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FINE ARTS THEATRE

For TWO WEEKS, Beginning
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THE CHICAGO PLAYERS
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Evenings (Except Wednesdays and Thursdays)
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by
EMILE ZOLA

FINE ARTS THEATRE
Poems

H. D.

Late Spring

We can not weather all this gold
Nor stand under the gold from elm-trees
And the re-coated sallows.
We can not hold our heads erect
Under this golden dust.

We can not stand
Where enclosures for the fruit
Drop hot—radiant—slight petals
From each branch.

We can not see:
The dog-wood breaks—white—
The pear-tree has caught—
The apple is a red blaze—
The peach has already withered its own leaves—
The wild plum-tree is alight.

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Night

The night has cut each from each
And curled the petals back from the stalk
And under it in crisp rows:

Under at an unfa\-\altering pace,
Under till the rinds break,
Back till each bent leaf
Is parted from its stalk:

Under at a grave pace,
Under till the leaves are bent
Back till they drop upon the earth,
Back till they are all broken.

O night,
You take the petals of the roses in your hand,
But leave the stark core of the rose
To perish on the branch.
A Deeper Music

MARGARET C. ANDERSON

A PIANO, alone on a stage; shadowed light around and above it; ivory and ebony moving out of the shadow; and the silence that hangs there before the musician plays. There is nothing like it in the world,—nothing more wonderful . . . .

There are "revolutions" going on in all the arts. The revolution in poetry is coming in for a lot of discussion, so that even the layman is conscious of it. His feeling about it is that some effeminate beings called Imagists are trying to emasculate the noble art of poetry. But the thing is happening right under his nose and he is careful to keep posted, in order to be able to defend his favorite theory. As for the stage, he knows that Gordon Craig and Rhinehart have been using screens instead of marble pillars painted against red velvet curtains. In painting he knows all about the cubists and futurists; he even knows that the donkey's tail story was something of a joke. In sculpture he has heard of an unreasonable reaction from Rodin, and he has probably seen Brzeska's head of Ezra Pound. In the ballet he has a rather clear idea of why the old classical form wouldn't serve; perhaps because the Russians have demonstrated so clearly what it was they could do with the new form. In opera he thinks very little is happening. He is right.

But the slowest revolution of all—and the most interesting—is that which is just beginning in the art of the piano. It is the slowest because it is not the public alone that is bound to the old form. The masters themselves have not visioned toward a need that would make a new form inevitable. The need is—a deeper music. And it is the most interesting because the convention that has bound the piano,—virtuosity,—is a more worthy convention than that which has restricted any of the other arts.

There is a universe of the arts in the piano. But it is not a universe now. It is a stunt. The piano has been used for stunts for years and years. It will go on being used that way for years. Well, I am the last one to deprecate the art of these stunts. I think they are beautiful—some of them. I think they have their place. But they have served it too well. I love them more than I love all the opals and rubies and sapphires and emeralds and topaz and amethyst and pearl a jeweller can dip his fingers into and spread out for your dazzled senses. But I love poetry more than jewels. And I love music more than poetry. In the music of the piano you get the best illustration that music is a thing beginning and ending in itself, a thing not of story or image but of sound, a thing that must be understood quite simply in its own terms,—as Hiram Kelly Moderwell puts it, a thing
that must be heard and not seen. And in the revolution that is beginning you get this first pure principle combined with another: that the music of the piano must reach to the passion of life. This is quite different from saying that music must be a dramatization of human life. It is merely saying that ballet dancing could never have produced an Isadora Duncan.

I imagine that Harold Bauer must have said something of this sort to himself. He has certainly said it on the piano. His attitude toward the piano has this sort of prophecy in it. It is a matter of the beauty of sound. The methods of approach of all the "masters" have been the same. They have imposed something upon the piano. But Bauer has approached the handling of the piano as Debussy approached composition—or Schönberg.

When Schönberg wrote that "the alleged tones believed to be foreign to harmony do not exist; they are merely tones foreign to our accepted harmonic system", and that "tonality is not a hard and fast compulsion directing the course of music but a concept which makes it possible for us to give our ideas the requisite aspect of compactness", he was saying practically what Bauer has suggested about the touching of the piano: that virtuosity is only a means to an end, that the springs of the art have been drying up, and that until the musician can hear better he is not worthy of the sounds the piano has to give him. You can't play César Franck with the same hands you use for Liszt. You must change your hands into different "feelers". The piano will give you the quality of almost every instrument. It is as though Bauer had said: "They call this an instrument of percussion. They have laid down its limitation. But I doubt very much whether it will stay within that limitation. I suspect it does not stop there but goes on into a realm where sound is of infinite development." That is why you hear an organ when he plays César Franck; that is why you realize how the Imagists have worked when he plays Debussy; that is why you get a sense of painting in all his music. Bauer puts on the sound like paint. He knows, as Romain Rolland has said, that every art tends to become a universe in itself; that music becomes painting and poetry, that painting becomes music, etc. And Bauer is not a genius. He has merely suggested what will happen to the piano, and paved the way for an openness of mind about it. He has made a good many people gossip of how his scales won't compare with those of the other great ones; but he has made a good many more suspect that there has been something lacking in the ultimatums of the piano athletes. He has done many simple and dynamic things to bring the piano into its own.

But the full achievement of this will go beyond what has been heard yet anywhere; and the man who does it will be scorned as the greatest fool or madman of his time before it is fully understood. It doesn't matter. The thing will happen—I hardly know how. I hardly even know words with which to tell what it will be like. It can only be told on the piano.

In his Spiritual Adventures Arthur Symons has a story of a musician who says more true things about the piano than I have ever found any-
The Little Review

where else. One of them is this: "Most modern music is a beggar for pity. The musician tries to show us how he has suffered and how hopeless he is. He sets his toothache and his heartache to music, putting those sufferings into the music without remembering that sounds have their own agonies which alone they can express in a perfect manner." This is where the "lions and panthers of the piano" have failed most: they have not loved the sounds enough. They have not allowed each sound its full life. This is the real reason why the piano has stopped short of itself. They might almost as well have played bells. You can strike bells which will bring out any number of tunes, loud or soft, with every possible variety of phrasing. But your interest will be in the tune rather than in the sound. You can't limit the piano to the tunes that can be played upon it. You don't treat a violin that way, nor an organ. And of course you can register a piano almost as fully as an organ with the "stops" that are in the ends of your fingers. How fascinating it is, and how wonderful!

But most piano recitals are like recitations—or some sort of performance on a school platform. Their beauty ends with the beauty of style, phrasing, finish, tone, taste. It is diction rather than music. It is science. Busoni is not a prophet; he is an orchestra. Hofmann loves style more than he does sound. Godowsky loves patterns more than sound. Gabriowitsch loves delicate sounds intensely, but has no feeling for the sounds of great chords. Zeisler loves rhythm more than sound. And so on. Paderewski loves the piano. He is genius, pure and simple—though of course there is nothing less pure or simple. He may do what he likes—break sounds into bits, crack them like nuts. It doesn't matter. He never fails to communicate a mood to the instrument—the mood of his personal equation. And that is art. "Przybyszewski playing Chopin"—that would also be art. What have the excellent piano concerts you hear to do with art, with inspiration? Piano playing is certainly something to be surpassed. Music is the thing! And that means ecstasy, madness, divinity,—the beauty upon which all the ends of the world are come. The design of sound . . . Each sound that comes out of the piano is something alive . . .

And now for the interesting part.

