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THE LITTLE REVIEW

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MARGARET C. ANDERSON
EDITOR

NOVEMBER, 1915

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THE LITTLE REVIEW

Vol. II

NOVEMBER, 1915

No. 8

"Life Itself"

MARGARET C. ANDERSON

I

BUT you don't know Life," they are always saying.
I wonder what it is they mean?

They mean humanity and the urge of it;
In the beginning and in the end the soul's longing to be known, to
know itself, and to know others;
And that means, in the beginning and in the end, the quest for love;
It is the ideal of love and the finding of it;
And the magic of it and the drain of disillusionment;
And the luxury of sorrow and the voluptuousness of suffering;
And the vacuum that is beyond death;
And the conviction that ideals are better than reality;
And the decision to live for "art";
And the pull to new love . . .
And the discovery that love is enslavement;
And the breaking from it;
And the courage to contain life;
And the emancipation *from* something;
And the complacency of first freedom;
And the emptiness of it;
And the pull to new love . . .
And the discovery that rapture is not relived;
And the conviction that passion is not love;
And the dedication to "the spiritual";
And the pull to new love . . .
And the deepest agony, which is unrequited love;
And the realization of people;

And the discovery that the world is wrong;
 And the glory of rebellion;
 And the emancipation *for* something;
 And the pull to new love . . .
 And the birth of cynicism;
 And the conviction that rebellion is futile;
 And the discovery of one's self;
 And the dedication to one's self;
 And the discovery that one's self is not big enough;
 And the pull to new love. . . .
 And the knowledge that love includes passion;
 And the sense of rich growing;
 And the hope of sharing growth;
 And the longing to be known;
 And the relinquishing of that longing;
 And the discovery that perfection does not last;
 And the sufficiency of self-direction;
 And the completeness of freedom;
 And the longing to know the human soul;
 And the pull to new love . . .
 And the relinquishing of that longing;
 And the discovery of the peace that is in nature;
 And the realization of the unimportance of man;
 And the knowledge that only great moments are attainable;
 And the hatred of consummations;
 And the realization of truths too late to act upon them;
 And the acceptance of substitutes;
 And the pull to new love . . .

And every human being knows these things.

II.

"But you don't know life itself," I am always saying.
 I wonder what it is I mean.

I think it is something wonderful like color and sound, and something mystical like fragrance and flowers.

And something incredible like air and wind,
 And something of grey magic like rain;
 It is faded deserts and the unceasing sea;
 It is the moving stars;
 It is the orange sun stepping through blue curtains of sky,
 And the rose sun dropping through black trees;
 It is green storms running across greenness,
 And gold rose petals spilled by the moon on dark water;

It is snow and mist and clouds of color,
It is tree gardens and painted birds;
It is leaves of autumn and grasses of spring;
It is flower forests and the petals of stars;
It is morning—yellow mornings, green mornings, red mornings, gold
mornings, silver mornings, sun mornings, mist mornings, mornings of dew;
It is night—white nights, green nights, grey nights, purple nights, blue
nights, moon nights, rain nights, nights that burn;
It is waking in the first of the morning,
It is the deep adventure of sleep;
It is lights on rivers and lights on pavements;
It is boulevards bordered with flowers of stone;
It is poetry and Japanese prints and the actor on a stage;
It is music;
It is dreams that could not happen;
It is emotion for the sake of emotion;
It is life for the sake of living;
It is silence;
It is the unknowable;
It is eternity;
It is death.

And only artists know these things.

The Zeppelins Over London

RICHARD ALDINGTON

. . . . The war saps all one's energy. It seems impossible to do any creative work in the midst of all this turmoil and carnage. Of course you know that we had the Zeppelins over London? Let me give you my version of the affair.

It was just after eleven. We were sitting in our little flat, which is on the top floor of a building on the slope of Hampstead Hill. We were reading—I was savouring, like a true decadent, that over-sweet honied Latin of the early Renaissance in an edition of 1513! Could anything be more peaceful? Our window was shut—so the silence was absolute. Suddenly there was a Bang! and a shrill wail. "That was pretty close," said I. Bang—whizz! Bang—whizz! Shrapnel from the anti-aircraft guns which are not five hundred yards from our house! (Of course, like boobies, we thought they were bombs.) I jumped up and got my coat, and grabbed the door-key. It took hours to put out the light! (All the time Bang—whizz!) It seemed interminable, that descent of those four flights of stairs, all the time with the knowledge that any second might see the whole damn place blown to hell. We could see the flashes of the guns and the searchlights as we passed the windows—they *were pointed straight at us!* That meant that the Zeppelin was either right overhead or coming there! Some excitement, I tell you. I shiver with excitement when I think of it. We stood at the porch for a few seconds—very long seconds—wondering what to do. You are supposed to get into the cellars, but we haven't got cellars; and it's very risky in the streets from the flying shrapnel. We could see the long searchlights pointing to a spot almost overhead and the little red pin-pricks of bursting shells. A man came down from one of the flats—very calm, with field glasses, to have a look at the animal! Suddenly we saw it, clear over head, with shells from three of four guns making little rose-coloured punctures in the air underneath it. One shell went near, very near, the Zeppelin swerved, tilted—"They've got it! It's coming down!" we all exclaimed. In the distance we could hear faint cheering. But the Zeppelin righted itself, waggled a little, and scenting danger made for the nearest cloud! Apparently a piece of shell had hit the pilot, for there was no apparent damage to be seen through the glasses. There were a few more bangs from the guns, followed by the cat squeals of the shells and the little explosions in the air. Then silence as the Zeppelin got into a cloud; the searchlights looked wildly for it, for ten minutes. Then they all went out and in the resulting darkness we could see the glow of the fires in London.

What rather detracts from our heroism is the fact that the Zeppelin had already dropped all its bombs in the middle of London, but we didn't know it till afterwards.

I deduce these reflections. 1. That as an engine of frightfulness the Zeppelin is over-rated. And the damage it does is comparatively unimportant. 2. That it is uncultured of the Germans to risk murdering the English Imagists and ruining the only poetic movement in England, for the sake of getting their names into the papers. 3. That I notice I never go to bed now earlier than twelve, and frequently go for a walk about eleven o'clock.

I can't of course tell you where the bombs fell, as it is strictly forbidden. Still I can say this: that no public building of any kind was touched; that it looks jolly well as if our Teutonic friends made a dead set at St. Paul's and the British Museum; that, without exception, the bombs fell on the houses of the poor and the very poor—except for a warehouse or so and some offices; that one bomb fell near a block of hospitals, containing paralytics and other cripples and diseased persons, smashed all the hospital windows, and terrified the unhappy patients into hysterics; that, lastly, it is a damned lie to say there are guns on St. Paul's and the British Museum—the buildings are too old to stand the shock of the recoil. Voilà!

. . . . Remy de Gourmont is dead. . . . Camille de Saint-Croix also. It is hard to write of friends recently dead. . . .

The experienced artist knows that inspiration is rare and that intelligence is left to complete the work of intuition; he puts his ideas under the press and squeezes out of them the last drop of the divine juices that are in them—(and if need be sometimes he does not shrink from diluting them with clear water).—*Romain Rolland*.

Portrait of Theodore Dreiser

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

There were gilded Chinese dragons
And tinkling danglers of glass
And dirty marble-topped tables
Around us, that late night-hour.
You ate steadily and silently
From a huge bowl of chop-suey
Of repellant aspect;
While I,— I, and another,—
Told you that you had the style neither of William Morris
Nor of Walter Pater.

And it was perfectly true
But you continued to occupy yourself
With your quarts of chop-suey.
And somehow you reminded me
Of nothing so much as of the knitting women
Who implacably counted stitches while the pride of France
Went up to death.

Tonight I am alone,
A long way from that Chinese restaurant,
A long way from wherever you are.
And I find it difficult to recall to my memory
The image of your large laboring inexpressive face.
For I have just turned the last page
Of a book of yours—
A book large and superficially inexpressive,—like yourself.
It has not, any more than the old ones,
The style of Pater.
But now there are passing before me
Interminable figures in tangled procession—
Proud or cringing, starved with desire or icy,
Hastening toward a dream of triumph or fleeing from a dream of doom,—
Passing—passing—passing

Through a world of shadows,
Through a chaotic and meaningless anarchy,
Under heavy clouds of terrific gloom
Or through ravishing flashes of knife-edged sunlight—
Passing—passing—passing—
Their heads haloed with immortal illusion,—
The terrible and beautiful, cruel and wonder-laden illusion of life.

Theodore Dreiser

JOHN COWPER POWYS

IN estimating the intrinsic value of a book like *The "Genius"* and—generally—of a writer like Theodore Dreiser, it is advisable to indulge in a little gentle introspection.

Criticism need not always impose itself as an art; but it must at least conform to some of the principles that govern that form of human activity. The worthlessness of so much energetic modern criticism is that it proceeds—like scum—from the mere surface of the writer's intelligence. It is true that all criticism resolves itself ultimately into a matter of taste;—but one has to discover what one's taste really is; and that is not always easy.

Taste is a living thing, an organic thing. It submits to the laws of growth; and its growth is fostered or retarded by many extraneous influences. In regard to the appreciation of new and original works of art, it belongs to the inherent nature of taste that it should be enlarged, transmuted, and undergo the birth-pangs of a species of re-creation. In the presence of a work of art that is really unusual, in an attempt to appreciate a literary effect that has never appeared before, one's taste necessarily suffers a certain embarrassment and uneasiness. It suffers indeed sometimes a quite extreme discomfort. This is inevitable. This is right. This means that the creative energy in the new thing is getting to work upon us, unloosening our prejudices and enlarging our scope. Such a process is attended by exquisite intellectual excitement. It is also attended by a certain rending and tearing of personal vanity.

One is too apt to confuse the existing synthesis of one's aesthetic instincts with the totality of one's being; and this is a fatal blunder; for who can fathom the reach of *that* circumference? And it is of the nature of all syntheses to change and grow.

Yet, on the other hand, nothing is more ridiculous and ineffective than the kind of hand-to-mouth criticism which attempts to eliminate its own past, and to snatch at the glow and glamour of a work of art, as it were "*de vacuo*," and out of misty clouds. If one wishes to catch the secret of true criticism; if one's criticism is to be something more than a mere howl of senseless condemnation or yawp of still more senseless praise; one must attempt to do what Goethe and Saint-Beuve and Brandes and Pater were always doing: that is to say, to make every use of every tradition, *our own*, as well as that of classical authority;—and then carry all this a little, just a little, *further*; giving it the shudder and the thrilling interest of the process of organic growth.

Without tradition, the tradition of our own determined taste and the tradition of classical taste, there can be no growth. Oracles uttered in neglect of these, are oracles "*in vacuo*," without meaning or substance; without roots in human experience. Whether we are pleased to acknowledge it or not, our own gradually-evolved taste is linked at a thousand points with the classical taste of the ages. In criticizing new work we can no more afford to neglect such tradition than, in expressing our thoughts, we can afford to neglect language.

