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Seven Poems
William Butler Yeats

I.
Upon a Dying Lady

With the old kindness, the old distinguished grace
She lies, her lovely piteous head amid dull red hair
Propped upon pillows, rouge on the pallor of her face.
She would not have us sad because she is lying there,
And when she meets our gaze her eyes are laughter lit
Her speech a wicked tale that we may vie with her
Matching our broken-hearted wit against her wit,
Thinking of saints and of Petronius Arbiter.

2
Certain Artists Bring Her Dolls and Drawings

Bring where our Beauty lies
A new modelled doll, or drawing
With a friend's or an enemy's
Features, or may be showing
Her features when a tress
Of dull red hair was flowing
Over some silken dress
Cut in the Turkish fashion,
Or it may be like a boy's.
We have given the world our passion
We have naught for death but toys.
She Turns the Dolls' Faces to the Wall

Because to-day is some religious festival
They had a priest say Mass, and even the Japanese,
Heel up and weight on toe, must face the wall
— Pedant in passion, learned in old courtesies,
Vehement and witty she had seemed—, the Venetian lady
Who had seemed to glide to some intrigue in her red shoes,
Her domino, her panniered skirt copied from Longhi,
The meditative critic, all are on their toes
Even our Beauty with her Turkish trousers on.

Because the priest must have like every dog his day
Or keep us all awake with baying at the moon,
We and our dolls being but the world were best away.

She is playing like a child
And penance is the play,
Fantastical and wild
Because the end of day
Shows her that someone soon
Will come from the house, and say—
Though play is but half done—
"Come in and leave the play".

She has not grown uncivil
As narrow natures would
And called the pleasures evil
Happier days thought good;
She knows herself a woman
The Little Review

No red and white of a face,
Or rank, raised from a common
Unreckonable race.
And how should her heart fail her
Or sickness break her will
With her dead brother's valour
For an example still.

When her soul flies to the predestined dancing-place
(I have no speech but symbol, the pagan speech I made
Amid the dreams of youth) let her come face to face,
While wondering still to be a shade, with Grania's shade,
All but the perils of the woodland flight forgot,
And that made her Dermuid dear, and some old cardinal
Pacing with half-closed eyelids in a sunny spot
Who had murmured of Giorgione at his latest breath—
Aye and Achilles, Timor, Babar, Barhaim all
Who lived in shameless joy and laughed into the face of Death.

Her Friends Bring Her a Christmas Tree

Pardon, great enemy,
Without an angry thought
We've carried in our tree,
And here and there have bought
Till all the boughs are gay,
And she may look from the bed
On pretty things that may
Please a fantastic head.
Give her a little grace
What if a laughing eye
Have looked into your face—
It is about to die.
List of Books

Comment by Ezra Pound

Passages from the Letters of John Butler Yeats.
Cuala Press, Dundrum, Dublin. 12 shillings.

To begin with one of the more recent; I have already sent a longer review of John Yeat's letters to Poetry on the ground that this selection from them contains much valuable criticism of the art to which that periodical is "devoted". I again call attention to the book for its humanism, for its author's freedom from the disease of the age. It is good, for America in particular, that some even-minded critic, writing in detachment, without thought of publication, should have recorded his meditations. There can be no supposition that he hoped to start a social reform. Carlos Williams wrote a few years ago:

"Nowhere the subtle, everywhere the electric". Quibblers at once began a wrangle about the subtlety of electricity. We can not massacre the ergoteur wholesale, but we might at least learn to ignore him; to segregate him into such camps as the "New Statesman" and the "New Republic"; to leave him with his system of "graduated grunts" and his critical "apparatus", his picayune little slot-machine.

John Yeats writes as a man who has refused to be stampeded; he has not been melted into the crowd; the "button-moulder" has not remade him. He praises solitude now and then, but he has not withdrawn himself into a pseudo-Thoreauian wilderness, nor attempted romantesque Borroviana. Lest we "of this generation and decade" imagine that all things began with us, it is well to note that a man over seventy has freed himself from the effects of the "Great Exposition" and of Carlyle and Wordsworth and Arnold—perhaps he never fell under the marasmus.