When I talk of the "new music"—which will be different from Debussy and Schönberg and all the rest of them—I am not talking of how far beyond the limits of known harmony, or the anarchy which disregards any harmonic system, we shall go. Undoubtedly, as far as all that is concerned, "some day some one will dig down to the roots and turn up music as it is before it is tamed to the scale." This seems to me a settled fact. But I am much more interested in the piano itself and the deliverer who is to set it free from the lie which has grown up around it and make it vibrate to a truer color. It is all in the plane of vibration, I believe. It will come about in three ways: through the mechanical development of the piano, through a new type of music, and chiefly through the new type of pianist.
You will have your Mason and Hamlin—(this is not advertising; it is merely a conviction)—you will have that great dark-winged-victory standing alone on a stage; you will care a great deal about the color of the light around and above it—the tones of the walls within which your beautiful sounds are to live; you will touch that ivory and ebony—oh, there are no words! You will see those sounds against the color.

You may write a program for your audience—something like this:

I believe the right technical approach is simply a different kind of friendship—or love affair—with each sound.

I believe that tone goes way beyond the range between pianissimo and fortissimo, between legato and staccato, etc. Tone is radiance, eagerness, light, darkness, devastation, something that melts, something that cries and burns, something that shatters.

I do not believe in playing “programs”—ending with a blaze of Liszt. I couldn’t play the Campanella to save my life, but I don’t see that it matters.

I do not believe in “program” music—beginning with Bach (now that the public has learned to applaud him) and ending with Liszt. I couldn’t play the Campanella to save my life, but I don’t see that it matters.

I do not believe in nature music—babbling brooks and warbling birds. I believe in nature mood, just as I do in the mood of all great phenomena.

The music I have made will be sometimes merely the curve of a mood—like the curve of line in Watts’s Orpheus and Eurydice; or merely the design of a color or a scent. But always it will keep close to two fundamentals: that “hard gemlike flame” and the rhythm of sex.

All this will come under the classification of those things which are so worth knowing that they can never be taught. It will belong to that individual who can say the new word—his own word. It will make the piano something we have scarcely dreamed of. It will make up an art that has nothing to do with the four walls of a room. It could not be set to “Questions and Answers” in The Ladies’ Home Journal. It will have little to do with accomplishment, but everything to do with that which is of all things the highest manifestation of life.
Debutante

You are a faded shawl about the shoulders of your mother. A puff of wind catches at your fluttering edge to jerk you away. But she draws you close, growing cold in the warm young breeze. She holds you with her shiny round pin, as all young ones are clasped to old by round things grown shiny with age.

In your wistful tired eyes I see the trembling of her shawl as she breathes.

The Pillar

When your house grows too close for you,
When the ceilings lower themselves, crushing you,
There on the porch I shall wait,
Outside your house.
You shall lean against my straightness,
And let night surge over you.
The Pathos of Proximity*

ALEXANDER S. KAUN

PULL down the shades. Turn out the lights. So. We do not want loud electricity. We shall have a jewelled light. For I am rich to-night. Come, let us recline on Bagdad cushions and Teheran rugs ("Only savages sit", Mme. Zinovyeva, the Russian Lesbian, told us), and I shall scatter over the fantastic patterns jewels and stones. How softly they illumine the thick dark—these varicolored glowflies, these streams of wine, emerald wine, and amethyst wine, and wine of topazes "yellow as the eyes of tigers, and topazes pink as the eyes of a wood pigeon, and green topazes that are as the eyes of cats", and wine of opals "that burn always with an icelike flame", and wine of onyxes that are like "the eyeballs of a dead woman", and wine streams of sapphires and chrysolites and rubies and turquoises and ambers and pearls. . . I am rich to-night, and we shall bathe our eyes in quivering rainbows, and our fingers shall wander lightly through dimly-jewelled ripples, stirring up old visions, exotic unhuman faces, enchanting monsters, dancing rhythmic words, fantastic moonlit thoughts.

What songless tongueless ghost of sin crept through the curtains of the night?

"In exquisite raiment, and to the delicate sound of flutes, the sins of the world are passing in dumb show before us. Things that we have dimly dreamed of are suddenly made real. Things of which we have never dreamed are gradually revealed."

Lift up your large black satin eyes which are like cushions where one sinks!

Fawn at my feet, fantastic Sphinx, and sing me all your memories!


Uneasiness. The moon filters through the stained embrasure.


. . . Elle ressemble à une petite princesse qui porte un voile jaune, et des pieds d’argent. Elle ressemble à une princesse qui a des petites colombes blanches. . . On dirait qu’elle danse.

. . . On dirait une femme hystérique, une femme hystérique qui va cherchant des amants partout. Elle est nue aussi. Elle est toute nue. Les nuages cherchent à la vêtir, mais elle ne veut pas. Elle chancelle à travers les nuages comme une femme ivre. . .

. . . Cachez la lune! Cachez les étoiles!

No, it is not the moon that causes the uneasiness. It is that Egyptian scarabæus in lapis lazuli that bedims the scattered jewels and envelops me in sadness. An image beckons to me out of the ultramarine glimmer, an image of a king, a lord, possessor of a golden tongue and of a scintillating mind, yet an image repulsive in its carnal vulgarity, its dull inexpressive eyes, its fat jowl, its unreserved mouth. On a stout, democratic finger guffaws the scarabæus.

Lights! Turn on the lights.

I have been sybaritizing with thirteen beautiful little volumes of Oscar Wilde, recently published by G. P. Putnam’s Sons. It is a useful, although often painful, ordeal—ventilating the store-room of your old gods. There was a time when I worshipped Wilde unqualifiedly. As a freshman I wrote a pathetic paper in which I demanded the canonization of the author of De Profundis. Alas, I have come to discern spots on the sun.

As a decorative artist Wilde has no flaws. The perfect design applied in his multifarious productions makes one compare him to the titans of the High Renaissance: Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit. The graceful form justifies even his obvious moral-fairy-tales, even his unoriginal, Keats-esque and Poe-esque poems. It is for the style that we accept his De Profundis, that insincerest attempt for sincerity. But Wilde strove for more than mere external artistic effect. In his critical essays he lifted the critic to the heights of co- and re-creation, and instructed him to demand from a work of art eternal values. “The critic rejects those obvious modes of art that have but one message to deliver and having delivered it become dumb and sterile, and seeks rather for such modes as suggest reveries and moods and by their imaginative beauty make all interpretations true and no interpretation final.” We, his disciples in aesthetic valuations, come to our
master with his own criterion, and find him on more than one occasion
grievously wanting in the requirements that he had set up for the artist.
He either has no message to deliver, as in his clever plays, or he delivers
his message in such an outspoken way that no field is left for suggestion
or imaginative interpretation. He had transgressed Mallarmé's maxim—
"To name is to kill; to suggest is to create" not only in *The Ballad of Read­ing Gaol*, the work that belongs to the crushed, semi-penitent Wilde; he
committed this unpardonable sin in his masterpiece, *Salomé*! That won­
derful harmonious ghastliness, woven out of moods and motives, surcharged
with suggestive tragedy and fatalism, suddenly breaks into a criminal vul­
garity through the introduction of a "real" dead head, which drives away
illusion and atmosphere, and strikes your nostrils with the odor of theatri­
cal grease paint.

The rehabilitation of Oscar Wilde was imposed upon the Anglo-Saxon
world by the continent, especially by Germany, the expropriator of Eng­
lish geniuses, where the production of Wilde's plays has rivelled in fre­
quency those of Shakespeare. I know of a German pundit who chose as
a topic for his doctor's dissertations "The Influence of Pater on Oscar
Wilde". But continental depreciation is as fast as Anglo-Saxon appre­
ciation is slow. Neue Zeiten, neue Vögel; neue Vögel, neue Lieder. Euro­
pean literature in recent decades has had more meteors than stars. Wilde's
flash is rapidly vanishing. You may call me a Cassandra, but I venture a
prophecy that soon Wilde will find his peaceful place in American colleges
alongside with Austen, Eliot, Meredith, etc.