Tradition is the language of criticism. It can be carried further: every original work of art, by producing a new reaction upon it, necessarily carries it further. But it cannot be swept aside; or we are reduced to dumbness; to such vague growls and gestures as animals might indulge in. Criticism, to carry any intelligible meaning at all, must use the language provided by the centuries. There is no other language to use; and in default of language we are reduced, as I have said, to inarticulate noises.

The unfortunate thing is, that much of the so-called "criticism" of our day is nothing better than such *physiological gesticulation*. In criticism, as in life, a certain degree of *continuity* is necessary, or we become no more than arbitrary puffs of wind, who may shriek one day down the chimney, and another day through a crack in the door, but in neither case with any intelligible meaning for human ears.

In dealing with a creative quality as unusual and striking as that of Theodore Dreiser, it is of absolutely no critical value to content ourselves with a crude physical disturbance on the surface of our minds, whether such disturbance is favourable or unfavourable to the writer. It is, for instance, quite irrelevant to hurl condemnation upon a work like *the "Genius"* because it is largely preoccupied with sex. It is quite equally irrelevant to lavish enthusiastic laudations upon it because of this preoccupation. A work of art is not good because it speaks daringly and openly about things

that shock certain minds. It is not bad because it avoids all mention of such things. An artist has a right to introduce into his work what he pleases and to exclude from his work what he pleases. The question for the critic is, not what subject has he selected, but how has he treated that subject;—has he made out of it an imaginative, suggestive, and convincing work of art, or has he not! There is no other issue before the critic than this; and if he supposes there is,—if he supposes he has the smallest authority to dictate to a writer what his subject shall be;—he is simply making a fool of himself.

There is an absurd tendency among some of us to suppose that a writer is necessarily a great writer because he is daring in his treatment of sex. This is quite as grotesque an illusion as the opposite one, that a great writer must be idealistic and uplifting. There is not the remotest reason why he should concern himself with sex; if he prefers—as did Charles Dickens for instance—to deal with other aspects of life. On the other hand there is not the least reason why he should be “uplifting.” Let him be an artist—an artist—that is the important matter! All these questions concerning “subjects” are tedious and utterly trifling.

In the “*Genius*” Theodore Dreiser has achieved a very curious and a very original work. In doing it he has once more made it clear how much more interesting the quality of his own genius is than that of any other American novelist of the present age.

The “*Genius*” is an epic work. It has the epic rather than the dramatic quality; it has the epic rather than the mystic, or symbolic, quality. And strictly speaking, Dreiser’s novels, especially the later ones, are the only novels in America, are the only novels, as a matter of fact, in England or America, which possess this quality. It is quite properly in accordance with the epic attitude of mind, with the epic quality in art, this reduction of the more purely human episodes to a proportionate insignificance compared with the general surge and volume of the life-stream. It is completely in keeping with the epic quality that there should be no far-fetched psychology, no quivering suspensions on the verge of the unknown.

Dreiser is concerned with the mass and weight of the stupendous life-tide; the life-tide as it flows forward, through vast panoramic stretches of cosmic scenery. Both in respect to human beings, and in respect to his treatment of inanimate objects, this is always what most dominantly interests him. You will not find in Dreiser’s books those fascinating arrests of the onward-sweeping tide, those delicate pauses and expectancies, in backwaters and enclosed gardens, where persons, with diverting twists in their brains, murmur and meander at their ease, protected from the great stream. Nobody in the Dreiser-world is so protected; nobody is so privileged. The great stream sweeps them all forward, sweeps them all away; and not they, but *It*, must be regarded as the hero of the tale.

It is precisely this quality, this subordination of the individual to the deep waters that carry him, which makes Dreiser so peculiarly the American

writer. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why he has had a more profoundly appreciative hearing in England than in the United States. It was so with Walt Whitman in his earlier days. To get the adequate perspective for a work so entirely epic it seems necessary to have the Atlantic as a modifying foreground. Americans—so entirely *in it* themselves—are naturally, unless they possess the Protean faculty of the editor of Reedy's *Mirror*, unable to see the thing in this cosmic light. They are misled by certain outstanding details—the sexual scenes, for instance; or the financial scenes,—and are prevented by these, as by the famous "Catalogues" in Whitman, from getting the proportionate vision.

The true literary descendants of the author of the *Leaves of Grass* are undoubtedly Theodore Dreiser and Edgar Masters. These two, and these two alone, though in completely different ways, possess that singular "beyond-good-and-evil" touch which the epic form of art requires. It was just the same with Homer and Vergil, who were as naturally the epic children of aristocratic ages, as these are of a democratic one.

Achilles is not really a very attractive figure—take him all in all; and we remember how scandalously Æneas behaved to Dido. The ancient epic writers, writing for an aristocracy, caught the world-stream from a poetic angle. The modern epic writers, writing for a democracy, catch it from a realistic one. But it is the same world-stream; and in accordance with the epic vision there is the same subordination of the individual to the cosmic tide. This is essentially a dramatic, rather than an epic epoch, and that is why so many of us are bewildered and confused by the Dreiser method.

The "*Genius*" is a long book. But it might have been three times as long. It might begin anywhere and stop anywhere. It is the Prose-Iliad of the American Scene; and, like that other, it has a right to cut out its segment of the shifting panorama at almost any point.

And so with the style of the thing. It is a ridiculous mis-statement for critics to say that Dreiser has no style. It is a charming irony, on his own part, to belittle his style. He has, as a matter of fact, a very definite and a very effective style. It is a style that lends itself to the huge indifferent piling up of indiscriminate materials, quite as admirably as that gracious poetical one of the old epic-makers lent itself to their haughtier and more aristocratic purpose. One would recognize a page of Dreiser's writings as infallibly as one would recognize a page of Hardy's. The former *relaxes* his medium to the extreme limit and the latter *tightens* his; but they both have their "manner." A paragraph written by Dreiser would never be mistaken for anyone else's. If for no other peculiarity Dreiser's style is remarkable for the shamelessness with which it adapts itself to the drivel of ordinary conversation. In the Dreiser books—especially in the later ones, where in my humble opinion he is feeling more firmly after his true way,—people are permitted to say those things which they actually do say in real life—things that make you blush and howl, so soaked in banality and ineptitude are they. In the true epic manner Dreiser gravely puts down

all these fatuous observations, until you feel inclined to cry aloud for the maddest, the most fantastic, the most affected Osconian wit, to serve as an antidote.

But one knows very well he is right. People don't in ordinary life—certainly not in ordinary democratic life—talk like Oscar Wilde, or utter deep ironic sayings in the style of Matthew Arnold. They don't really—let this be well understood—concentrate their feelings in bitter pungent spasmodic outbursts, as those Rabelaisian persons in Guy de Maupassant. They just gabble and gibber and drivel; at least that is what they do in England and America. The extraordinary language which the lovers in Dreiser—we use the term “lovers” in large sense—use to one another might well make an aesthetic-minded person howl with nervous rage. But then,—and who does not know it?—the obsession of the sex-illusion is above everything else a thing that makes idiots of people; a thing that makes them talk like Simple Simons. In real life lovers don't utter those wonderful pregnant sayings which leap to their lips in our subtle symbolic dramas. They just burble and blather and blurt forth whatever drivelling nonsense comes into their heads. Dreiser is the true master of the modern American Prose-Epic just because he is not afraid of the weariness, the staleness, the flatness, and unprofitableness of actual human conversation. In reading the great ancient poetic epics one is amazed at the “naivete” with which these haughty persons—these gods and demi-gods express their emotional reactions. It is “carried off,” of course, there, by the sublime heightening of the style; but it produces just the same final impression,—of the insignificance of the individual, whether mortal or immortal, compared with the torrent of Fate which sweeps them all along.

And the same thing applies to Dreiser's attitude towards “good and evil” and towards the problem of the “supernatural.” All other modern writers array themselves on this side or that. They either defend traditional morality or they attack it. They are anxious, at all costs, to give their work dramatic intensity; they struggle to make it ironical, symbolical, mystical—God knows what! But Dreiser neither attacks morality nor defends immorality. In the true Epic manner he puts himself aside, and permits the great mad Hurly-Burly to rush pell-mell past him and write its own whirligig runes at its own careless pleasure. Even Zola himself was not such a realist. Zola had a purpose;—the purpose of showing what a Beast the human animal is! Dreiser's people are not beasts; and they shock our aesthetic sensibilities quite as often by their human sentiment as they do by their lapses into lechery.

To a European mind there is something incredibly absurd in the notion that these Dreiser books are immoral.

Unlike the majority of French and Russian writers Dreiser is not interested in the pathology of vice. He is too deeply imbued with the great naive epic spirit to stop and linger in these curious bye-paths. He holds Nature—in her normal moods—to be sufficiently remarkable.

It is the same with his attitude towards the "supernatural." The American Prose-Epic were obviously false to reality if the presence of the supernatural were not felt. It is felt and felt very powerfully; but it is kept in its place. Like Walt Whitman's stellar constellations, it suffices for those who belong to it, it is right enough where it is—we do not want it any nearer!

Because the much-tossed wanderer, Eugene Witla, draws a certain consolation, at the last, from Christian Science, only a very literal person would accuse the author of *The "Genius"* of being a convert to the faith. To omit Christian Science from any prose-epic of American life would be to falsify the picture out of personal prejudice. Dreiser has no prejudices except the prejudice of finding the normal man and the normal woman, shuffled to and fro by the normal forces of life, an interesting and arresting spectacle. To some among us such a spectacle is not interesting. We must have the excitement of the unusual, the shock of the abnormal. Well! There are plenty of European writers ready to gratify this taste. Dreiser is not a European writer. He is an American writer. The life that interests him, and interests him passionately, is the life of America. It remains to be seen whether the life of America interests Americans!

It is really quite important to get the correct point of view with regard to Dreiser's "style." The *negative* qualities in this style of his are indeed as important as the positive ones. He is so epical, so objective, so concrete and indifferent, that he is quite content when the great blocked-out masses of his work lift themselves from the obscure womb of being and take shape before him. When they have done this,—when these piled-up materials and portentous groups of people have limned themselves against the grey background,—he himself stands aside, like some dim demiurgic forger in the cosmic blast-furnace, and mutters queer commentaries upon what he sees. He utters these commentaries through the lips of his characters—Cowperwood, say, or Witla—or even some of the less important ones;—and broken and incoherent enough they are!

But what matter! The huge epic canvas is stretched out there before us. The vast cyclopean edifice lifts its shadowy bulk towards the grey sky. The thing has been achieved. The creative spirit has breathed upon the waters. Resting from his titanic labor, what matter if this Demiurge drowns, and with an immense humorous indifference permits his characters to nod too, and utter strange words in their dreams!