I have met men even older than Mr. John Yeats, men who remembered the writings of the French eighteenth century. They had endured the drought, and kept a former age's richness. When I say "remembered the writings of the French
eighteenth century," I mean that they had received the effect of these writings as it were at first hand, they had got it out of the air; there is a later set who took it up as a speciality, almost a fanaticism; they are different. Then there came the bad generation; a generation of sticks. They are what we have had to put up with.


B. W. Huebsch, New York.

*A PORTRAIT of the Artist as a Young Man* was so well reviewed in the April number of this paper that I might perhaps refrain from further comment. I have indeed little to add, but I would reaffirm all that I have yet said or written of the book, beginning in *The Egoist*, continuing in *The Drama*, etc. Joyce is the best prose writer of my decade. Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* is the only contemporary novel that can compare with *A Portrait; Tarr* being more inventive, more volcanic, and "not so well written." And that last comparison is perhaps vicious. It would be ridiculous to measure Dostoevsky with the T-Square of Flaubert. Equally with Joyce and Lewis, the two men are so different, the two methods are so different that it is rash to attempt comparisons. Neither can I attempt to predict which will find the greater number of readers; all the readers who matter will certainly read both of the books.

As for Joyce, perhaps Jean de Bosschère will pardon me if I quote from a post card which he wrote me on beginning *A Portrait*. It was, naturally, not intended for publication, but it is interesting to see how a fine piece of English first strikes the critic from the continent.

"Charles Louis Philippe n'a pas fait mieux. Joyce le dépasse par le style qui n'est plus le style. Cette nudité de tout ornement rhétorique, de toute forme idiomatique (malgré la plus stricte sévérité contre le détour ou l'esthétique) et beaucoup d'autres qualités fondamentales font de ce livre la plus sérieuse oeuvre anglaise que j'aie lue. Les soixante premières pages sont incomparables,......"

The "most serious", or to translate it more colloquially: "It matters more than any other English book I have read".
De Bosschère has not yet published any criticism of Joyce, but he is not the only established critic who has written to me in praise of *A Portrait*. Joyce has had a remarkable “press,” but back of that and much more important is the fact that the critics have praised with conviction, a personal and vital conviction.

3

Certain Noble Plays of Japan.
*Cuola Press, Dublin. 12 shillings.*

Noh, or Accomplishment.

The earlier and limited edition of this work of Ernest Fenollosa contains four plays, with an introduction by W. B. Yeats. The larger edition contains fifteen plays and abridgements and all of Fenollosa’s notes concerning the Japanese stage that I have yet been able to prepare for publication. This Japanese stuff has not the solidity, the body, of Rihaku (Li Po). It is not so important as the Chinese work left by Fenollosa, but on the other hand it is infinitely better than Tagore and the back-wash from India. Motokiyo and the fourteenth-century Japanese poets are worth more than Kabir. Fenollosa has given us more than Tagore has. Japan is not a Chinese decadence. Japan “went on with things” after China had quit. And China “quit” fairly early; T’ang is the best of her poetry, and after Sung her art grows steadily weaker.

It would be hard to prove that the Japanese does not attempt (in his art, that is) to die in aromatic pain of the cherry blossom; but his delicacy is not always a weakness. His preoccupation with nuances may set one against him. Where a Chinese poet shows a sort of rugged endurance, the Japanese dramatist presents a fine point of punctilio. He is “romanticist” against the “classical” and poetic matter-of-factness of the Chinese writer. The sense of punctilio is, so far as I can make out, a Japanese characteristic, and a differentiating characteristic, and from it the Japanese poetry obtains a quality of its own.
The poetic sense, almost the sole thing which one can postulate as underlying all great poetry and indispensable to it, is simply the sense of overwhelming emotional values. (For those who must have definitions: Poetry is a verbal statement of emotional values. A poem is an emotional value verbally stated.) In the face of this sense of emotional values there are no national borders. One can not consider Rihaku as a foreigner, one can only consider him human. One can not consider Odysseus, or Hamlet, or Kagekiyo as foreigners, one can only consider them human.

At one point in the Noh plays, namely in the climax of Kagekiyo we find a truly Homeric laughter, and I do not think the final passages of this play will greatly suffer by any comparison the reader will be able to make. If I had found nothing else in Fenollosa's notes I should have been well paid for the three years I have spent on them.

