeavor to give the words of these Greek and Latin authors as simply and as clearly as may be. Where the text is confused, they will use the most characteristic version; where obscure, they will interpret.

The first six pamphlets, when bound together, will form a small collection of unhackneyed poetry, too long buried under the dust of pedantic scholarship. They range over a period of two thousand
years of literature—a proof of the amazing vitality of the Hellenic tradition.

If this venture has the success its promoters look for, other similar and possibly larger pamphlets will be issued.

1. (Ready September) The complete poems (25) of Anyte of Tegea, now brought together in English for the first time: translated by Richard Aldington. (8 pages) 2d. (2½d. post free).

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6. The Mosella of Ausonius, translated by F. S. Flint. All the pamphlets—except the first—will be twelve pages long and cost four pence; 4½d. post free. The series of six 2s. post free. The pamphlets will be issued monthly.

To be obtained from: The Egoist, Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, W. C., or from Richard Aldington, 7 Christ Church Place, Hampstead, N. W.

Subscriptions will be taken through The Little Review.

Wanted: A "Spoon River Anthology."

A first edition of The Spoon River Anthology has been borrowed or filched from our office. First editions are scarce, and we prize ours beyond words. Will the guilty person please return it; or will any one wishing to dispose of his at a reasonable price let us know about it?
The Reader Critic

"CULTURE"

Richard Aldington, London:

. . . It is almost impossible to get English people to subscribe to an American literary review. English people are so conservative, so self-satisfied, that it will be years and years and years and years before they even become aware of the new spirit in America—and then it will be more years and years and years before they will take it seriously and still more years before they will pay to know anything of it. In a sense, you are more fortunate than we are—in England the big circulating libraries have almost stopped the sale of new books, and there is such an amazing mental lassitude that no one ever buys literary and art periodicals. England is well behind the four other great powers—France, Russia, Austria, and Germany. There seems to be a tremendous Renaissance in Russia, but that comes, I think, from their reading French stuff seriously. Have you ever tried to make an English person—I expect it's the same with Americans—read a new French book, a book which has original ideas? If you haven't, don't!

. . . Is Comstock's successor worse or better? It seems to me—who am down-trodden by a corrupt aristocracy—amazing that the Great Republic (?) should humbly let Comstock sit on its head for forty years; why even in stodgy, money-bagged, hypocritical old England, someone would have arisen—some Shaw—and assassinated him! There is no tyranny for the artist comparable to that of an "enlightened" (God save us) democracy. Notice that Vienna and Petrograd, the two capitals of benighted feudalism, are, at this moment, the two great art centres of the world. Paris has become a provincial town since the war; I don't believe it will recover—at least not for a decade.

TO THE EDITOR, "WHO TENTS—INTENSE!"

"Ursus":

How dare you seek the adventure of beauty? To release, to joy, to clout with hilarious freedom is to outguess the crowd. To outguess the crowd is to encourage critical suicide in episodal splendor. The unknowable is not wanted known; to venture is contagion.

Man ruts—knowingly, wilfully; slithers in purring abandon so long as steaks fry and pieces of silver rattle in the pocket. When you attempt to stir unthinking recesses, whip at latent possibilities, you prove that you outclass, and he stares fishily from his Mongolian eyes. You seek beauty; the average person tortures it! His father did not diet him upon such. Your creed is not his. Mass brains chemicalize into a common ingredient. Why precipitate? The world wants its filing cabinets to contain regular, trimmed memos.

How dare you seek the adventure of beauty? Shall you consecrate yourself to individual newness, to truth, against age-old creeds? Against mountains of odds?

Then I congratulate you. You are different—you shall be singular and never plural. Go your way! You may find beauty because of the adventures in seeking it.

Arthur Davison Ficke, Davenport, Iowa:

Witter Bynner has sent me a copy of his letter to you on the subject of the imagists, with the rubric—"Come at them yourself! Print something about them! The public
mustn't think itself alone in disliking them!" In spite of our very old friendship,—or perhaps because of it,—he and I have never agreed on any subject under the sun; and now, when I find that the greater part of his letter is just what I should like to say, I am dissuaded from following his suggestion only by the fear that he and I must both be wrong since we are at last in agreement. But I suppose that even an unholy alliance cannot poison a good cause; and I therefore beg you to append this as a footnote to Bynner's communicaton.

AN OBJECTION

John F. Weedon, Chicago:

Your menu promises "Literature, Drama, Music, Art," and as your guest I sat down to enjoy one of those "feasts of reason and flows of soul,—so extremely rare since The Chap Book went out of print,—and I was immediately plunged into five or six pages of dyspeptic regurgitation of war dope.

I hate the war,—I am sick of the war. It is not, according to my well-worn lexicon, either Literature, Drama, Music, or Art. I came near pitching your magazine into the waste paper basket and getting a drink to take the taste out of my mouth.

Really, we caterpillars are tired of the war. Can we not find refuge from it even in THE LITTLE REVIEW, or will you always get the head of Charles the First into your Memorial?

However, I admit the picture of Rupert Brooke alone was worth the price of admission; and Ben Hecht,—I don't know who he is,—I could love like a brother. Lucian Cary is enjoyable, and your stuff is good but a little inclined to be sophomorish. I bet old Dr. Johnson would have insisted that "you define your terms, young man."

Anyhow, as an elderly gentleman with a large family I bow to the superknowledge and exuberance of your youth, and freely admit you are giving full value for the money. But you will cut out the "vaarr"—won't you?

The following letter, typical of many that come in, expresses much of what we have hoped to do through THE LITTLE REVIEW.

Until I read Mr. Ben Hecht's article on The American Family in the August issue I had not believed that any one in America would have the courage to give expression to the terrible truth about our most prized institution, the family. It is splendid; it is the kind of thing we "struggling daughters" need to keep us from being unselfish once too often.

I imagine there are not enough emancipated souls in Chicago who are understanding your work to make a word of sincere appreciation a mere bore . . . My social position is such that just a suggestion of the revolutionary things which are "going on inside" would be a matter for intense horror to most of my friends. THE LITTLE REVIEW is one of the sources from which I am deriving strength to cling to my ideals, and to keep on hoping until school is finished and it is time to strike for freedom.

THE "ARTIST IN LIFE"

M. Isadore Lyon, Chicago:

Please permit me to point out to all the Mrs. Quackenbushes in one that the obviously clear though much misunderstood article, The Artist in Life, so far from being a snobbish self-revelation of pessimism is a clarion feast of optimism; it is the optimistic urge back of it which presupposes people do possess latent will power, latent art love back of—deep under—the lethargic brooding sleep of the Mass. It is a strong plea to cease crawling in slumpy illusions and become self-conscious, self-directed beings. I would ask the Quackenbushes to read it from this view point.
PADRAIC COLUM, the distinguished Irish poet and lecturer, says: "POETRY is the best magazine, by far, in the English language. We have nothing in England or Ireland to compare with it."

William Marion Reedy, Editor of the St. Louis Mirror, says: "POETRY has been responsible for the Renaissance in that art. You have done a great service to the children of light in this country."

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