The carelessness of Dreiser's style, its large indolence, its contempt for epigrammatic point, its relaxed strength, is not really a defect at all when you regard his work from the epic view-point.

There must be something in a great cosmic picture to take the place of the sand and silt and rubbish and rubble which we know so well in life, under the grey sky! And these stammered incoherences, these broken mutterings, fill in this gap. They give the picture that drab patience, that

monotonous spaciousness which is required. Symbolic drama or psychological fiction can dispense with these blank surfaces. The prose-epic of America cannot afford to do without them. They suggest that curious sadness—the sadness of large, flat, featureless scenery, which visitors from Europe find so depressing.

Well! Thus it remains. If one is interested in the “urge—urge—urge,” as Whitman calls it, of the normal life-stream as it goes upon its way, in these American States, one reads Dreiser with a strange pleasure. He is no more moral than the normal life-stream is moral; and he is no more immoral. It is true the normal life-stream does not cover *quite* the whole field. There *are* back-waters and there *are* enclosed gardens.

There was a Europe once. But the American prose-epic is the American prose-epic.

“So We Grew Together”*

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Reading over your letters I find you wrote me
 “My dear boy,” or at times “dear boy,” and the envelope
 Said “master”—all as I had been your very son,
 And not the orphan whom you adopted.
 Well, you were father to me! And I can recall
 The things you did for me or gave me:
 One time we rode in a box-car to Springfield
 To see the greatest show on earth;
 And one time you gave me red-top boots,
 And one time a watch, and one time a gun.
 Well, I grew to gawkinsness with a voice
 Like a rooster trying to crow in August
 Hatched in April, we’ll say.
 And you went about wrapped up in silence
 With eyes aflame, and I heard little rumors
 Of what they were doing to you, and how
 They wronged you—and we were poor—so poor!
 And I could not understand why you failed,

*Copyright, 1915, by Edgar Lee Masters.

The Little Review

And why if you did good things for the people
 The people did not sustain you.
 And why you loved another woman than Aunt Susan,
 So it was whispered at school, and what could be baser,
 Or so little to be forgiven?

They crowded you hard in those days.
 But you fought like a wounded lion
 For yourself I know, but for us, for me.
 At last you fell ill, and for months you tottered
 Around the streets as thin as death,
 Trying to earn our bread, your great eyes glowing
 And the silence around you like a shawl!
 But something in you kept you up.
 You grew well again and rosy with cheeks
 Like an Indian peach almost, and eyes
 Full of moonlight and sunlight, and a voice
 That sang, and a humor that warded
 The arrows off. But still between us
 There was reticence; you kept me away
 With a glittering hardness; perhaps you thought
 I kept you away—for I was moving
 In spheres you knew not, living through
 Beliefs you believed in no more, and ideals
 That were just mirrors of unrealities.
 As a boy can be I was critical of you.
 And reasons for your failures began to arise
 In my mind—I saw specific facts here and there
 With no philosophy at hand to weld them
 And synthesize them into one truth—
 And a rush of the strength of youth
 Deluded me into thinking the world
 Was something so easily understood and managed
 While I knew it not at all in truth.
 And an adolescent egotism
 Made me feel you did not know me
 Or comprehend the all that I was.
 All this you divined.

So it went. And when I left you and passed
 To the world, the city—still I see you
 With eyes averted, and feel your hand
 Limp with sorrow—you could not speak.

You thought of what I might be, and where
Life would take me, and how it would end—
There was longer silence. A year or two
Brought me closer to you. I saw the play now
And the game somewhat and understood your fights
And enmities, and hardnesses and silences,
And wild humor that had kept you whole —
For your soul had made it as an antitoxin
To the world's infections. And you swung to me
Closer than before—and a chumship began
Between us.

What vital power was yours!
You never tired, or needed sleep, or had a pain,
Or refused a delight. I loved the things now
You had always loved, a winning horse,
A roulette wheel, a contest of skill
In games or sports . . . long talks on the corner
With men who have lived and tell you
Things with a rich flavor of old wisdom or humor;
A woman, a glass of whisky at a table
Where the fatigue of life falls, and our reserves
That wait for happiness come up in smiles,
Laughter, gentle confidences. Here you were
A man with youth, and I a youth was a man,
Exulting in your braveries and delight in life.
How you knocked that scamp over at Harry Varnell's
When he tried to take your chips! And how I,
Who had thought the devil in cards as a boy,
Loved to play with you now and watch you play;
And watch the subtle mathematics of your mind
Prophecy, divine the plays. Who was it
In your ancestry that you harked back to
And reproduced with such various gifts
Of flesh and spirit, Anglo-Saxon, Celt?—
You with such rapid wit and powerful skill
For catching illogic and whipping Error's
Fangéd head from the body?

I was really ahead of you
At this stage, with more self-consciousness
Of what man is, and what life is at last,
And how the spirit works, and by what laws,

The Little Review

With what inevitable force. But still I was
 Behind you in that strength which in our youth,
 If ever we have it, squeezes all the nectar
 From the grapes. It seemed you'd never lose
 This power and sense of joy, but yet at times
 I saw another phase of you.

There was the day
 We rode together north of the old town,
 Past the old farm houses that I knew—
 Past maple groves, and fields of corn in the shock,
 And fields of wheat with the fall green.
 It was October, but the clouds were summer's,
 Lazily floating in a sky of June;
 And a few crows flying here and there,
 And a quail's call, and around us a great silence
 That held at its core old memories
 Of pioneers, and dead days, forgotten things!
 I'll never forget how you looked that day. Your hair
 Was turning silver now, but still your eyes
 Burned as of old, and the rich olive glow
 In your cheeks shone, with not a line or wrinkle!—
 You seemed to me perfection—a youth, a man!
 And now you talked of the world with the old wit,
 And now of the soul—how such a man went down
 Through folly or wrong done by him, and how
 Man's death cannot end all,
 There must be life hereafter!

As you were that day, as you looked and spoke,
 As the earth was, I hear as the soul of it all
 Godard's *Dawn*, Dvorák's *Humoresque*,
 The Morris Dances, Mendelssohn's *Barcarole*,
 And old Scotch songs, *When the Kye Come Hame*,
 And *The Moon Had Climbed the Highest Hill*,
 The Mussetta Waltz and Rudolph's Narrative;
 Your great brow seemed Beethoven's
 And the lust of life in your face Cellini's,
 And your riotous fancy like Dumas.
 I was nearer you now than ever before
 And finding each other thus I see to-day
 How the human soul seeks the human soul
 And finds the one it seeks at last.

For you know you can open a window
That looks upon embowered darkness,
When the flowers sleep and the trees are still
At Midnight, and no light burns in the room;
And you can hide your butterfly
Somewhere in the room, but soon you will see
A host of butterfly mates
Fluttering through the window to join
Your butterfly hid in the room.
It is somehow thus with souls.

 This day then I understood it all:
Your vital democracy and love of men
And tolerance of life; and how the excess of these
Had wrought your sorrows in the days
When we were so poor, and the small of mind
Spoke of your sins and your connivance
With sinful men. You had lived it down,
Had triumphed over them, and you had grown
Prosperous in the world and had passed
Into an easy mastery of life and beyond the thought
Of further conquests for things.
As the Brahmins say no more you worshipped matter,
Or scarcely ghosts, or even the gods
With singleness of heart.
This day you worshipped Eternal Peace
Or Eternal Flame, with scarce a laugh or jest
To hide your worship; and I understood,
Seeing so many facets to you, why it was
Blind Condon always smiled to hear your voice,
And why it was in a green-room years ago
Booth turned to you, marking your face
From all the rest, and said "There is a man
Who might play Hamlet—better still Othello";
And why it was the women loved you; and the priest
Could feed his body and soul together drinking
A glass of beer and visiting with you.

 Then something happened:
Your face grew smaller, your brow more narrow,
Dull fires burned in your eyes,
Your body shriveled, you walked with a cynical shuffle,
Your hands mixed the keys of life,

You had become a discord.
A monstrous hatred consumed you—
You had suffered the greatest wrong of all,
I knew and granted the wrong.
You had mounted up to sixty years, now breathing hard,
And just at the time that honor belonged to you
You were dishonored at the hands of a friend.
I wept for you, and still I wondered
If all I had grown to see in you and find in you
And love in you was just a fond illusion—
If after all I had not seen you aright as a boy:
Barbaric, hard, suspicious, cruel, redeemed
Alone by bubbling animal spirits—
Even these gone now, all of you smoke
Laden with stinging gas and lethal vapor.
Then you came forth again like the sun after storm—
The deadly uric acid driven out at last
Which had poisoned you and dwarfed your soul—
So much for soul!
The last time I saw you
Your face was full of golden light,
Something between flame and the richness of flesh.
You were yourself again, wholly yourself.
And oh, to find you again and resume
Our understanding we had worked so long to reach—
You calm and luminant and rich in thought!
This time it seemed we said but "yes" or "no"—
That was enough; we smoked together
And drank a glass of wine and watched
The leaves fall sitting on the porch.
Then life whirled me away like a leaf,
And I went about the crowded ways of New York.

And one night Alberta and I took dinner
At a place near Fourteenth Street where the music
Was like the sun on a breeze-swept lake
When every wave is a patine of fire,
And I thought of you not at all
Looking at Alberta and watching her white teeth
Bite off bits of Italian bread,
And watching her smile and the wide pupils
Of her eyes, electrified by wine
And music and the touch of our hands
Now and then across the table.

We went to her house at last.
And through a languorous evening.
Where no light was but a single candle,
We circled about and about a pending theme
Till at last we solved it suddenly in rapture
Almost by chance; and when I left
She followed me to the hall and leaned above
The railing about the stair for the farewell kiss—
And I went into the open air ecstatically,
With the stars in the spaces of sky between
The towering buildings, and the rush
Of wheels and clang of bells,
Still with the fragrance of her lips and cheeks
And glinting hair about me, delicate
And keen in spite of the open air.
And just as I entered the brilliant car
Something said to me you are dead—
I had not thought of you, was not thinking of you.
But I knew it was true, as it was
For the telegram waited me at my room. . . .

I didn't come back.

I could not bear to see the breathless breath
Over your brow—nor look at your face—
However you fared or where
To what victories soever—
Vanquished or seemingly vanquished!

Choleric Comments

ALEXANDER S. KAUN

Faithful are the wounds of a friend.—Proverbs, 27:6.

WE were looking at oriental rugs one day, that enfant terrible, the Scavenger, and I. There were rugs that tempted me to transgress the tenth commandment, and there were rugs that jarred me as if I were listening to Carpenter's *Perambulator* stunts. My fellow-flâneur became impatient with my critical remarks.