*Salomé* will always remain one of the world's great symphonies,—a
symphony in which the motive of doom rends your soul from the first
sound to the last. *Poems in Prose* will never lose their charm as ivory-
carved bits of ideal conversation—the art in which Wilde was supreme,
the art that is almost unknown in this country where it is substituted by
talk. His other works are doomed to be time's victims. Not because they
are worthless, but for the reason of their adaptability. One must be a
prophet, a Nietzsche, who hurls his seeds over many generations, in order
to endure. Wilde was aware of this danger, and he wished to be mis­
derstood, but he lacked the profundity for such a merit. He did not
mirror his age; but he had realized the potentialities of his age, had popu­
larized them to such a degree that they have become the possession of the
crowd. We are not any longer dazzled by the clever witticisms in his *Plays*;
they have become almost commonplace. Even the graceful, radiating *Inten­tions* appear to us somewhat obvious. Why?—It is the pathos of proxim­
ity! Wilde's paradoxes, *mots*, theories, have proven so appropriate, adapt­
able, and digestible for our age, that it took only one decade to absorb
them into our blood and marrow. Cleverism for the sake of cleverism has
come to be an epidemic in our days; cleverists find Wilde an inexhaustible
source for parasitic exploitation. Our Hunekers (and under this appella-
tive I have in mind the legions of our omniscient boulevardiers-critics) don a Wildesque robe, and have little trouble in passing as genuine before the good-natured public. Unfortunately the constitution of the Hunekers is too weak to absorb Wilde's big truths; they prefer the digestible chaff. Adaptability spells forgetability. Crime and punishment.

Solitude

DAVID O'NEIL

Youth!
If there be madness
In your soul,
Go to the mountain solitudes
Where you can grow up
To your madness.
The Novelist

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

The novelist is about to begin the writing of a novel. For a year he will be at the task and what a year he will have! He is going to write the story of Virginia Borden, daughter of Fan Borden, a Missouri river raftsman. There in his little room he sits, a small, hunched-up figure with a pencil in his hand. He has never learned to run a type-writer and so he will write the words slowly and painfully, one after another on the white paper.

What a multitude of words! For hours he will sit perfectly still, writing madly and throwing the sheets about. That is a happy time. The madness has possession of him. People will come in at the door and sit about, talking and laughing. Sometimes he jumps out of his chair and walks up and down. He lights and relights his pipe. Overcome with weariness he goes forth to walk. When he walks he carries a heavy walking stick and goes muttering along.

The novelist tries to shake off his madness but he does not succeed. In a store he buys cheap writing tablets and, sitting on a stone near where some men are building a house, begins again to write. He talks aloud and occasionally fingers a lock of hair that falls down over his eyes. He lets his pipe go out and relights it nervously.

Days pass. It is raining and again the novelist works in his room. After a long evening he throws all he has written away.

What is the secret of the madness of the writer? He is a small man and has a torn ear. A part of his ear has been carried away by the explosion of a gun. Above the ear there is a spot, as large as a child's hand, where no hair grows.

The novelist is a clerk in a store in Wabash Avenue in Chicago. When he was a quite young man he began to clerk in the store and for a time promised to be successful. He sold goods, and there was something in his smile that won its way into all hearts. How he liked the people who came into the store and how the people liked him!

In the store now the novelist does not promise to be successful. There is a kind of conspiracy in the store. Although he tries earnestly he continues to make mistakes and all of his fellows conspire to forgive and conceal his mistakes. Sometimes when he has muddled things badly they are impatient and the manager of the store, a huge, fat fellow with thin grey hair, takes him into a room and begins to scold.

The two men sit by a window and look down into Wabash Avenue. It is snowing and people hurry along with bowed heads. So much do the
novelist and the fat grey-haired man like each other that the scolding does not last. They begin to talk and the hours pass. Presently it is time to close the store for the night and the two go down a flight of stairs to the street.

On the corner stands the novelist and the store-manager, still talking. Presently they go together to dine. The manager of the store looks at his watch and it is eight o'clock. He remembers a dinner engagement with his wife and hurries away. On the street car he blames himself for his carelessness. "I should not have tried to reprimand the fellow," he says, and laughs.

It is night and the novelist works in his room. The night is cold and he opens a window. There is, in his closet, a torn woolen jacket given him by a friend, and he wraps the jacket about him. It has stopped snowing and the stars are in the sky.

The talk with the store-manager has inflamed the mind of the novelist. Again he writes furiously. What he is now writing will not fit into the life-story of Virginia Borden but, for the moment, he thinks that it will and he is happy. Tomorrow he will throw all away, but that will not destroy his happiness.

Who is this Virginia Borden of whom the novelist writes and why does he write of her? He does not know that he will get money for his story and he is growing old. What a foolish affair. Presently there may be a new manager in the store and the novelist will lose his place. Once in a while he thinks of that and then he smiles.

The novelist is not to be won from his purpose. Virginia Borden is a woman who lived in Chicago. The novelist has seen and talked with her. Like the store-manager she forgot herself talking to him. She forgot the torn ear and the bald spot where no hair grew and the skin was snow white. To talk with the novelist was like talking aloud to herself. It was delightful. For a year she knew him and then went away to live with a brother in Colorado where she was thrown from a horse and killed.

When she lived in Chicago many people knew Virginia Borden. They saw her going here and there in the streets. Once she was married to a man who was leader of an orchestra in a theater but the marriage was not a success. Nothing that Virginia Borden did in the city was successful.

The novelist is to write the life story of Virginia Borden. As he begins the task a great humbleness comes over him. Tears come into his eyes. He is afraid and trembles.

In the woman who talked and talked with him the novelist has seen many strange, beautiful, unexpected little turns of mind. He knows that in Virginia Borden there was spirit that, but for the muddle of life, might have become a great flame.

It is the dream of the novelist that he will make men understand the
spirit of the woman they saw in the streets. He wants to tell the store-
manager of her and the little wiry man who has a desk next to his own.
In the Wabash Avenue store there is a woman who sits on a high stool with
her back to the novelist. He wants to tell her of Virginia Borden, to make
her see the reality of the woman who failed, to make all see that such a
woman once lived and went about among the women of Chicago.

As the novelist writes events grow in his mind. His mind is forever
active and he is continually making up stories about himself. As the
Virginia Borden whom men saw was a caricature of the Virginia Borden
who lived in the mind of the novelist, so he knows that he is himself but
a shadow of something very real.

And so the novelist puts himself into the book. In the book he is
a large, square-shouldered man with tiny eyes. He is one who came to
Chicago from a village in Poland and was leader of an orchestra in a
theatre. As the orchestra leader the novelist married Virginia Borden
and lived in a house with her.

You see the novelist wants to explain himself also. He is a lover
and so vividly does he love that he has the courage to love even himself.
And so it is the lover that sits writing and the madness of the writer is
the madness of the lover. As he writes he is making love. Surely all
can understand that!

Because sexual love is the most useful and common type of excitement we are apt to think it necessary to life, when the truth is that it is excitement itself which is life's essential.—
Rebecca West.
Asperities

MITCHELL DAWSON

Threat
If you should come into my cave
Bringing molded beads of sunlight
For offering—
I would trample your beads
And crush you
With that great bone of darkness
Which I have gnawed for years
And which has left me
Meagre as a gnarled root.