If I dispraise Tagore now I can only say that I was among the first to praise him before he became a popular fad. The decadence of Tagore may be measured. His first translations were revised by W. B. Yeats; later translations by Evelyn Underhill, facilis et perfacilis descensus, and now they say he has taken to writing in English, a language for which he has no special talent. If his first drafts contained such clichés as "sunshine in my soul", he was at least conscious at that time of his defects. Praise was rightly given to his first poems because it was demonstrated and demonstrable that they were well done in Bengali, i.e. that they were written in a precise and objective language, and in a metric full of interest and variety. The popular megaphone took up phrases made to define the originals and applied them to the translations. Imagine a criticism of Herrick and Campion applied to a French or German prose translation of these poets, however excellent as a translation in prose! As the vulgarizer hates any form of literary excellence, he was well content with obscuring the real grounds for praise. The unimportant element, that which has made Tagore the prey of religiose nincompoops, might easily have passed without comment. However, it has proved the baccillus of decay. Sir Rabindranath having been raised in a country where the author need not defend himself against blandishment... I mean the force of the babu press is scarcely enough to turn anyone's head or his judgement...
dronath is not particularly culpable. His disciples may bear
the blame as best they may; along with his publishers. But no
old established publishing house cares a damn about literature;
and once Tagore had become a commercial property, they
could scarcely be expected to care for his literary integrity.

He might still wash and be clean; that is to say there is still
time for him to suppress about three fourths of the stuff he
has published in English, and retain some sort of literary
position.

Another man who stands in peril is Edgar Masters. He did
a good job in *The Spoon River Anthology*. What is good in
it is good in common with like things in the Greek anthology,
Villon and Crabbe; plus Masters's sense of real people. The
work as a whole needs rewriting. The difference between a
fine poem and a mediocre one is often only the fact that the
good poet could force himself to rewrite. "No appearance of
labour?" No, there need be no appearance of labour. I have
seen too many early drafts of known and accepted poems not
to know the difference between a draft and the final work.
Masters must go back and take the gobbetts of magazine cliché
out of his later work; he must spend more time on *Spoon
River* if he wants his stuff to last as Crabbe's *Borough* has
lasted. There is a great gulph between a "successful" book
and a book that endures; that endures even a couple of cen-
turies.

I would not at any cost minimize what Edgar Masters has
done, but his fight is not yet over.

The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and
XVIIIth Centuries, by Arnold Dolmetsch.


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H'S book has been out for some
time. No intelligent musician would willingly remain
without it. No intelligent musician is wholly without interest
in the music of those two centuries. But this book is more than
a technical guide to musicians. It is not merely "full of sugges-
tion" for the thorough artist of any sort, but it shows a way
whereby the musician and the "intelligent" can once more be
brought into touch. If Dolmetsch could be persuaded to write
a shilling manual for the instruction of children and of mis-taught elders it might save the world's ears much torture. Dolmetsch's initial move was to demonstrate that the music of the old instruments could not be given on the piano; any more than you could give violin music on the piano. His next was to restore the old instruments to us. There is too much intelligence in him and his book adequately to be treated in a paragraph. I am writing of him at greater length in The Egoist. His citations from Couperin show the existence of vers libre in early eighteenth-century music. I do not however care unduly to stir up the rather uninteresting discussion as to the archaeology of "free" verse.


The book-buyer can not do better.

Frost tinges the jasper terrace,
A fine stork, a black stork sings in the heaven,
Autumn is deep in the valley of Hako,
The sad monkeys cry out in the midnight,
The mountain pathway is lonely.

.... The red sun blots on the sky the line of the colour-drenched mountains. The flowers rain in a gust; it is no racking storm that comes over this green moor, which is afloat, as it would seem, in these waves.
Wonderful is the sleeve of the white cloud, whirling such snow here.

—From "Noh", by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound. Pound.
Theatre Muet
John Rodker
Interior

Black Curtain.
In one corner the picture of a door.
A man in black tights (so that only his face is seen and the outlines of his body divined) crosses the stage.
He passes through the door.
We follow him because the curtain is raised.
Black room.
Again he crosses the stage and striking a match, lights a gas jet at his own height with great deliberation.

Man goes off unseen.
Three chairs become apparent.
They are in a line—two kitchen chairs—
one white—dirty.
One—old—beautiful—
highly polished.
In the flickering light the three chairs grow
unutterably mournful.