"You don't love rugs." His Svidrigailovian face grinned. "If you did, you would just love them, you would not quibble. Academician!"

The last epithet is used by THE LITTLE REVIEW priests and prophets as a means to close all arguments. So it did on that occasion. But it left me pondering over the words of a New York critic who accused our magazine of being somewhat indiscriminate in its enthusiasm for the sake of enthusiasm, in its emotionalism for the sake of emotion. I recalled blushing the confession of our chief Neo-Hellenist, who is moved aesthetically by any sort of music, whether it emanates from Kreisler's Stradivarius or from the pianola at Henrici's.

I confess I am a fastidious lover. The dearer a person or a thing are to me the more I demand from them, the more painfully I am hurt by their flaws. Hence the number of my dislikes exceeds that of my likes. Hence I grit my teeth at the sight of Maria Gay in *Carmen*. Because the music of that opera is so full of eternal symbols to me, because when listening to it I understand why Nietzsche preferred Bizet to Wagner,—I am scalded by its vulgar cabaretization. Had I not been stirred by Mr. Powys' remarkable liturgy of St. Oscar Wilde, I would not have been so keenly pricked by his subsequent remark in his Verlaine lecture that Rimbaud was a ruffian. It is because I cannot live without music that I am compelled to suffer weekly indigestion from the sauerkraut menus furnished by Mr. Stock's bâton. Will Mr. Scavenger of the rug-philosophy expect me not to swear and damn at the prospect of being doomed to a long season of Meister-singers, Perambulators, Goldmarckian fudge, Brahmsian Academics, Stockian Jubilee-Confetti, and similar insults? Let me touch another sore:—the Little Theatre, the Temple of Living Art, to which I have looked up with reverence and hope; the only theatrical organization in the city that seemed to have other considerations outside of box-receipts. I was present at the opening night of this season, and left the little "catacomb" with an aching heart. What reason, what artistic reason, is there to stage Andreyev's *Sabine Women* anywhere outside of Russia? The play was written as a biting satire against the Russian liberals who fought against the government

with Tolstoyan Non-Resistance instead of joining the revolutionary proletariat. In Andreyev's land he is perfectly, painfully understood; but here, on Michigan Avenue, the satire degenerated into a boring burlesque! Even Raymond Johnson's suggestive, graceful horizons fail to save the situation. As to *Lithuania*—what is the matter with the Little Theatre males? They move and speak like hermaphrodites, they drink vodka and swear in squeaking falsettos, they appear so feeble and effeminate in comparison with the virile, gruesome Ellen Van Volkenburg and Miriam Kipper. Then, how realistic—shades of Zola! Maurice Browne vomits so much more realistically than Charlie Chaplin in *Shanghied*. . .

Finding myself in the Fine Arts Building, I am in dangerous proximity of another "Temple" that invites my friendly hostility. But I vision the brandishment of the Editor's fatal pencil—*silenzia*! Yet, if I must refrain from, or at least postpone, my general attack on THE LITTLE REVIEW, let me be allowed, pray, to whip one of my confreres, the Scavenger. Whether a sound thrashing will do him good or not is doubtful; but he certainly deserves flagellation. As a denier, as a depreciator, as an anti, he is as convincing as a bulldog; but when he loves, when he lauds and affirms, his voice thins to that of a sick puppy. He should be administered cure from his mania of showering superlatives upon false gods and counterfeit prophets. I dislike the rôle of a Good Samaritan, but our Scavenger is so young, so impressionable; perhaps he will repent. Besides, I sympathize with him. He is one of those promising Americans who suffocate in their native atmosphere, or lack of atmosphere, and are easily lured and led astray by will-o'-the-wisps. In his yearning for wings he is apt to proclaim a domestic rooster as an eagle; in his craving for sun, for light, he often mistakes a cardboard butaforial sun for Phoebus Apollo. Hence his admiration for that Arch-Borrower, Huneker. "He is one of the two or three American critics that are above Puritanic provincialism, that are broad, European!" exclaims Scavenger. It is true; but this truth serves only as a *testimonia pauperitatis* for the intellectual state of this country, where glittering counterfeit coins are less odious than Simon-pure Americanism. The Huneker-cult is one of the American tragedies of which I have spoken on other occasions, the tragedy of surrogates. The young generation, seething with longing for the great and the beautiful in life and art, is forced to feed on substitutes in the absence of real quantities. They want to read a living word about Verlaine, about Huysmans, about Matisse, about those winged titans who make Trans-Atlantic life so rich and pulsating, and they turn to Huneker, the great concocter of newspaper clippings and boulevard gossip. When Scavenger read for me Huneker's admirable essay on Huysmans I was not yet aware that whatever was admirable in the essay had been borrowed almost in toto from Havelock Ellis's *Affirmations*.* Why use the second

**Affirmations*, by Havelock Ellis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

The first edition of the book was issued about twenty years ago, yet

or third-hand patched up cloak of Boulevardier-Huneker, when you may drink from the very source, from Arthur Symons, from Havelock Ellis, from—oh, well, who can recount them? Ah, the tragedy of substitutes!

The other evening, at a gathering of "The Questioners," I accused Miss Harriet Monroe and Miss Margaret C. Anderson of being too lenient editors, in not trying to mould the taste of their contributors. What conscientious editor would allow a writer of Scavenger's caliber to descend to the irritating rhetoric of "The Dionysian Dreiser"? To print this loud exaggeration immediately after Ben Hecht's *Songs and Sketches* is to profess the rug-philosophy.

The Scavenger, as most of his colleagues, is a reformed Puritan. He finds boyish delight in reading an author who is a professional fence-wrecker and convention-smasher. To him immoralizing is a virtue *per se*. He hails Dreiser as the greatest, for things that he has not done. Dreiser is a genius because he has not followed the conventional novelist who makes his villain repent or perish. I admit this; but such a negative virtue, significant as it may appear in given conditions, does not qualify an artist. *The "Genius"* is not art. It is instructive, it is of great value for the study of contemporary America, as Mr. Masters pointed out. I can imagine that in the twenty-first century *The "Genius"* will be used as a textbook for the history of the United States in the end of the nineteenth century, for the author has minutely depicted our customs and morals, has gone into detailed description of country and city life, of farmers' menus, of stomach-aches and their cure, of Christian Science wonders, of salaries and prices, of all the infinitesimal particles that compose the mosaïque of mediocre life. Instructive—yes; but art—by no means. Let me quote Havelock Ellis's *Affirmations*:

Three strokes with the brush of Frans Hals are worth a thousand of Denner's. Rich and minute detail may impress us, but it irritates and wearies in the end. . . . When we are living deeply, the facts of our external life do not present themselves to us in elaborate detail; a very few points are—as it has been termed—focal in consciousness, while the rest are marginal in subconsciousness. A few things stand out vividly at each moment of life; the rest are dim. The supreme artist is shown by the insight and boldness with which he seizes and illuminates these bright points at each stage, leaving the marginal elements in due subordination.

Truisms, aren't these? I wish Dreiser, "the greatest," and his hailers would ponder over them before they apply the term art to 736 pages devoted to rumination of what Ellis calls "marginal elements" of life. And what one reads it now with keen joy. With the exception of the essay on Nietzsche, which is somewhat obsolete, the essay on Zola, Huysmans, Casanova, and St. Francis have stood the test of time. One feels the breeze of cleanliness, freshness, sincerity, and profundity. I may have an opportunity of discussing the book some other time.

a life! In what respect does the life of Witla, the "genius," deserve so much elaboration and painstaking analysis? The hero's only distinction is his sexual looseness. But he is not a Sanin who gratifies his animalistic instincts with contempt for motivation or justification. Witla, and Dreiser, and Scavenger, are reformed Puritans. When Witla falls in "love" with the round arm of a laundress, or with the golden hair of a country girl, or with the black eyes of an art-model, or with the perfect form of a gambler's wife, or with the innocence of a mama's girl; when in each case the lover swears and damns and lyricizes in bad English and strives to win and possess the object d'art, Mr. Dreiser appears from behind the sinner, pats him on the shoulder, and flings defiantly into the faces of the terrified philistines: "Witla is all-right. He is an *artist*. He loves beautiful things. See, God damn you?!" Is he? Throughout the long book we are told time and again that he is an artist. Unless we take the author's word for it we are inclined to doubt it very much. True, an artist loves beauty; but does he necessarily desire to possess the object of his admiration? Does not the contemplation of a beautiful arm or sunset or flower or vase or rug bring the artist complete satisfaction and possession? I do not condemn Witla; although I dislike him, for he is a loud mediocrity. There is a Witla in every one of us men; but we take our Witla as our animalistic self, not as the artistic.

Ah, dear Scavenger, I do love rugs. But there are rugs and rugs.

The Scavenger's Swan Song

What a remarkable fellow my friend the Incurable is! I talk to him about rugs, quite casually, as we wait for a car, and what does this devil of a psychologist do but walk deep into my soul on one of them. I read him a Huneker article on Huysmans which he remarks is excellent at the time, only to find (almost too late) that I should have read Havelock Ellis. . . .

How I envy him this distinction of having read Havelock Ellis instead of James Huneker, of being subtle enough to prefer the deep, metaphysical didactics concerning Life (with a capital L, Miss Editor) to the contemplation of that most seductive of literary signposts—Huneker. But it is so foolish to quibble about books. . . . If I had anything else to do I wouldn't read them. . . .

Puritan, indeed! That is too much. I suspect it is only a withering retort, a ferocious counter to the "academic charges." But what of Dreiser—poor, little, smug, banal, and illiterate Dreiser? You should have spared him. You remember on the elevated going home one night how I pleaded with you to spare him, how I argued, defended, fought? Ah, I am shamed. I feel somehow responsible for this annihilation of a man, aye a good writer, who was fast becoming one of the great men of America. . . .

When you speak of music everything becomes clear to me. Here am I

who like music well enough to have studied it for ten years, who can improvise as well on the violin as on the typewriter, but who nevertheless have been denied the capacity for experiencing the critical disorganization of the soul at the sound of bad music, and nervous exaltations at the sound of good. I suffer and gloat—but subjectively. To me music is a background. . . . It is not my natural form of self-expression. Neither are rugs.

And I haven't time to be a connoisseur. Later—perhaps. But now I reduce all such differences of attitude as yours and mine to the everlasting wrangle between the connoisseur and the improviser. Yes?

Puritan! That is nothing. Later you will call me charlatan because I sometimes compose paradoxes and even epigrams. Culture abhors an epigram.

Ho! ho! the devil take you and all critics. We ride the crests—Miss Editor and I. Once my friend the Incurable rode the crests and they washed him up on a foreign shore, and now he calls the crests “foam” or “emotion for emotion’s sake” or a lot of other rather true things. To ride on the crests as long as you can—that’s the life (a small “I,” Miss Editor); to think one thing today and another tomorrow, to have lots of fun, to yell while you’re young, to believe Havelock Ellis a bearded old lady—in short, “klushnik,” to follow the care-free, tortuous path of improvisation, self-expression, instead of pursuing the lugubrious catacombs of criticism and connoisseurship.