In Passing
One moment—
Your friend
Has squeezed great drops from you
Upon his palette;
With your color he has wrought—
Masterpieces, you say?
But the empty tube
Grown flat in his hand,
Will he hold it or pick up another,
Your friend—

Teresa
Do you remember Antonino—
Swift-winged, green in the sun?
Into the snap-dragon throat of desire
Flew Antonino.
Snap! . . .
The skeleton of Antonino has made
A good husband, a good provider.
Amy Lowell's New Book

F. S. FLINT

AMY LOWELL has sent me her book, *Six French Poets,* who are: Emile Verhaeren, Albert Samain, Remy de Gourmont, Henri de Régnier, Francis Jammes, and Paul Fort; and it occurs to me that I must be her severest critic—are we not rivals? When, in the summer of 1914, before the war was dreamed of, she told me over her dinner-table of her intention to write this book and of the names of the poets she had chosen, I objected to Samain. Samain, I said, was exquisite, but not important; and he could only be read a few pages at a time without weariness. Stuart Merrill and Francis Vielé-Griffin, I went on, are both more considerable poets; and both are Americans; and since you insist on including Remy de Gourmont as one of your poets, you might increase your number to seven, in many ways an appropriate number where poets are concerned; and so on. But she only motioned the waiter to fill my glass with champagne; and what can a man do against such argument and such a will? And now, even if I wished to damn her book (I do not), she will have already heaped coals of fire upon my head in her preface, where she says kind things about me because I happened to mention the names of one or two books to her, information she did not really need.

Miss Lowell states that she has "made no attempt at an exhaustive critical analysis of the various works" of her poets. "Rather, I have tried to suggest certain things which appear to the trained poet while reading them. The pages and pages of hair-splitting criticism turned out by erudite gentlemen for their own amusement has been no part of my scheme. But I think the student, the poet seeking new inspiration, the reader endeavoring to understand another poetic idiom, will find what they need to set them on their way." That is so: this book contains six causeries in which Miss Lowell tells you why she loves these poets, and what she loves about them, interrupting her talk every now and then to read some poem to you which illustrates her meaning, introducing every now and then a fragment of biography to correspond with the stage of the poet's work to which she has brought you, or stopping every now and then to pick out rare phrases and rare music of words for your especial delight. No one, I suppose, will have listened to Miss Lowell's causerie in so happy a setting as the sitting-

room on the third floor of a hotel in Piccadilly in which she talked to us in the August of 1914. Through the long French window open in the corner could be seen the length of Piccadilly, its great electric globes, its shining roadway, and, on the left, the tops of the trees of Green Park, dark grey in the moonlight; the noise of the motorbusses and of the taxis reached us in a muted murmur, and at the corner of the park opposite, beneath a street lamp, stood a newsboy, whose headlines we strained our eyes from time to time to catch. It was in this tenseness created by the expectation of news that Miss Lowell read Paul Fort and Henri de Régnier to us (she reads French beautifully); and it is the emotion of those evenings, more than anything else, that her book brings back to me. This is not criticism, I know; but I am a critic displaced. I have quoted Miss Lowell's statement of her aims; let me now give my impression of what she has done. You can take up her book, and read it from beginning to end without weariness or boredom; you will be continually interested, continually delighted, continually moved. Miss Lowell's method of quoting whole poems and long poems as well as detached and beautiful fragments has filled her book with an emotional content that almost makes me afraid to open it; the fear of too much beauty. And, finally, she has flattered the sense of personal superiority in us all by allowing little slips to remain where we may find them, and preen ourselves on our cleverness. When you have absorbed all these sensations, you will have come to Appendix A, which is 140 pages of the finest translations into English that exist of the six poets in question, or, it might truly be said, of the French poets of the symbolist generation. In these translations, Miss Lowell has rarely been tempted away from prose, and you have only to compare her work with the work of other translators to be immediately aware of how much she has gained by her prudence, her artistry had better be said. That Miss Lowell had all the equipment for a task of this kind, her own two books of poems left no doubt at all. In them you will find the same delight in beautiful word and phrase which has undoubtedly led her to modern French poetry as to a friendly country, and to the achievement in these translations. If she had done nothing more than just publish these, she would have earned our gratitude; but she offers them to you as the least of her book (as an appendix!) after you have been amused, interested, instructed and moved. I can conceive of no greater pleasure—my pleasure in the book is of a different kind—than that of the lover of poetry who reads in Miss Lowell's book about modern French poetry for the first time; it must be like falling into El Dorado. I should add that the book contains an excellent signed photograph of each poet.
Here they come in pairs, carrying baskets,
Pale clerks with brilliant neckties and cheap serge suits
Steering girls by the arm, clerks too,
Pretty and slim and smart
Even to yellow kid boots, laced up behind.

They take the electric cars far into the country;
They descend, gaily chattering, at the Amusement Park.
Under the trees they eat the lunch they have carried—
Potato salad and boiled sausages, cream puffs, pretzels, warm beer.

They ride in the roller-coaster, two in a seat—
Glorious danger, warm delicious proximity!
The unaccustomed beer floods their veins like heady wine,
And smothered youth awakens with shrill screams of joy.

The sun sets, and evening is drowned in electric lights;
Arm in arm they wander under the trees
Everywhere meeting others wandering arm in arm
In the same wistful wonder, seeking they know not what.
They have left the park and the crowds, the stars shine out,
A river runs at their feet, behind them a leafy copse,
Away on the other shore the fields of grain
Lie sleeping peacefully in the starlight.
Tonight the world is theirs, a legacy
From those who lived familiar friends with river, field and forest—
Their forebears—
Through the night the same earth-magic moves them
That swayed those ancient ones, long dead—
And these, too, lean and drink,
Drink deeply from the river, the flowing river of life.
Slowly they return to the crowds and the brilliant lights,
Dazzled they look aside, silently climb on the cars—
They cling to the swaying straps, weary, inert, confused.
The lurching car makes halt, they are thrown in each other's arms,—
Alien and unmoved they sway apart again.—
The car moves on through the fields and suburbs back to the town.

They leave the car in pairs, the picnic baskets
Rattling dismally plate and spoon and jar.
Each clerk takes his girl to her lodgings in awkward silence,
Indeed their eyes have not met since by the river
Those wondrous moments
Linked them to earth and night, not to each other.
They look askance,—“Good-night”—the front door closed.
They do not meet again except by chance.
Editorials and Announcements

Wanted: Some Imaginative Reason

N IETZSCHE was an individualist, a hater of the State and of the Prussians, a sick man, a great artist in words to be read with delight and—your tongue in your cheek.” This is from John Galsworthy’s “Second Thoughts on this War” in the January Scribner’s. And so it goes on: he identifies Nietzsche with the new German philosophy (which the poor man would have hated as he did Prussianism), he talks of the Will to Power and the Will to Love as two forces at opposite poles (quite in the manner of the Chestertons), and he derides Shaw’s clear-headed understanding that there is no real struggle of ideals involved in the war as the statement of a brilliant intellect with “no flair, no feelers, none of that instinctive perception of the essence and atmosphere of things which is a so much surer guide than reason.” These things are heart-breaking. If the artists can not understand the prophets of their time why should we expect the masses to do so?

“Homo Sapiens” Is Obscene!

A NTHONY COMSTOCK’S successor, John Sumner, has arrested Alfred Knopf for publishing Przbyszewski’s Homo Sapiens. It was suggested that magistrate Simms read the book before passing judgment. The assistant district attorney protested that “no such cruel punishment be imposed on the court”; but Mr. Simms promised to try it.

P. S. Since writing the above something has happened which my brain still refuses to believe. I have just been told that Mr. Knopf has pleaded “guilty” to this asinine charge, in order to avoid the expense and the publicity, and that Homo Sapiens will no longer be circulated in this country. If it is true it is the most inexcusably ridiculous thing that has happened for many months. It is incredible!

“The World’s Worst Failure”

R EAD REBECCA WEST’S brilliant articles in The New Republic.
Margaret Sanger and the Issue of Birth Control

NOTHING makes me so positively ill as the average radical. The average conservative is a ghastly figure, but at least he is true to type. The average radical is a person who professes to believe something that he does not believe. If he did, he would be in trouble. No one gets into more involuntary trouble than the splendid fools who think they can do quite simply what they believe in, and who proceed to do it.