II
Hunger

The Celestial Quire.
The lambent sea-green flanies that are the celestial quire
burn shrilly, striving....
They describe the circle which is Kosmos, swirling shrilly.
When they writhe it is outside three-dimensioned space.
Forever they return in their orbits.

Forever they return in their orbits.
If they writhe at all, it is outside the three-dimensioned spaces.
They do not touch each other. They do not clash with each other.

Nor is there light in Space.
III

A room. Sombre faces of 1, 2, and 4 (women) in profile. Man (3) with back to audience. They are seated round a gas fire. Glow seen through legs and chair legs. A silent duel in progress between 1 and 3 seated diagonally. 2 and 4, more or less neutral, obscure issue.

Conversation clockwise (need not be materialised).
1. "What shall it be then, Cerise?"
2. "It was a lovely party."
3. "Pouf" (lights a cigarette).
4. Sighs (blow out smoke).
Silence.
Conversation resumed. Same things more or less. The man's back becomes inimical, hating 1. His back muscles prepare to spring and so ripple to crouch. 1 trembles, fearful. Tries to talk to show her nonchalance, fails. Her heart beats thud, thud, thud. 2 and 4 neutral, disturb inimic waves.
The man loses his tenseness. Obscurely he collects all his forces for a final overwhelming, but they dissipate among 2 and 4 (neutral). 4 now becomes sympathetic to him and so drains more vitality. 1 stiffens, gathers that 2 is her ally. Also 4 unconsciously.
Man rises to his feet. For a moment tries to gather vitality through firm feet and twitching fingers. His shoulders fall, he stumbles out. Three sighs of relief.

Conversation:
1. What shall it be?
2. Such a lot of men!

Hours later:
1 in bed. Mass of shadow on white sheets. Cannot sleep, tosses about. Attack of nerves. One feels it has gone on for hours. She seeks relief.
Man and Woman, face to face. Same height. Woman facing audience.

Woman mad, breathing heavily, whites of eyes showing, striking man in face, once... twice.

His back is to audience. No muscle of it moves. (Inert—a crumbling block of salt).

Her madness drops. His passivity makes her doubt his reality—then her own.

In the uncertain pause, she is again assured of her reality.

More blows, same effects.

Tears blind her, she dashes them away.

More blows, face distorted.

Still same effects.

The ubiquitous man, appearing and reappearing (real and phantom) before her strained eyes makes them water.

She feels it a weakness—swallows. Another weakness.

Stares dully at the figure before her.

Impotence realised—weeps.

Weeps loudly and slobberingly and hopelessly like a whipped child.

Weeps more loudly yet, more hopelessly: with distorted muscles, copious tears and lengthening and coarsening of upper lip.

Such lack of control is intolerable.

Members of the audience want to strike each other.

A few women weep too, in identical pitch. It becomes a panic spreading suddenly.

The men leave quickly, swallowing hard.

One man throws a brickbat at the inert back, then another.

Others do the same.

When he sinks stoned, expiring—a yell of exultation rises from the men—long sighs of relief from the women.

“ANTICHRIST”

Outside the Theatre—weeping: fitful, intolerable—mounts from street to street and star to star in festoons of distinguished and unutterable melancholy.
V

1.
Thick twilight. A long row of houses, several storeys high. All have area railings and steps leading up to the front door. One light in a top window a third of the way down the block. A drab yellow light also works through glass of street door. A woman walks (bent) on the pavement in front of these houses hovering undecidedly, evidently fearful. Then she draws herself together and climbs the steps leading to the lit door. She waits shuffling from foot to foot, seeming undecided — (she has rung the bell). The door opens a little, a wedge of light moves out and a dark figure appears for a moment breaking it. They talk for a few seconds, and both enter. The door shuts. A wedge of darkness passes across the lit panes. The light works out tranquilly again.

2.
Stairs dimly lit, narrow, carpeted. The figure climbs, climbs, climbs—foreboding, distrust and fear at every point.

3.
A room—walls dark red; small, stuffy, unbearable. The woman stands uneasily just inside the door—waiting. The room is full of impending tragedy. Influences are in the room and in the next room. Tragedy becomes apparent in the woman’s pose. She waits. Nothing happens. With dramatic suddenness, her body droops—she cringes. (Nothing, nothing, NOTHING happens). Curtain—very quietly, like a sigh, so that it is some seconds before audience realises that play is over.
Stark Realism

This Little Pig Went to Market

(A Search for the National Type)

Ezra Pound

This little American went to Vienna. He said it was "Gawd's Own City". He knew all the bath-houses and dance halls. He was there for a week. He never forgot it—No, not even when he became a Captain in the Gt. American Navy and spent six months in Samoa.