As for my article, “The Dionysian Dreiser,” I will not defend that. Your abuse of that writing coupled with your smug praise of Ben Hecht’s atrocious poetry (concerning which I agree with my friend “Bubble” Bodenheim, who told me it was so bad on the whole that he couldn’t get it out of his mind) is inconsistent.

Ah, friend, may my death and Dreiser’s be forever on your conscience.

“THE SCAVENGER.”

Dregs

BEN HECHT

Life

THE sun was shining in the dirty street.

Old women with shapeless bodies waddled along on their way to market.

Bearded old men who looked like the fathers of Jerusalem walked flatfooted, nodding back and forth.

"The tread of the processional surviving in Halsted street," thought Moisse, the young dramatist who was moving with the crowd.

Children sprawled in the refuse-laden alleys. One of them ragged and clotted with dirt stood half-dressed on the curbing and urinated into the street.

Wagons rumbled, filled with fruits and iron and rags and vegetables.

Human voices babbled above the noises of the traffic. Moisse watched the lively scene.

"Every day it's the same," he thought; "the same smells, the same noise and people swarming over the pavements. I am the only one in the street whose soul is awake. There's a pretty girl looking at me. She suspects the condition of my soul. Her fingers are dirty. Why doesn't she buy different shoes? She thinks I am lost. In five years she will be fat. In ten years she will waddle with a shawl over her head."

The young dramatist smiled.

"Good God," he thought, "where do they come from. Where are they going? No place to no place. But always moving, shuffling, waddling, crying out. The sun shines on them. The rain pours on them. It burns. It freezes. Today they are bright with color. Tomorrow they are grey with gloom. But they are always the same, always in motion."

The young dramatist stopped on the corner and looking around him spied a figure sitting on the sidewalk, leaning against the wall of a building.

The figure was an old man.

He had a long white beard.

He had his legs tucked under him and an upturned tattered hat rested in his lap.

His thin face was raised and the sun beat down on it, but his eyes were closed.

"Asleep," mused Moisse.

He moved closer to him.

The man's head was covered with long silky white hair that hung down to his neck and hid his ears. It was uncombed. His face in the sun looked like the face of an ascetic, thin, finely veined.

He had a long nose and almost colorless lips and the skin on his cheeks was white. It was drawn tight over his bones, leaving few wrinkles.

An expression of peace rested over him—peace and detachment. Of the noise and babble he heard nothing. His eyes were closed to the crowded frantic street.

He sat, his head back, his face bathed in the sun, smileless and dreaming.

"A beggar," thought Moisse, "asleep, oblivious. Dead. All day he sits in the sun like a saint, immobile. Like one of the old Alexandrian ascetics, like a delicately carved image. He is awake in himself but dead to others. The waves cannot touch him. His thoughts, oh to know his thoughts and his dreams?"

Suddenly the eyes of the young dramatist widened. He was looking at the beggar's long hair that hung to his neck.

"It's moving," he whispered half aloud. He came closer and stood over the old man and gazed intently at the top of his head.

The hair was swaying faintly, each separate fiber moving alone. . . .

It shifted, rose imperceptibly and fell. It quivered and glided. . . .

"Lice," murmured Moisse.

He watched.

Silent and asleep the old man sat with his thin face to the sun and his hair moved.

Vermin swarmed through it creeping, crawling, tiny and infinitesimal.

Every strand was palpitating, shuddering under their mysterious energy.

At first Moisse could hardly make them out but his eyes gradually grew accustomed to the sight. And as he watched he saw the hair swell like waves riding over the water, saw it drop and flutter, coil and uncoil of its own accord.

Vermin raised it up, pulled it out, streaming up and down tirelessly in vast armies.

They crawled furiously like dust specks blown thick through the white beard.

They streamed and shifted and were never still.

They moved in and out, from no place to no place, but always moving, frantic, and frenzied.

An old woman passed and with a shake of her head dropped two pennies into the upturned hat. Moisse hardly saw her. He saw only the palpitating swarms that were now racing, easily visible, through the grey white hair.

Some ventured down over the white ascetic face, crawling in every direction, traveling around the lips and over the closed eyes, emerging

suddenly in thick streams from behind the covered ears and losing themselves under the ever moving beard.

And Moisse, his senses strained, thought he heard a noise—a faint crunching noise.

He listened.

The noise seemed to grow louder. He began to itch but he remained bending over the head. He could hear them, like a faraway murmur, a purring, uncertain sound.

"They're shouting and groaning, crying out, weeping and laughing," he mused. "It is life . . . life. . ."

He looked up and down the crowded burning street with its frantic crowd, and smiled.

"Life," he repeated. . .

He walked away. Before him floated the hair of the beggar moving as if stirred by a slow wind, and he itched.

"But who was the old man?" he thought.

A young woman, plump and smiling, jostled him. He felt her soft hip pressing against him for a moment.

A child running barefoot through the street brushed against his legs. He felt its sticky fingers seize him for an instant and then the child was gone. On he walked.

Three young men confronted him for a second time. He passed between two of them, squeezed by their shoulders.

A shapeless old woman bumped him with her back as she shuffled past.

Two children dodged in and out screaming and seized his arm to turn on.

The young dramatist stopped and remained standing still, looking about him.

Then he laughed.

"Life," he murmured again; and

"I am the old man," he added, "I . . . I . . ."

Depths

Crowds began to come out of the buildings.

They came in streams and broad waves, breaking in a black sweep over the pavements and spreading into a thick long mass that moved forward. The glassy lights cut the twilight drizzle with their yellow fire. The tumult grew until up and down the street an unceasing din sounded, shrieking, roaring, clanging noises.

Moisse, the young dramatist, stood against one of the office buildings as the throngs spilled past him on their ways home. His eyes were fixed

on the distant gloom of the sky which hung beyond the drizzel and the fuzzy glare of light like a vast black froth.

"It is so silent," mused Moisse. "Millions of miles without a sound. Man and his accomplishments are infinitesimal," went on the young dramatist as the swelling throng brushed and buffeted against him, "but his ego is infinite. Only by thought can he reach the stars."

He was thoughtless for a moment, holding his position with difficulty as the crowds pressed past. Then he resumed:

"None of them looks at me. None of them imagines I am thinking of the stars. How startled these fat evil-smelling men and women would be if they could see my thought for a moment as they crashed along their tiny ways. But nevertheless I don't eat tonight," he murmured suddenly, as if awakening. And the idea plunged him into a series of reflections from which he emerged with a frown and looked about him.

A short thick man with an unshaven face was shuffling past. His skin was broken under his growth of beard with red and purple sores. His mouth hung open, his eyes stared ahead of him and his head was bent forward. Moisse thought of the body concealed by the layers of caked rags which covered the man, and shuddered.

"He never bathes," mused the young dramatist. "I wonder what a creature like that does." And he followed him slowly.

At the corner the man stopped and blew his nose violently with his fingers. Another block and he stopped again, bending over in the midst of the crowd and straightening with a cigar butt in his hand. He eyed the thing critically. It was flattened at the end where feet had passed over it. The man thrust it between his lips and shuffled on.

In a vestibule he extracted a blackened match from his pocket and with shaking fingers lighted the butt. When it burned he blew a cloud of smoke, and taking it out of his mouth regarded it with satisfaction.

Several in the throng noticed him, their eyes resting with disapproval and sometimes hate upon the figure. Once a crossing policeman spied him and followed him with his gaze until he was lost to view.

Moisse kept abreast of him and together they turned into an alley that led behind a hotel. The man's eyes never wavered, but remained fixed in the direction he was moving.

The alley was dark. In the court that ran behind the hotel were several large, battered cans that shone dully against the black wall. Debris littered the ground. Looking furtively at the closed doors the man made his way to one of the cans.

He lifted the cover cautiously and thrust his arm into its depths. For several minutes he remained with his arm lost inside the refuse can.

"He's found something," whispered Moisse.

The man straightened. In his hand he held an object on which sparks seemed to race up and down like blue insects.

He raised his find to his face and then thrust it into his pocket and resumed his shuffle down the alley.

"To think," mused Moisse, "of a man eating out of a garbage can. Either he is inordinately hungry or careless to a point of . . . of . . ."

He searched for a word that refused to appear and he followed slowly after the man. In the dim light of a side street the man paused and took out his booty. It was evidently the back of a fowl.

Standing still the man thrust it into his mouth, gnawing and tearing at its bones. After he had eaten for several minutes he held it up to the light and started picking at shreds of meat with his fingers. These he licked off his hand.

The meal was at length finished. The man threw the gleaned bones away, blew his nose and walked on.

Through the dark tumbled streets Moisse followed. The shuffling figure fascinated him. He noted the gradually increasing degradation of the neighborhood, the hovels that seemed like torn, blackened rags, the broken streets piled with refuse and mud.

In front of a lighted house the man stopped. The curtains which hung over the two front windows of the house were torn. One of them was half destroyed and Moisse saw into the room in which a gas jet flickered and which was empty.

The man walked up the steps and knocked at the door. It was opened.

"A woman," whispered Moisse.

She vanished, and the man followed her. The two appeared in a moment in the room with the gas light.

The woman was tall and thin, her hair hung down her back in two scimpy braids. Her face was coated with paint and great hollows loomed under her eyes.

The man walked to her, his open mouth widened in a grin.

"They're talking," murmured the young dramatist as he watched their haggard faces move strangely. He noted the woman was dressed in a wrapper, colorless and streaked.

"I wonder—" he began, but the scene captured his attention. He watched absorbed. The woman was shaking her head and backing away from the man who finally halted in the center of the room.

He lifted a foot from the floor and removed its shoe. Standing with the shoe in his hand his eyes glistened at the woman who watched him with her neck stretched forward and a sneer on her lips.

The man put his hand in the shoe and brought out a coin.

"A twenty-five cent piece," muttered Moisse.

The man held it up in his fingers and laughed. His face distorted itself into strange wrinkles when he laughed. Moisse who could not hear the laugh saw only an imbecilic grimace. The woman took the coin, and left the room.

She returned in a moment holding out her arms to the man.

He seized her, crushing her body against him until she was bent backward. He pressed his face over her, his mouth still open, his eyes staring.

The woman stared back and laughed, fastening her lips suddenly to his.

Losing his balance, the man staggered and the woman broke from his grasp. He pounced on her, seizing her hand and jerking her against him.

As she held back he raised his fist and struck her fiercely in the face. She swayed for an instant and then stood quiet.

Her lips began to smile and move in speech. The man shook his head rapturously, rubbing his nose with a finger and panting.

Moisse turned away and walked slowly toward the town.