Margaret Sanger's trial is set for the twenty-fourth of this month. She is under three indictments, based on twelve articles, eleven of which are for printing the words—"prevention of conception." It is these words which are regarded as "lewd, lascivious, and obscene."

Many "radicals" have advised Mrs. Sanger that the wisest thing to do is to plead guilty to this "obscenity" charge and to throw herself upon the mercy of the court—which would mean that she could get off with a light sentence or a small fine. And what would become of her object, which has been to remove the term "prevention of conception" from this section of the penal code, where it has been labelled as filthy, vile, and obscene? No revolution has ever been started by evasion. No one wants Margaret Sanger to be a martyr. The point is that every one must see to it that she is not made a martyr. There is no other way out of these issues. You can't really believe in a thing without knowing that some time you will have to fight for it. Margaret Sanger is taking the stand that her type always takes—just because it is the type that insists on believing hard. We should do all the rest. If you will wire your protest to the District Attorney, office of U. S. Marshal, Post Office Building, New York City, it will help. You may write Margaret Sanger, or send contributions to her, care of Ethel Byrne, 26 Post Avenue, New York City. Please, please do it!

The Russian Literature Group

THE introductory lecture, which took place January 14 and was rather well attended, will be followed by a series of talks on characteristic features in Russian literature. The pivots of the discussion will be Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the moderns. Mr. Kaun presents the point of view of a Russian, not that of a foreign student.

The next lecture will be Friday, February 11, at 8:30 P. M., in room 612, Fine Arts Building.
American Art
(An Indefinite Comment)

REPORT, without regret, my inability to present a definite article about the Annual Exhibit of American Painters and Sculptors. Not that the exhibit is vague—American art is a definite thing: travelling collections, annual exhibits, "friends" and organizations have made it so. But visit after visit left me without words. The feelings I did have were alternately those of amusement, anger, disgust, indifference, mild excitement, and most of the time: "Oh well, what's the use?"

In this exhibit the only thrills or "artistic emotions"—such as one demands of art—were very minor notes and immediately they were felt—thump! (Register amazement and then anger.) You come across something good: its neighbors and surroundings deaden its appeal. Thus, Massonovich's *Moon-Dark*—poet's magic! But alas! it is the only landscape in the exhibit. Next to it is Oliver D. Grover's Italian platitude, near it a Redfield—"blast" his "school" of landscapes, please, someone! Peyraud, Stacey, Butler—oh, what emptiness! The Innes Room cuts into the exhibit separating two rooms from the rest of the galleries. Passing through it one is reminded of the Inness tradition—how it has been ignored! Or at least how his spirit has been ignored. Monet, Renoir, Manet, and some other modern French are hanging elsewhere in the Institute; and then there is Whistler; and again recall Inness; Massonovich, on you rests the perpetuation, not of "American Landscape" but of that spirit we shall always be searching for in landscapes, if landscapes we must have. One parting remark about landscapes. Hayley Lever comes in for some praise and much scolding. He has a good color sense, but strength and virility in composition seem to be lacking. Recall what Jerome Blum has done and you will understand why this half-way person ought to be jolted.

And the portraits. One of Katherine Dudley's decorative-German-poster—"Every Week" cover-design-women, is now the property of the "Friends"—"American Art as it was in the early part of the twentieth century". Yes, indeed, to represent it clearly to posterity you must include at least one of the numerous society dilettantes. However, Gordon Stevenson, Blows, Henri, and Davey as portrait painters are worth watching.

And the rest of the show? Most of the exhibitors have been represented for years. Their pictures are all so familiar. Many of the paintings have appeared year after year. Birge Harrison has a rather atmospheric beach scene; Beal, Albright, Dougherty, Hassam, Sargent, Mary Cassatt,
Symons, Ballin, Weir, Schofield. All are familiar and recognised in the Market Place. These people are standing still. I imagine they are old: grey without magnificence. And being haunted by the truth of that lingering statement that there is no such thing as an old artist—why, dare we say that they are not artists?

Sculptor? There is none.

American Art?—To the Annual Exhibit, Ladies and Gentlemen, for a definite demonstration!

"The Critic."

Photography

"My, isn't that real! Just as it really is! My dear, haven't you often seen Grant Park just like that?—a little changed, of course." . . . She who had spoken was considered not a high-brow but just a good normal cultured woman. Not being a fanatic about art, or anything else, for that matter, she knew absolutely what she was talking about. The thing she was talking about was a painting of Grant Park by Frank C. Peyraud looking east from the top of some Michigan Boulevard office building. . . . It was indeed "real." Peyraud's one-man exhibit at the Art Institute shows him up for what he is—an imitator without imagination, a reproducer, a copyist of nature in her most obvious moods. Not an artist or a creator his landscapes are all "real," "true-to-life" and they are all enjoyed. . . . The Public knows where the originals are and the association and comparison gives them pleasure and the artist fame. . . .

"Oh, how clever, and can't you just hear the policemen, and the buggy-wheels and the bark of the dogs and the grind-organ! Oh, its just wonderful what they can do in music and with an orchestra. I would like to hear that played again!" A woman speaks—not the one referred to above but one who holds the same position in her set towards music as her friend towards "art" in her circle. . . . Of course, she can appreciate music, when it is so natural and real. . . . Carpenter is to be congratulated: the percussions are given a splendid and unusual chance to show their versatility—it is they, it seems to me, and they alone who benefit by this splendid display of music.
"My dear, I just love Stevenson and you know, my dear, those places in his novels are so real—you can just see them so plainly. Of course, I've never been in Scotland or England or France or, my dear, even in New York but really Stevenson is so descriptive, his stories are so gripping it really is as good as traveling. And I have a lovely new book,* just out with beautiful pictures and awfully dear binding, showing how the places Stevenson describes actually exist! You know this book amounts to a liberal education—it's just the same as going abroad. I just adore places and scenes and travel in books—don't you? And Stevenson," she ended with a sigh, "is so romantic." Which reminds me of a line of the Intolerable Wilde's in a letter from Reading—"I see that romantic surroundings are the worst surroundings possible for romantic writers." . . . . "And, my dear, it brings Art so close to everyday life, does it not?—to have artists portray for us our everyday surroundings and show us how nice they are."

Long, long ago one Woman spoke to an Artist—will her type never become extinct?

"But, Mr. Turner (Artist; contemporary of John Ruskin) "I never saw such colors in a sky in all my life."

"My dear madam," he returned, "don't you wish you had?"

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—C. A. Z.
A Brilliant Enemy

*Modern Painting*, by Willard Huntington Wright.
*New York: John Lane Company.*

It is a hard book. None of Clive Bell's sunny cynicism, none of Kandinsky's colorful musicalness; surely nothing in common with the watery ecstacies of our official Chicago modernist, Arthur Jerome Eddy. While reading the voluminous book I experienced an uneasy, an uncertain feeling in regard to the author: to hate him, or just to dislike him? Let me confess that when I turned over the last page I lowered my head in respect for a brilliant enemy.

It is a hard book, brothers-dilletanti. It gives us a merciless thrashing, we who love without being able to state why and wherefore. We are ordered to go to school, children, to study chemistry and color, to approach a work of art as scientifically equipped as a surgeon venturing to operate on a human body. As a reward we are promised the bliss of unadulterated aesthetic emotion. Ah, that aesthetic emotion! For a time we believed that it was possible to grasp that slippery “blue bird” by following Clive Bell's maxim on the significance of form. Alas, this theory is obsolete. Color itself should become form, proclaims Mr. Wright, and he quotes the manifesto of his beloved Synchromists: “In our painting color becomes the generating function. Painting being the art of color, any quality of a picture not expressed by color is not painting!”