This little American went West—to the Middle-West, where he came from. He smoked cigars, for cigarettes are illegal in Indiana, that land where Lew Wallace died, that land of the literary tradition. He ate pie of all sorts, and read the daily papers—especially those of strong local interest. He despised European culture as an indiscriminate whole.

Peace to his ashes.

This little American went to the great city Manhattan. He made two and half dollars per week. He saw the sheeny girls on the East Side who lunch on two cents worth of bread and sausages, and dress with a flash on the remainder. He nearly died of it. Then he got a rise. He made fifteen dollars per week selling insurance. He wore a monocle with a tortoise-shell rim. He dressed up to "Bond St." No lord in The Row has surpassed him.

He was a damn good fellow.

This little American went to Oxford. He rented Oscar's late rooms. He talked about the nature of the Beautiful. He swam in the wake of Santyana. He had a great cut glass bowl full of lilies. He believed in Sin. His life was immaculate. He was the last convert to catholicism.

This little American had always been adored—and quite silent. He was quite bashful. He rowed on his college crew. He had a bright pink complexion. He was a dealer in bonds, but not
really wicked. He would walk into a mans' office and say: “Do you want any stock?...eh.... eh .. I don’t know anything about it. They say it’s all right.” Some people like that sort of thing; though it isn’t the “ideal business man” as you read of him in *Success* and in Mr. Lorimer’s papers.

This little American had rotten luck; he was educated—soundly and thoroughly educated. His mother always bought his underwear by the dozen, so that he should be thoroughly supplied. He went from bad to worse, and ended as a dishwasher; always sober and industrious; he began as paymaster in a copper mine. He made hollow tiles in Michigan. His end was judicious.

This little American spoke through his nose, because he had catarrh or consumption. His scholastic merits were obvious. He studied Roumanian and Arumaic. He married a papal countess.

Peace to his ashes.

This little American ... but who ever heard of a baby with seven toes.

This story is over.

**Verses**

**Iris Barry**

**His Girl**

The bigger boys, gathered round the gates in the dusk,
Watch her walk away with their teacher.
They stop shouting, somewhat astonished
That she should wait for him in the cold.
They do not see very much in him themselves
And stare, commiserating the stupidity of woman.
Widow

Monica may well modulate her voice
And pose as a charming and sympathetic person.
Everyone knows she has had two husbands
And driven both to a lasting great distance.

At the Ministry

*September* 1916

Having received the last volume of a certain poet
I look out of the office window—
Coloured shirts: green, blue, red, grey:
Men in coloured shirts moving heavy things with deliberation
Out there in the sun.

The junior typist cries ecstatically
On seeing the costly photogravure of the author,
Clasping her hands and flushing.
But I sit and look out at the irregular wandering shirts,
At the men unloading projectiles
And storing them in the dark sheds.

The Black Fowl

Black fowl, perching,
I have seen nothing more beautiful than your plumes.
It should be pleasant to nestle luxuriously in that rich black.
But there is no joy in the winking eye that watches me
As you stand there perching.
At the Hotel

While at table
Or chatting conventionally in the drawing-room
She eyes him.
They are seen together everywhere
Husband and wife.
Nothing but her vigilance binds them.
Her smoothness sickens him:
She is not even successful.
She may keep his body to her bed—
It is easier than a scene and remonstrances.

Towards dawn he turns, smiling,
Dreaming of a girl on the hotel-staff.
—(Already he has trifled with her in his heart).

Towards the End

Others might find inspiration and wide content
In this mellow kitchen, the beams and washed walls,
Flagged floor lit by the log-glow:
But the beetles and mice appreciate it more than I.
And my Mother is bored to death,
(She keeps putting records on the gramaphone)
Even grandfather eating his supper by the jumping light
from the hearth
Hardly seems to enjoy his food.
Very patriarchal-benign he looks.
Somehow his shadow on the wall awes me in its grandeur
As though he might not be here long,
And the beetles and mice come into their own very shortly.
What the Public Doesn’t Want

Margaret Anderson

America is a confounding place.