"Good God," he murmured, "he'll take his clothes off and she . . ."

His emotions began to trouble him. An unrest stirred his body.

"I should have gone in there and taken her away from him," he mused, and then with a shudder he walked on—smiling.

Gratitude

The avenue bubbled brightly under the grey rain.

The afternoon crowd had melted from the sidewalk, washed into hall-ways and under awnings by the downpour.

It began to look like evening. A refreshing gloom settled over the street.

The wind leaped out of alley courts and byways and raced over the pavement accompanied by spattering arpeggios of rain.

Moisse, the young dramatist, turned into the avenue. His voluminous black raincoat, reaching from his ears to his shoe tops, flapped in front of him.

By exercising the most diligent effort, however, he managed rather to saunter than walk, and he kept his eyes raptly fixed upon the deserted stretch of shining cement.

As he moved peacefully along he repeated to himself:

"The rain leaps and pirouettes like a chorus of Russian elves. It jumps. It bounces. It hops, skips, and runs. Flocks of little excited silver birds are continually alighting around my feet and chattering in a thousand voices. I should have been a poet."

Removing his gaze from the ground he looked at the faces which lined the buildings and floated like pale lamps in the darkened vestibules.

"Everyone is watching me," he thought, "for in my attitude there is the careless courage of an unconscious heroism. I stroll along indifferent to the rain. It splashes down my neck. It takes the crease out of my trousers. It trickles off the brim of my hat."

"And all this stamps me momentarily in these afflicted minds as an unusual human.

"That one with the monogomistic side-whiskers is wondering what a queer fellow I am.

"What can it be that engrosses my attention to the point of making me so oblivious to the rain?

"And that fat woman with the face like a toy balloon is certain I will catch my death of cold.

"The little girl with the wide eyes thinks I am in love.

"There is an infinite source of speculation in my simple conduct."

The water was making headway down the back of his neck, but Moisse hesitated and then abstained from adjusting his collar more firmly.

"They will notice it," he thought, "and immediately I will lose the distinctive aloofness which characterizes me now."

So moving leisurely down the avenue Moisse, the young dramatist, progressed, his eyes apparently unconscious of the scene before him, his soul oblivious to the saturated world, and his mind occupied with distant and mysterious thoughts.

The downpour began to assume the proportions of a torrent. Moisse persisted in his tracks.

Someone touched his elbow.

He turned and found a little old man with faded eyes and threadbare, dripping clothes smiling earnestly at his side.

The little old man was bent in the shoulders. His shirt had no collar. His brown coat was buttoned to his neck.

His face screwed up by a sensitiveness to the cataract of drops beating against it, was round and full of wrinkles.

It had the quizzical, goodnatured look of a fuzzy little dog.

His wet eyes that seemed to be swimming in a red moisture peered at Moisse who was frowning.

"I'm hungry," began the little old man, "I ain't had anything to eat—"

"How much do you want?" inquired Moisse.

"Anything," said the beggar.

The young dramatist felt in his pocket. A single half-dollar encountered his fingers.

"I've only got a half-dollar," he said, "I'll get it changed. Come on."

The two of them walked in silence, Moisse still sauntering, the little old man bent over and looking as if he wanted to speak but was afraid of dissipating a dream.

"Wait here," Moisse said suddenly, "I'll go in and get change."

He stepped into the box office of one of the large moving-picture theaters on the avenue and secured change.

The little old man had followed him inside the building, his eyes watching him with an eager curiosity.

Moisse turned with the change to find the beggar at his elbow.

He handed him fifteen cents.

"What's the matter?" he inquired. "Been drinking?"

"No, no," said the beggar.

"Why haven't you?" persisted Moisse frowning; "don't you know there's nothing for you but drink. That's what drink is for. Men like you."

The faded eyes livened.

"Now you go and get yourself three good shots of booze," went on Moisse, "and you'll be a new man for the rest of the day."

The beggar had become excited.

His lips moved in a nervous delight but he uttered no sound. With the fingers of his right hand he picked at the blackened and roughly-bitten nails of his other. He cleared his throat and then as if suddenly inspired, removed his drenched hat and raised his eyebrows.

Touched by the sincerity of the little old man's emotions the young dramatist reached into his pocket and brought forth another ten cent piece.

"Here," he said, "buy two more drinks."

The little man seemed about to break into a dance. His face became tinged with the pink of an old woman's cheek.

The red moisture ran out of his eyes in two white tears. Moisse regarded him, frowning.

"Once you were young as I am today," said Moisse aloud, fastening his eyes upon the top of the little old man's head which seemed dirty and bald despite the pale hair, and alive.

"Perhaps you had ambitions and then some commonplace occurred and you lost them. And now you float around begging nickles. That's interesting. A little old man begging nickles in the rain."

The beggar smiled eagerly and then ventured a slight laugh.

He came closer to Moisse and stood trembling.

"Asking for crumbs," went on Moisse with a deepening frown, "cursed at night when alone by memories that will not die. Eh?" He looked suddenly into the faded eyes and smiled.

The little old man nodded his head vigorously. He caught his breath and stood looking at Moisse with his mouth open and his checks wrinkled as if he were about to cry.

His breath struck the young dramatist and he averted his nose.

"Strange," resumed he, "now you have a quarter and I have a quarter and still we remain so different. Isn't it strange, old fellow? Yet it is the inevitable inequality of men that makes us brothers."

The beggar was about to speak. Moisse paused and looked with interest at the round face, the quivering nostrils and the lips that were twitching into speech.

"No one has talked to me like you," he said, "no one."

And he caught his breath and stared with a strange expression at his benefactor.

He bit at a finger nail and lowered his head. He seemed suddenly in the throes of a great mental struggle for his face had become earnest.

It endured for a moment and then he looked at Moisse.

"You—you want me to come along with you," he said and he scratched at the back of his ear.

"I'll come along if you want me to," he repeated.

"Come along? Where?" Moisse asked, his eyes awakening.

"Oh, anyplace," said the little old man. "I ain't particular, if you ain't."

He was breathing quickly and he reached for the palm of his patron.

A deep light had come into his face. His faded eyes had grown stronger. Their quizzical look was gone and they were burning in their wet depths.

They looked now with a maternal intensity into the eyes of Moisse and their smile staggered the sophistication of the young dramatist.

The little old man continued to breathe hard until he began to quiver. He suddenly assumed command.

"Come," he said, seizing Moisse by the palm and squeezing it. "I know a place we can go and get a room cheap and where we won't be disturbed. It ain't so nice a place but come."

He squeezed the palm he held for the second time.

The deep light that had come into his little dog's face softened and two tears rolled again out of his eyes.

He caught his breath in a sob.

"I—I don't drink," he said; "I'm hungry—but I can wait . . . until we get through."

He was beaming coquettishly through his tears and fondling the young dramatist's hand.

"I can wait," he repeated, raising his blue lips toward Moisse, his face transfigured and glowing pink.

"I see," said Moisse, withdrawing his hand with an involuntary shudder. He was about to say something but he turned, again involuntarily, and hurried away, breaking into a run when he found himself in the rain.

The little old man's face drooped.

He walked slowly staring after him.

He stood bareheaded while the rain bombarded his drenched figure and he looked at the young dramatist running.

While he stood gazing after him his face screwed up was suffused with a strange tenderness and the tears dripped out of his eyes.

Editorials and Announcement

Emma Goldman at the Fine Arts Theatre

BEGINNING Sunday night, November 21, Emma Goldman is to deliver nine new lectures in the most interesting playhouse in town—the Fine Arts Theatre, Chicago home of the Irish Players and Miss Horniman's company and Miss Barnsdall's Players' Producing company, etc. The complete list of lectures will be found on page 44.

The first, on "Preparedness"—well, if you heard the Powys-Browne debate last Sunday night and agree with Margery Currey that Mr. Browne struck the roots of the issue, then I *beg* you to hear Emma Goldman. Mr. Browne said something about the real issue being whether people would rather kill or be killed. I could scarcely believe my ears. . . . If you once listen to Emma Goldman talking of fundamentals you can never fall for sentimentalizations again.

Will Our Readers Help?

THERE is a beautiful plan on foot to help THE LITTLE REVIEW live through its third year. It is this:

If our readers will order their books through the Gotham Book Society we will receive a certain percentage on all the sales. This arrangement has been made with the publishers, so that any book you want, whether listed in our pages or not, may be procured at the same price for which it is on sale at your local bookseller's—and sometimes even less than that. You will find full particulars on page 50 of this issue.

Radical magazines do not become popular, and the problem of meeting the cost of production every month is really a desperate one. If there is a good response to this plan we ought to make the bulk of our publishing cost out of it, and then we can devote our energies to the improvement of the magazine's quality. Will you please keep this in mind when ordering your books? It will mean such a tremendous thing to us!

The Russian Literature Class

IN reply to many inquiries about the group for the study of Russian literature, we are glad to announce that the idea is in the process of realization. Early in January the group will meet, and will proceed to attend the regular lectures. The course will be offered by a Russian, who is well known to the readers of *THE LITTLE REVIEW*. Those willing to join the adventure are asked to send their names and addresses to 834 Fine Arts Building.

John Cowper Powys on War

MARGERY CURREY

IT was a quite, quite dreadful jolt that shook the John Cowper Powys cult on the night of the debate between the master and Maurice Browne of the Little Theatre. The great one, appearing robed in black, through his Delphic, released, blinding vapor clouds of infallible utterance, was to devastate the suggestion that war is evil, avoidable, and should not be prepared for by military methods. Maurice Browne was to defend the suggestion.

Scarce half a moon before had the first murmuring of discontent arisen among the worshipers of the temple, when their idol, beautiful, mordant, flaming, strode forth in flapping black garments and proclaimed that in this great war of many nations "the gall and vitriol and wormwood and uncleanness of mankind are burned, purged from the purified flesh of humanity; that then humanity is transformed, until the passion of hate is hardly distinguishable from the passion of love."

The master himself was the glorious vulture of war. Looming there on the stage of the Little Theatre, black, huge, alone under a vast orange sky heavily streaked with black, a violet light from somewhere touching the crimson of his face—and beside him in that great lonely cosmos an iridescent emerald bowl upon a high ivory pedestal. That little, little iridescent bowl, the ivory, the vast peace of a universe, no coagulating clots

hanging from the shreds of bodies torn and entangled in the barbed wire meshes of the trenches, no cries—only one huge black moving thing there.

"War a great evil and an unmitigated wrong? I cannot see it. A pacifist struggle for existence is only a meaner struggle. They are fools who think it advisable or possible to stamp out war; they are knaves if, thinking this possible or advisable, they still go on a pacifist crusade."

Followed then the picture of a well-managed nation during war, a regime of exalted socialism—the pooling of all moneys, the raising of the income tax, the rich paying for the needs of the poor; she who was once thought a bedraggled hussy of London's east end now become a savior of her country, in her potential gift of a son to the recruiting office of her country; the high price now set on flesh and blood, even that of the most humble.