With a sigh of relief we reach the chapter on Synchromism. All art up to the year 1912 has been nothing but preliminary experimentation. In Rubens were consummated the aims of the old painters (beginning with the fifteenth century; the Primitives are dismissed as not deserving consideration)—organization and composition. The new cycle opens in the nineteenth century with Turner, Constable, and Delacroix, who experiment in naturalism. Manet introduces thematic freedom—not more. The Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists close the second, naturalistic, cycle, having enriched art with laborious investigations into the secrets of color in relation to light. All these have been but precursors forging weapons for the third and *last* (!) cycle—the final purification of painting. Synchromism, of course. Of this last cycle Cezanne was—hear, Messieurs and
Mesdames Questioners—the primitive! Still Cezanne and Matisse and Picasso ignored color as a generator of form, until two Americans, MacDonald-Wright and Russell, rent asunder the ultimate veil from purity and truth, and the new and final deity emanated from their canvasses, the unsurpassable Synchromism.

There is so much truth in Mr. Wright's statements, particularly in his negative statements, that we may disregard his fanatic credo. Who will deny that painting has been "a bastard art—an agglomeration of literature, religion, photography, and decoration"? Who will not approve of the efforts of modern painters to eliminate all extraneous considerations and make painting as pure an art as music? But why dogmatize again and anew? Why reduce creative art to scientific formulae, to mathematical calculations, to Procrustean standards? Why ridicule those who paint comme l'oiseau chante? Why belittle Kandinsky for his too-subjective symphonies? Why be so hard, Mr. Wright, so finite, so sententious, so encyclical? Why not have a little sense of humor, pray?

Gorky's Memories

My Childhood, by Maxim Gorky.

That Gorky is deteriorating has become a truism. Exaggerated as the importance of his early works has been, one could not deny their freshness, elementary adroitness, soulfulness. But the god-fire was soon exhausted in the none-too-deep spirit of the tramp-poet. He gave us the few good songs he knew about the life of the has-beens, and then went hoarse. The public, Hauptmann's Huhn, is not irresponsible for Gorky's false notes. Compel the canary to imitate the nightingale and the poor bird will lose her short, simple, pretty twitter, and rend her little heart with shrill ejaculations. I have in mind Gorky's later dramas and stories. The book before me makes me think that Gorky has come to recognize his fallacy in attempting to treat subjects alien to his inherent capacity. At any rate in this case he is free from pretentiousness. His childhood memories are related simply, realistically, sans philosophizing, sans allegorizing. It is left for the reader to deduce the "moral" from the sordid panorama that is revealed before him, that malodorous dunghill swarming with human beings, whose crawling and writhing is called life. The book should have been much shorter; the super-abundance of details makes it Dreiserian or Bennetian.
And here I should like to touch upon a sore which reviewers customarily do not discuss, for fear of mauvais ton. Why are the English translations so careless and comical? The book in question is full of such glaring errors, such nonsensical misunderstandings, such atrocious ignorance, that it has made me pull my hair in despair of solving the dilemma whether I should laugh at the comicalness or whether I should rage at the impertinence. I am quite sure that the translator (his name is not revealed) knows as much Russian as Percy Pinkerton, the crucifier of Artibashev; he mutilated Gorky from a German translation, I suspect. The book has another jolly feature—illustrations. They are reproductions from popular Russian paintings, with inscriptions that are supposed to illustrate the text. The naive forgery is too crude and unskilful to mislead even the unsuspecting reader. Will the publishers ever acquire respect for the printed word?

Instruction

*Boston: Houghton Mifflin.*

Have you the sense of humor to guess which is the Problem? Shakespeare or Bacon! About seven hundred gigantic pages on this vital question, with illustrations and data. Are you curious to know who wins? I shall not tell. Why should the reader be spared the reviewer’s agony in wading through the bewildering labyrinth of speculations and arguments till he reaches . . . the same point that he started from. Bon voyage!

Instruction Plus

*Tales from Old Japanese Dramas*, by Asataro Miyamori.
*New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons.*

*Some Musicians of Former Days*, by Romain Rolland.
*New York: Henry Holland Company.*

These books, like the preceding one, are intended to be instructive; they attain their purpose, however, thanks to gracefulness of style and fascination of subject. Mr. Miyamori has condensed the plots of the most famous *joruri*—the epical dramas of the Eeddo period, which are to this day chanted in Japanese theatres. It is an exotic atmosphere of oriental fairyland, tapestries of childlike love and naive passion, of smiling bloody tragedies and blissful harakiris. When lovers are prevented from being
married they do not employ the cumbersome process of elopment, but transport themselves into the other world by committing shinju or double suicide. The author tells us that Metizahormach shinju dramas have had such powerful influence on the audiences that there have been numerous instances of lovers performing that delicious suicide after leaving the theatre. I fear that for the occidental reader the dramas will not prove as convincing—alas.

After Musicians of To-Day the last book of Rolland has little appeal. Journalistic notes, interesting information, brilliant suggestions,—and we look in vain for the profound spirit of the old Romain.

Hospitable Mr. Braithwaite


Mr. Braithwaite has chosen the guests for his house party with kindly catholicity. Amy Lowell, John Gould Fletcher, and H. D. sit uncomfortably in his New England parlor eyeing one another furtively. Clement Wood clowns in a corner. Vachel Lindsay before the mantel-piece declaims to James Oppenheim and Louis Untermeyer, who listen with an air of importance. Edgar Lee Masters sits on the _corpus juris_ and meditates upon the beauties of silence. Sara Teasedale dances in the hallway. Harriet Monroe reclines on a porch chair, listening to the rain. A crowd in the library recreate themselves by reading from a set of British Poets. Percy MacKaye gloomily reads the war news to a group in the dining-room, while little Arvia, his daughter, lisps happily to herself. And alone in the kitchen is Robert Frost roasting chestnuts.

Who will say that Mr. Braithwaite could have better performed the duties of host? Did he omit any of the “older established names”? And did he not make a special Cook’s tour to far off islands (not shown in the atlas of the _Boston Transcript_ office) for the purpose of bringing home with him certain “new discoveries”?

Mr. Braithwaite pats his guests admiringly upon the back and regrets that there are other excellent poets for whom he has no accommodations. Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Maxwell Bodenheim, perhaps he will invite you next time. Is it not a pleasant anticipation?
Empty Souls

The Later Life, by Louis Couperus.
New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.

This is the second part of the tetralogy of “Small Souls” which began to appear in English last year. The slowly-developing epic is pregnant with promises, but, oh how slowly the skein unrolls. We are still in the midst of Dutch bourgeoisie, dull, stony-faced, petty, filthy; again the incessant rain, ever-cloudy skies, bicycle rides, large dinner-parties at Mama’s. Small souls. Last year I asked the question whether in depicting Dutch life Couperus could not find a single big soul, one interesting individual. This second book gives us pale glimmers of potentialities, very pale indeed. The big man is big only relatively; he has been in America, worked in factories, and is now . . . lecturing on peace.

The book introduces a feature that may interest the sexologist: frequent passionate love among near kinsmen. Two sisters are in love with their brothers. A romance between uncle and niece. The heroes and heroines are awakened to love for the most part at the dangerous age of forty. I recall that Przybyszewski presents in two of his works love between brother and sister. Shall we say that ideal sex-relationship requires the closest kinship of body and spirit? In the Pole’s lovers the force driving them together is the harmonious coincidence of two morbidly developed intellects with a common craving for beauty and fullness. In Couperus we face mutual yearning of small, pale, empty souls. But I am not interested in sex-problems, not yet.

K.

Two Points of View

Violette of Pere Lachaise, by Anna Strunsky Walling.
New York: Frederic A. Stokes.

A gigantic background—the eternal graves and trees and monuments of the old Paris cemetery. The rest is fudge. A mouse born out of the bowels of a mountain. Nauseating feminine sentimentalism. Boring talk, talk, talk.

The reviewer above is absolutely mistaken about Mrs. Walling’s book, I believe. It is the story of one of those human beings—rare people—who live inner lives of extraordinary intensity. It is radiantly absorbing, to me.

M. C. A.
The Reader Critic

The Editor:

We have had cancellations, congratulations, and a lot of indignant letters about Ben Hecht’s “Dregs.” I print two of them below. As it happens, these stories are among the best things The Little Review has printed. With the exception of some of the poetry and two stories of Sherwood Anderson’s, they may be listed as the only “literature” we have published. Some one has compared them to Gorky. But this is not a very accurate judgment. As a reviewer pointed out in the November issue, Gorky could feel his stories, could imagine them deeply, but he could never quite tell them. The supreme virtue of Ben Hecht’s “Dregs” is that he could tell them. That is the art. Of course I have nothing to say to those people who deplore Mr. Hecht’s subject matter and urge me to use some moral judgment in selecting things for The Little Review. There is no such thing as moral judgment in literature. There should be no such thing in life, but unfortunately—

A Sorrowful Friend:

The Little Review: Literature, Drama, Music, Art. Which of these four shrines did you intend to desecrate in offering Ben Hecht’s “Dregs”? Or have you added an “unwritten” class to your list, comprehensive enough to include such bold portrayals of viciousness and filth, of licentiousness and lust, as these three degenerate manifestations!

Little Review—how could you do it? You who have hitherto held so bravely to the tenets of beauty and truth in thought and expression, held to them courageously through storms of adverse criticism, consent to print descriptions of the bestial abnormalities of the scum of mankind! If you, who profess to look to a higher, better realization of life, consent to crawl in the gutter with the vermin, what can we expect of the lesser publications?

You have polluted an edition of your magazine; it is true that flames will destroy the manuscript, but what of the hideous memory that remains? Take heed—Little Review; remember that cleanliness is akin to godliness and—look to your soul!

Florence Kiper Frank, Chicago;

May I call your attention to the fact that Mr. Edward J. O’Brien, in his annual review of the year’s fiction, not only lists all the stories printed in The Little Review during 1915 among those possessing “distinction,” but double-asterisks (verb) the three sketches of Ben Hecht’s published under the title “Dregs.” This in the chaste and genealogical Boston Evening Transcript! And, following to the best of my ability Mr. O’Brien’s rather vague reference to and nebulous listings of the stories to be published in his anthology, The Best Stories of 1915 and Year Book of American Fiction, I can but come to the startled conclusion that Ben Hecht’s three stories are all to be reprinted in the estimable collection. Good for Ben Hecht, The Little Review, and Mr. O’Brien’s catholicity of judgment! Some of us there are who like to have our opinions backed and bolstered by authority. And what more august authority than the printed word of Boston. Some of us—but of course not your insurgents. Perhaps Mr. Hecht will resent congratulations. I tender them, nevertheless—with apologies. Good stuff, Ben Hecht! Do us some—more of them.
I'm truly grateful to your reviewer who found my play, *The State Forbids*, "negative as literature." If he had found it bad architecture or mediocre sculpture I should have been less pleased.

Play making, to my mind, is not a form of literature (even though its medium chances to be words) but it is an art of spacing....focusing....building. Structure upon structure! Foundation. Ornament. Design. An art as distinct from other forms of word utility as color medium is from plastic art. Drama is related to literature only in so far as all arts are inter-related. No more than this. By drama I mean, of course, plays intended (at least in the writer's mind) for production. These alone are plays. For one reason or another they may never reach the boards, but they must have lived in the writer's fantasy as things produced. *Desk drawer dramas* are not plays.

I believe that the hope of the modern drama lies in the artist who can learn to look upon himself as a builder....a maker and not a writer of plays.

And so again I thank your critic whose charity has made me feel that I am on the road which leads to "Somewhere." Even though at the end of my journey I may not yet have reached the first mile stone.

*Virginia York, Washington, D. C.:*

It is published in windy Chicago, *The Little Review*. Claimed by management, editors and its readers to be the very, very last, last word in prose and poetry; it is sold at fifteen cents a copy. Normal-minded, healthy folk will find it cheap at that price, because normal-minded, healthy folk will find in it fifteen laughs for fifteen cents, despite the fact that it is entirely a serious publication.

Years ago an editor sent me to the government hospital for the insane just outside Washington, to interview a certain man. As I passed into the building an elderly gentleman of profoundly respectful manner presented me with a neatly-bound pamphlet which he said he had written, edited and illustrated entirely by himself. Examining it later, the cover-page proved to be a mass of meaningless, whirling lines labeled in carefully printed letters, "The Croucher At The Door." The reading matter was wholly unintelligible.

A poet-friend has given me the October number of *The Little Review*. The vers libre poetry in the small magazine might easily be called "The Croucher At The Door" for all the sense to be made of it. In fear and trembling that my own unworthy brain might finally have addled, relatives and friends were invited to peruse the contents of the volume. I thank heaven they could make nothing of it.

One contribution entitled *Cafe Sketches*, by Arthur Davison Ficke, is herewith reprinted for the benefit of readers of this page who are denied access, and accompanying the laugh, to *The Little Review*. Mr. Ficke, after telling in the first verse that he is in a cafe, surrounded by a "cortege of seven waiters," mourning for a "boundlessly curious lady," recites in mournful meanderings:

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.

Base people!
How I dislike you!

Maybe you think this is funny, but certainly it is not intended to be. Seriousness, thick, black, dense seriousness is the keynote of THE LITTLE REVIEW. This is vers libre with a vengeance. "Persons will come out and shake legs. I do not want legs shaken." Here we have the spirit of the dance! It is quite evident Mr. Ficke does not wish joy to be unconfined.

There have been many descriptions of dawn, probably none so unique as "the dawn spilled across the blackness like a scrambled egg on the skillet." The second verse is short and to the point, but it is much to be thankful for both in point of length and the statement that we are abhorred.

In order to restore our thoughts to something sane, to take away from us the taste of such gibberish, consider for a moment the following eight lines by Harriet Howe, recently published in THE LITERARY DIGEST. Comparison between the two authors is utterly impossible, totally unnecessary:

**SUNSET AFTER RAIN**

The cradle of the valley
Is filled with floating mist,
The summits of the mountains
Are veiled in amethyst.

The trees spread grateful branches
Above a smiling sod,
For thirsting slaked, for hunger fed,
All things are praising God.

*Hunty Carter, London:*

The letter by C. Smith of Chicago, in the October issue of THE LITTLE REVIEW, is so phenomenally stupid and so intellectually dishonest that it is almost beneath notice. If I consent to notice it, I do so in order to warn Smithsonian understudies that they will be severely dealt with if they attempt to repeat Smith's brazen offence of writing to a significant journal and coolly suggesting that a single and relatively unimportant wrong attribution is to be regarded as a fair and honest sample of the whole subject matter of an article occupying several pages and mainly devoted to a metaphysical explanation of the origin and nature of poetry. Furthermore, suggesting that I am applying to a poet (Browning) a rigid test of poetry, seeking to prove his words poetically good or bad by my poetical experience, when as a matter of fact I am offering certain words, some of which are wrongly attributed to Browning, as indisputable evidence that in venting the emotions versifiers find descriptive figures efficacious.