W Well, all this heroic joy and thin-ice socialism—it was announced at the end of the evening that the week after the subject would be Walt Whitman. Thank heaven! Let his people listen to John Cowper Powys on Walt Whitman. Of these he should speak—of Walt Whitman, of Oscar Wilde, of Huysmans and Richpin and Milton and Ficke and Baudelaire and Goethe and Shakespeare. On these he speaks divinely. Peace and war indeed!

And the debate? There stood Maurice Browne in valiant opposition, really "the idealist and fanatic" as his opponent called him, not adding "the clear thinker," the rejector of temptations to revel in obvious and facile romanticisms on the sweet decorum of dying for one's country, with all the talk of defending one's beloved from the hand of the ravager. There were even those who understood Mr. Browne when his bravery and his prophetic sight let him dare to say such things as "It is better to be killed than to kill. To refrain from a combat of violence when the victims might be your dearest ones is not to put a finger in the cogs of God's orderly universe. It is a question of looking the God that is within you in the face." As for the merits of the debate, the matter of war and its avoidableness was not touched on in its practical aspects, except by one who presided over the meeting and in three intelligent moments discussed the economic and the proved sides of war. THE LITTLE REVIEW is no tract, and we may pass that by as understood.

And after it all, out of an audience of two hundred and twenty—when they overflowed the Little Theatre they trooped to the Fine Arts Assembly Room—eighty-four stood up to announce their conviction that war is not evil, not avoidable, and should be prepared for by military methods, and some sixty others stood up to indicate their opposite conviction! The vote was on the merits of the question.

The Theatre

THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PLAYERS

SAXE COMMINS

WERE I a self-appointed apologist for the Washington Square Players I might be able to say with gracious fairness that "their works are not worth as much as their endeavors but their endeavors are heroic." But I am not inclined to pardon these enthusiasts whose enthusiasm has become cautious, whose ideals are inoffensive, whose outlines are blurred by an undiscerning dilettantism, who in the absence of a dominant individual characteristic flounder helplessly through an unbalanced, inartistic program, that is only relieved, fortunately, by Mr. Phil Moeller's delicious satire *Helena's Husband*.

"It is not from what you emancipate yourself, it is for what."—Let us see whether the Washington Square Players have really liberated themselves from the Broadway tradition of "getting it over," from the sacrifice of the artistic for the opportune, and from the fear of offending the generous critics of the New York Press and incidentally a gullible public. "What have they done that has an element of daring, invigorating thought," was asked of one of the members of the producing staff. "*My Lady's Honor*, one of last year's plays," was his answer. To those who were unfortunate enough to have seen this pseudo-feminist tract—George Broadhurst supplanting Ibsen in a free theatre—I need not tell what resentment that remark aroused. Nor could those who saw *Moondown* on the same bill be more antagonized than I was when I heard so fatuous a statement as "If we had more plays like *Moondown* we would establish the equivalent in America to the Celtic renaissance." Is this "for what" the Washington Square Players have emancipated themselves? Even if *Moondown* had any value in itself would they deserve any credit for an aspiration that is only a conditional imitation? I take these casual expressions of members of the organization critically because there is a most noticeable absence of persistent, highly individualized effort, because there is a majority rule, the odorlessness of an insipid mixture prevalent in the atmosphere about the Band Box. They are successful—unfortunately.

Consider the present bill. Has the play-reading committee shown any distinction that differentiates it from those Broadway theatrical agencies that supply syndicated thrills on demand? Have they not arranged their programme without any regard for balance, to the vaudeville formula in this manner: One curtain-raiser on a current topic—of course the war; one

play cut and measured for the star, a misfit, to prepare you for the middle piece, in this instance an amazingly clever satire by Phil Moeller; and then the end-up—(Yes, they have outgrown Broadway; they don't wave a big American flag as a grand finale number)—in this spirit: "wouldn't a fancifully pagan thing be very nice to show that we have a conception of the beautiful?" Voilà—the whole is the sum of its parts, mathematically accurate, yes; but "who knows whether two and two don't make five" in the science of Esthetics, if there is such a thing.

Where, I cannot understand, is their proclaimed aspiration of finding plays which fulfill the artistic merit that they would lead us to believe the New York theatre-goer demands? If there is such a public, do they think and choose for them secure in the belief that the patient supporters of these sterile Little Theatre movements will abide such exploitation? Is their complacency so complete that they can disregard every requirement that a "New Theatre" movement imposes and yet get away with it? When I use the term "New Theatre" I mean it in the Strindbergian sense, a new and thoroughly iconoclastic theatre that panders to no opinion, whose merit lies solely in an individual and artistic distinction, a theatre that has something of the "continual slight novelty."

Fire and Water, the opening play of the bill by Hervey White, is a sacrifice of art to the god of timeliness, an inane argument, an undramatic episode, a virtuous plea against War that permits its author to air some abstractions on brotherhood and equality with utter disregard for the tenseness or the dramatic possibilities of the situation. Broadway knows better. They, at least, are both opportune and spectacular and do not pour forth so much of what Nietzsche calls "moralic acid."

Night of Snow, by Roberto Bracco, seems chosen ostensibly to allow Mr. Ralph Roeder to cover as great an area of the stage as is possible in forty-five minutes of monotonous gesture to the melodious obligato of a voice ranting second-rate Hamlet self-lacerations. It tells the story of a person half gentleman, half derelict, who likes to cry about it while his mistress and mother indulge themselves to satiation with sickly sweet sacrifice. "I am his Mo-ho-ther" etcetera. What a relief was Moeller's play—a play that could not even be contaminated by its environment. I think Anatole France would be glad to have written it. *Helena's Husband* is much more than an historical interpretation of a phase of the Trojan wars. It is the truth! Moeller is more than clever. He knows as well as France that "history is a pack of lies."

The Antick, by Percy Mackaye, is a devitalized Pagan attempt which in spite of charming Lupokova was extremely tedious. I heard little of it, so poor was the enunciation of the actors, and for my concentrated attention I was rewarded with an incoherent effort to transplant Pan to barren, colorless New England. I wonder whether Mr. Mackaye ever read Pater's *Denys L'Auxerrois*?

At least the Washington Square Players presume to desire, even though it be in a misdirected manner. Will they overcome the affable praise that they get so generously from uncritical critics? Will they mature sufficiently to recognize the mistakes of their infancy? There is still hope that they can be saved from success. Where is the strong, perhaps tyrannical, individual who can do it?

"Lithuania"

Whoever hasn't seen the Little Theatre's production of Rupert Brooke's *Lithuania* has missed an excellent although unimportant dramatic treat. It is the most "effective" thing of its kind I ever have seen executed in Chicago. It is one prolonged and unrelieved shudder from start to finish.

Rupert Brooke is the hero of the occasion. His play is the thing. The theme is that of the guest who stops over in an outlying peasant hut and is murdered in his chamber while he sleeps. Brooke added a flourish in making the guest a returned son of the house who vanished when he was thirteen. Taking this hackneyed idea Brooke moulded it with consummate skill. And the result is a study in horror and pathology, vivid, artistic and for its effect upon the audience to be compared only to the witnessing of a child birth. Three of its actors rose to its demands. Mrs. Browne as the lame daughter contributed practically all the human atmosphere there was. Miriam Kipper abetted her. Allan MacDougall, in the part of a half-witted son of a tavern keeper, added a few excellent moments. The other men were, however, entirely unsuccessful in their efforts. Maurice Browne, as the peasant father, failed with the rest of them to give the impression the play demanded, sullen, grim, virile, despondency. But it was there, despite them.

An Objection

Why is it people have such stupid reactions to the plays put on by the Chicago Little Theatre? I do not know. It is easy to explain why they talk in subdued tones while entering; why they almost walk on tip-toe; why they ask for the programs almost with awe; and why, sometimes, they stop their chatter as the lights are slowly dimmed. The causes of these actions and their explanation are obvious. And yet—after the play! What inane, half-witted remarks about the bill! This "notice" printed above about the opening bill of their fourth season—what is it worth as a piece of criticism, as a review, or even as an account of the proceedings it so tritely and knowingly pretends to explain? "Mrs. Browne as the lame daughter. . . . Miriam Kipper abetted her. MacDougall . . . added a few excellent moments . . . Maurice Browne . . . failed with the rest of them." What rot! In watching Brooke's play you are not aware that you

are watching "Mrs. Browne as the lame daughter" or Miriam Kiper as the mother, MacDougall as the son of an inn-keeper, or Mr. Browne as the father. You do not find time to bother about that part of your reaction. Your subjection to play and players is too strong and tense. It is the usual thing to bother after the play, questioning members—who played this role?—who played that role? And then, after hours or days of weighing and shallow balancing, write a "review." Again I question: Why do people react so stupidly to the plays at this theatre? This is not the adequate or honest way to view a play like Brooke's or acting like the Little Theatre company's. In this play even as in *The Trojan Women* they have closely approached that losing themselves in the "impersonal ideal" or "one tradition" of which Mr. Powys spoke so white-heatedly in a former article in THE LITTLE REVIEW. Except for MacDougall and for Moseman, who are *always* MacDougall and Moseman, we were watching a play—and forgot to gather the ingredients and essentials of the inevitable review.

Book Discussion

An Inspired Publisher

To paraphrase the biblical adage: Samson is upon ye, Philistines! That quaint giant, Russian literature, is storming the Anglo-Saxon world; and no longer in apothecary dozes, in solitary books, but in avalanches. A practical dreamer, Alfred A. Knopf, is determined to deluge this country with the best and nearly best that has been written in Russia, and he is doing it on a big scale, in torrents and showers. Such a dizzying list of publications: Gogol, Goncharov, Lermontov, Gorky, Andreyev, Garshin, Kropotkin; and he is going to give us Sologub, Kuzmin, Ropshin! And he has given us Przbyshewski's *Homo Sapiens*, the book about which I have been drumming the ears of my American friends for years, the book that has stirred me more than any other work of art,—I mean it literally. Mr. Knopf has introduced another novel feature on the book-market: he selects translators from among those who know three things—Russian, English, and how to write,—so that the reader will be spared the torture of wading through a badly-done translation from the French version of a German translation from the Russian (examples? Recall *Sanine*!).

A literature is like a people; if you want to know it, you must learn not only its Cromwells and Napoleons, but also its Asquiths and Vivianis; not only its Shakespeares and Goethes, but its Wellses and Sudermanns as well. Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, do not exhaust Russian literature

of the nineteenth century, though they are the greatest novelists of their epoch. There are many interesting sides of Russian life which are not reflected on the canvasses of the great Trio, but have been painted by perhaps minor artists, whom we cannot afford to miss if we intend to gain a clear vista of that peculiar life and its peculiar literature.

Hence Goncharov and his *Precipice*. In Russia he is ranked next to Turgenev. Without the latter's delicate lyricism Goncharov presents the objective artist, if this is possible, in depicting the life of the gentry, the class that has been either ignored or caricatured by the writers with a *Tendenz*. In *Precipice* we face Rayski, Vyera, the grandmother, the passing types of the romantic nobility, whose passions and tragedies are as stirring and as human as those of the more democratic elements of society.

Garshin is another writer heretofore unknown to the English world. His *Signal and other Stories* are achingly Russian. Garshin is a product of the Eighties, the epoch of "petty deeds," when the heavy boot of Alexander III. drove into the underground all that was idealistic in his country. The soil-less *Intelligentzia* had the alternative of turning retrogrades or going insane. Garshine's lot was with the latter category. His few stories ache with the black melancholy which finally hurled him down a flight of stone steps,—his last flight. His war impressions are gripping with the resigned Russian sadness; they are all-human, universal; but *Attalea Princeps*, the symbolical tale of an exotic plant chafing in a hot-house—who but a compatriot of mad Garshin will fathom its profound tragicness!

The republication of Kropotkin's *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature* will be of service to the critical student of Russian literature. I say critical, for although the book is rich in material the personal views of the author and his valuations of the writers are considerably obsolete and tainted with the liberalistic tendency of "problem"-friends.

Below are more reviews of Mr. Knopf's publications. The most important one is Przybyszewski's *Homo Sapiens*. It deserves a special article. See the next issue!

Homo Monstrosus

Taras Bulba, by Nicolai Gogol. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

They burned him at the stake, bound to a great tree in iron chains. The flames lapped at his feet, glowing into his old face that was scarred and leathered with battle, brightening the silver of his fierce mustache . . .

Out of the reddened shadows that fell over him like a mantle his lips could be seen curling in a smile, contemptuous and arrogant, and he turned his eyes toward the Dnyeper where the boats of his brothers were pulling away under a rain of lead.

"Farewell, comrades," he shouted to them; "remember me, and come hither again next spring to make merry!"

And then he turned to the Lyakhs against whom he had waged war and who knew him as the raven of the steppe.

The fire had risen above the faggots and the great tree was burning. Out of the flames came the voice of the hero . . .

"A Tzar shall arise from the Russian soil and there shall not be a Power in the world which shall not submit to him."

Thus died Taras Bulba, kazak.

In this day when a man's skin is his most greedily guarded possession and the lisp of pale, pretty words his greatest glory, Taras Bulba comes charging into America, a figure in need. On his black horse he comes, his scalp lock flying in the wind, his sword waving in great circles above his head, his body leaning over the shining neck of his steed and his voice ringing with the battle whoop of the kazak.

He is the eternal warrior, the plundering hero, the lusty knight of battle, a devil of a man with boiling blood in his veins and the savage joy of life in his heart.

Taras and his two sons, Andrii and Ostap, go thundering up and down the Russian steppe with the savage avalanche of the Zaporozhe. They fight and carouse and their deeds are mighty—mightier than the deeds of which Homer sang and the performances which Walter Scott sketched. Beside Taras Ivanhoe pales into tin puppet, Ulysses into a lady's man.

What a book!

If you know Gogol through his *Dead Souls*, the "humorous" classic of Russia, you will read in amazement his *Taras Bulba*. It is Rabalais with a sword. Through its pages ring the shouts of battle and Garagantuan manhood—Homo Monstrosus . . .

Once or twice the pale face of a woman peeps out of them and Gogol kicks it back into place with his kazak boot.

"Do you want fire, Ostap? Do you want mad blood in your heart? Come ride with me over the steppe to the tents of the Zaporozhe . . ."

When I closed the book with its red shouts still ringing in my ears—with old Taras still burning against the great tree and the magic steppe stretching before me—I thought of the baby-ribbon bards and the querulous quibblers of American letters—and smiled . . .

Come on, Bulba, there is still blood in America that has not dried, there are still hearts that have not been transformed into pink doilies.

Welcome! You can't shout too loud for me, you can't swagger too much. The soul of you that left your burning body laughed and roared its way into heaven . . .

Gorky at His Best and Worst

Chelkash, and Other Stories, by Maxim Gorky. New York:

Alfred A. Knopf

Maxim Gorky is the poorest and most uneven of the Russian writers. He is—or was—a pioneer. He came wailing from lonely roads where the vagrom man sleeps beneath the stars and wonders what there is to life. And his dull, bitter complaints with ferocity as their leit motif soon sounded over the world. When the majority of Russian genius was struggling to “go to the people” Gorky had the advantage of coming from the people.

Alfred Knopf’s collection of Gorky tales under the title of *Chelkash* is Gorky at his best and worst. I find in it some of his best tales abominably written, studded with crass “gems” of philosophy, broken up with unnecessary moralizings. For instance, his *Twenty-Six of Us and One Other*. In this Gorky writes of his immortal bakeshop. As a youth Gorky spent his days in a bakeshop. Time and again he has painted it, in other stories better than in this one. But in this instance the bakeshop is only a background; usually it is the main theme. Tanya, a little girl, stops every morning to say “Hello” to the twenty-six bakers. They give her little cakes. She is the only “ray of sweetness” in their lives. They look upon her as a daughter, a shrine. And Tanya it is who alone awakens in them for a few moments each day something approaching fineness. Along comes a terrible dandy, a ladies’ man. He seduces every lady he sets his cap for; it is his boast. The bakers like him: he is a “gentleman” and very democratic. But one day when he is boasting the head baker grows excited and mentions “Tanya.” The dandy boasts he will seduce her. An argument follows. After a month the dandy succeeds. The bakers witness the girl’s “undoing.” When she comes out of the dandy’s room, smiling, happy, they gather around her, spit at her, revile and abuse her. No names they can think of are bad enough. They fall into a frenzy of vituperation. But they do not strike her. Realizing dully that a “god” has died, they go back to work.

Chelkash, the first tale in the book, is Gorky on his “home ground”—the vagrom man, the pirate, the road thief. He paints him with a careful brush and a sureness of his subject. In *The Steppe* he does the same. *A Rolling Stone*, and *Chums*, the last the best story in the volume, are also variations of the vagrom man theme—the underdog. But it is in stories like *One Autumn Night*, *Comrades*, *The Green Kitten*, and *Her Lover* that Gorky reveals his greatest genius and his greatest weakness. He can feel them, imagine them, see them, but for some reason he cannot write them. *One Autumn Night* might have been one of the world’s strongest classics.

All the tales in the volume are the work of the “first” Gorky—the bitter one, the melodramatic, outraged Gorky. They are on a whole not as good as the collection of stories written during that same period and translated in a volume called *Orloff and His Wife*. Gorky still lives and he has learned how to write. His later tales, composed in Italy by the “second”

Gorky, the consumptive, contemplative, clear-seeing Gorky, are mature, almost mellow. But they are no longer distinctive. Anyone could have written them, anyone with a bit of genius and a great deal of time on his hands. But the *Chelkash* tales and the tales in *Orloff and His Wife*—these no one but Gorky has written, and although they are inferior in workmanship to the products of Chekhov and Andreyev the American reader will find them perhaps more interesting.

Two Masters and a Petty Monster

The Little Angel, by Leonid Andreyev. New York:
Alfred A. Knopf.

Russian Silhouettes, by Anton Chekhov. New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Breaking Point, by Michael Artzibashef. New York:
B. W. Huebsch.

"Charming fellows, those Russians," said my friend. "When it comes to delineating the processes, mental and physical, of rape, suicide, incest, arson, butchery, and disease, they are without peers . . ." I therefore take this occasion to hurl two newly translated Russian books at my friend, hoping they land on his thick head.

The first book which I hurl at my friend is Andreyev's *The Little Angel*. It is a collection of short stories. There are fifteen stories in the new volume brought out by Mr. Alfred Knopf, and all of them are little masterpieces. There is one story about a dog, *Snapper*. Only Anatole France has equaled it. There is another story, *The Marseillaise*. It is a perfect story. It is Kipling at his very best plus a flavor, a note, a something serious and deep that the Russians alone know how to command, that Kipling never reached. There is one story, *In the Basement*. I hope my friend chokes on this story. It would serve him right.

But *The Little Angel* stands out from the fifteen. It is about a little boy, a bitter, lonely-hearted fellow whose mother drinks and beats him, whose father is dying of consumption, and who in turn snarls and bullies his playmates and weeps at night because his heart is so empty and heavy. In this story Andreyev attains a poignant delicacy of touch and a grim beauty which even his one-time contemporary Chekhov never surpassed.

The Little Angel is the most beautiful short story I ever have read.

Chekhov has also been translated again. A collection of fragments, vibrating episodes, moods, and exquisite children stories called *Russian Silhouettes* has been issued by Scribners'.

A better artist than Andreyev, keener, more reserved, more subtle, Chekhov to my notion nevertheless lacks the vibrancy which the author of

The Seven Who Were Hanged flings into his tales. Andreyev wields the pen of Dostoevsky with a little thinner ink. Chekhov is Turgenev fragmented. He has left behind him a series of little canvases so finely done, so skilfully passionate . . . well, I hurl him at my friend without further ado . . .

. . . It is that consumptive rogue of an Artzibashef who has caused most of the trouble. The devil take him and his erotic suicides. His latest translated book brought out by Huebsch is a tasteless joke. It is called *The Breaking Point*. In it all the characters but one commit suicide, all the women are "ruined." Whenever two or more of its genial personae come together they forthwith fall into an argument concerning the futility of life, the idiocy of existence and so on and so on. And the trouble is that Artzibashef can write, beautifully, keenly, and sometimes gloriously. In *Sanine*, for instance, in *The Millionaire*, there are passages better than Andreyev, better than Chekhov, better than any writer has written. But the books are distorted, full of puerile moralizings, breathing a diseased lust and a sentimentalized violence—and *The Breaking Point* is the worst of them to date. Artzibashef's work stands in the same relation to the Russian realism that Paul De Kock's work stands to the French sensual finesse.

EMMA GOLDMAN

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Tuesday,	Nov. 23rd,	<i>The Right of the Child Not to Be Born</i>
Thursday,	Nov. 25th,	<i>The Message of Anarchism</i>
Saturday,	Nov. 27th,	<i>Sex, The Great Element of Creative Art</i>
Sunday,	Nov. 28th,	<i>The Philosophy of Atheism</i>
Tuesday,	Nov. 30th,	<i>Victims of Morality</i>
Thursday,	Dec. 2nd,	<i>Nietzsche and the German Kaiser</i>
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Sunday,	Dec. 5th,	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>

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| 2. Concerto in D minor..... | Bruch | (d) Valse-Caprice..... | Nandor Zsolt |
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