No doubt some of the words flaunted by Smith are wrongly attributed to Browning. They are so wrongly attributed that anyone can see they are wrongly attributed. And any "sane, intelligent and decently responsible man" (to use Smith's yellow press tautology) would have given me an opportunity of saying they are wrongly attributed before venturing to put on silly airs of hypercriticism. Then he would have learnt that the first and third line of the quotation belong oddly enough, to another piece of
The Little Review

poetry, and have got mixed up with Browning's stuff in some unaccountable way. I have not the least idea how the mix took place. All I know is that my article was finished off in great haste to catch the mail. It was sent in handscript and not typescript. And there was no time to send me a proof; otherwise the quotation would certainly have been corrected, and the many errors which now appear in my article would have disappeared. I feel I am justified in saying it was not my intention to send the words which have crept into print by the discovery that I have actually written down Browning's very words. Here is Browning:

And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

The first line of the verse is missing. The three lines however serve the purpose of my comparison. I had also set down these lines by Browning:

One lyric woman in her crocus vest,
Woven of sea-wools.

I intended to include this with my quotations. For here in my view is a figure as original and precisely felicitous as anything the Imagists have given us.

That this dragging in of some wrongly attributed words—so obviously wrong as to deceive no one—for the sole purpose of discrediting an important article is dishonest, is clear from the fact that Smith does not drag in any other quotation from the many given, nor produce any other evidence whatsoever in support of his contention that my article is inept and careless throughout. In fact he has nothing more damaging to offer than his own fatuous statement that he happens "to consider my article an ill-digested congeries of vague views"; which, when one comes to examine it is found to contain a baseless assertion and a clear admission that my article is above and beyond Smith's head.

As to the silliness of Smith's letter, this may be judged from the following: Smith begins with the generalization that magazines die "whose pages are as a rule careless, inconsidered and inept" (note the repetition and consequent lack of thoroughness). The publications of the capitalist press answer this description. The news sheets, for instance, are rotten with carelessness, inconsideredness and ineptness. They would be rrottener if they could. Yet they do not die. On the contrary they sell by the million. If so, then The Little Review should sell by the million. But Smith says it will die. And Smith is a careful, serviceable, and accurate man.

By way of comparison Smith relieves himself of this matchless composition. "Your magazine will die,—as a steam engine would grow useless in which no direction towards any cylinder was given to the indubitable forces generated in the boiler." What is the precise meaning of this bombastic twaddle? In homely words, it means that a steam engine is (not "would grow") useless when the steam power developed in its boiler is not utilised in any cylinder. Anyone who examines this analogy will agree with me that Smith is a careful, serviceable, and accurate man.

From the general Smith comes to the particular and quotes what he is pleased to call an example of my "ineptitude and carelessness" as an example of the general "ineptitude and carelessness" of The Little Review. Without knowing anything as to the circumstances under which the wrongly attributed words found their way into print, without stopping to inquire to what extent I contributed to the mistake, and upon no other evidence whatsoever than the said wrongly attributed words, he proceeds to saddle me with the astounding intention "to obliterate all sense of accuracy, all love of clear and rational communication, all fidelity to honest statement, and all interest in truth" (which makes four ways of uttering the same inverifiable statement).

Finally Smith challenges the editor of The Little Review to print his ghastly ineptitude. She has taken the short way and done so. It serves Smith right.
M. Silverman, Chicago:

Your last issue is a failure—with two exceptions, Miss Goldman's article on "Preparedness" and Mr. Hecht's letter. Both of them are human, understandable, and sincere. They shout—but do not roar. All the others are ostentatious, plebeian, and lack artistic restraint. They are not beautiful. They holler and produce a sense of heaviness and overexertion. Sympathy and politeness are apparently the cardinal virtues of the highly esteemed editor. Hence this "democratic" hash.

To be more specific: Your editorial, "Toward Revolution," is the acme of nonsense. I tried to take you seriously but I couldn't. It is pamphletory, and should have no place in The Little Review.

"The Ecstasy of Pain" is a stage hurricane, and, to paraphrase Mr. Goldbeck, it is like Chicago: vast, but not impressive. It lacks artistic touch and symmetrical wholeness. The fragmentary mind of Mr. Kaun is phosphorescent, produces tiny sparks which are soon lost in the darkness. Higher mathematics is the best remedy for Mr. Kaun's mind.

"The Spring Recital" is a bore. The author of The "Genius" seems to have a mania for torturing the innocent public. I read "The Spring Recital" twice; and when I got through with it I felt extremely uncomfortable. I don't understand it and it doesn't mean anything to me. I challenge anyone to explain to me: What does this piece of "dramatic" "quatch" mean?

All the other articles—well, they are harmless.

Woods Dargan, Darlington, S. C.:

I enclose a check for $1.50, and ask that you enter my name for one year's subscription—that is, if you will let one of the rabble creep in. Frankly, I know no more about art (with a capital A or otherwise) than a rabbit. I don't even know what an "Imagist" is! And for the life of me I cannot understand why the temperamental, fussy gentleman named Alexander S. Kaun should not use a singular verb with a singular noun, just like ordinary people. But when he says, as he does in the first line of the fourth paragraph of his article, "the dearer a person or a thing are to me, etc.," I know must be intellectual purpose in it, some esoteric effect that gets to the cultured few but passes over my head; so I bow before the unknown beauty of it, thinking, "Odd, but no doubt it's all right."

Also, to my untutored mind, the frequent use of profanity in an everyday, conversational way in two or three of the articles is amusing, and makes me wonder. It reminds me of the days when I first took up the art, and used to feel a shudder of delight when I ripped out a good, mouth-filling, "Damn it all to hell!" Perhaps it has lost its charm for me as a literary ornament because I swear so much myself, just as a matter of habit without deriving the oldtime pleasure from it.

Other places where these boys put it all over me are in music and Russians. It is one of my secret sorrows that I know I know nothing about music. I like it, but it never occurs to me to fade away and fill an early grave if I hear somebody's nocturne murdered—that is, if I know it is being murdered, which is highly unlikely. And as to the Russians, old Dostoevsky is my limit so far, but I'm game, and am going in for all the others,—the more gloomy and morbid the better.

Then, there's this Mr. Theodore Dreiser. As we say in this neck of the woods, in our uncouth manner, "He must be a bear-cat." (By the way, I'd give a lot to know what "demiurge" means in the sense in which it is applied to him. Mr. Masters used it in The New York Times some weeks ago, and now I find it again in Mr. Powys' appreciation. I don't know what they mean.) Well, I've had his book, The "Genius," for sometime, and mean to read it all as soon as I can get round to it. Perhaps I'll know what "demiurge" means then—but I doubt it.
For all that I have said I would not have you think that I am wholly lacking in soul. I have some things in common with these fellows, for I have no religion or morals, and I enjoy getting drunk, riotously, gloriously drunk, once or twice a year.

And now, after telling you at more length than any decent person should what has puzzled me in your Review, permit me to say what I like. The first part of your own contribution, "Life Itself," strikes me as the real thing. I understand all that, being a common person. For the last part, as I've said, I know nothing of art, and life doesn't mean those things to me, naturally. But I like it. I can, after a fashion, see how it might mean them. The review of Dreiser by Mr. Powys that I have mentioned already is good writing and good sense. How true it is, I am not yet in a position to guess. Then, Mr. Edgar Masters always writes vividly, deeply. I am glad to add "So We Grew Together" to what I know of his stuff. It is almost as good a portrait and short story as some of the best of the Anthology.

That fellow Ben Hecht can write. Personally, I have a sort of leaning toward the dregs, but, as a general thing, I don't know that there's much use in writing about them just so. But he's certainly good. He can write. I never heard of him before, but I shall look out for him in future.

For the sake of what I find good I'm willing to put up with what I fail to grasp, and so I look forward to much pleasure and instruction from The Little Review. Luck to it. As long as you, Miss Lowell, Mr. Masters, and Mr. Hecht contribute, so long will it be cheap at any price. And, who knows? I may yet learn from my friend Mr. Kaun the hidden beauties of a singular subject with a plural verb.

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