About four years ago I wanted to start a magazine. Two things in life interest me more than other things: Art and good talk about Art. The Little Review was launched as an organ of those two interests.

For three years, at irregular intervals, it reflected my concern about various other matters. When I got incensed over the sufferings of what is called the proletariat I preached profound platitudes about justice and freedom. I had always had the sense to know that all people can be put into two classes: the exceptional and the average. But when I decided that the only way to prevent the exceptional from being sacrificed to the average was for everybody to become anarchists, I preached the simple and beautiful but quite uninteresting tenents of anarchism. I have long given them up. I still grow violent with rage about the things that are “wrong”, and probably always shall. But I know that anarchism won’t help them. I have known good anarchists who are as dull as any other good laymen. And I have no interest in laymen. Only sensibility matters.

I had always known that education doesn’t produce sensibility, but I came to think that something could produce it. Now I know that nothing under the heavens will make any one sensitive if he is not born that way.

I had always known that people didn’t want Art, but I imagined that they would be glad to be made to want it. Now I know that they are “not merely indifferent to it: they hate it malignantly”.

Therefore, to sum up: all these ideas were not interesting enough to have bothered about.

But the curious thing about America is that while she thinks such insipid and pleasant and harmless ideas are abominable and dangerous, she also thinks they are interesting!

Any magazine that concerns itself with such ideas is sure to get an audience. Your audience will think that you are crazy or that you want a sensation, or, what is worse, that you are a sort of “Pollyanna” throwing sunshine and optimism
into dark places in order to help the world. But it will be interested in reading you for one reason or another.

And now, after working through unbelievable aridity, *The Little Review* has at last arrived at the place from which I wanted it to start. At last we are printing stuff which is creative and inventive, and, thank heaven, not purely local. The audience mentioned above, in the aggregate, resents it. We no longer interest that audience. The layman says that we are now given over to the bizarre and the "aesthetic" (that adjective which in America means something vaguely inconsequential, if not something shameless and immoral). People who like to "help" magazines with "artistic" leanings are not to be allured by Art. People who can’t prove that they know anything about good letters dare to tell us that we don’t know anything about them. Editors who make it a point of honor to discover artistic value in the work of their contemporaries feel that we are meticulous and too "arty". And the writers themselves are the most absurd. Maxwell Bodenheim writes that he "knows" Ezra Pound judges poetry on the basis of his personal dislikes. That is as necessarily untrue as anything can be. Any one who is unwilling to praise what seems to him unworthy of praise, anyone whose interest in a poet’s work abates when the work shows no signs of further progress—any such critic will come in for this kind of slander. Any such critic will get himself talked about the way people love to talk in New York: if you try to discuss a man’s work with them they say “that man is my enemy”, or “that man is my friend”. It’s very puzzling: they seem to think their remarks have something to do with literature.

Another remarkable thing that happens in New York: if you walk upon the street with a sensitive and rare and distinguished person you will find that he attracts more curious and resentful attention than the most badly-made, the most atrociously dressed, or the most grotesquely deformed human beings who surround him.

But this is the attitude of all America.

I have made several thoughtless statements about “Help us to make *The Little Review* a power”, etc. I know that nothing on earth will do that except our own contents. They tell me that Henley was a power in England with *The National Observer* when its circulation had shrunk to eighty subscribers. I should be willing to pursue dominion even to that point, but
it will probably not be necessary. Our circulation grows in spite of criticism and misunderstanding.

You can help us to give you more each month by subscribing for your friends who are interested in a magazine which is not interested in the public taste.

Orientale

Louis Gilmore

Wil't thou listen
To the voices of peacocks;
Or would'st thou prefer that the cats
Perform a nocturnal serenade?

This is no common
Entertainment
That I have prepared for thee,
Indifferent one.

The columns are smeared
With fire-flies,
And the glow-worms shed a light
Among the dishes....

But first let the slaves
Anoint thee with what
Has lain a long while
In the sun;

Or with this
Thou perceive'st
In a yellow
Vial.
The Reader Critic

Oddities?

A. R. S.:

I have found The Little Review excessively burdened with what you describe as "stuff in which the creative element is present". Indeed my impression is that it is devoted more to invention than to interpretation, and therein misses its calling as an agency of "Art". And as to quality, it is not my understanding that "Art" is necessarily, or usually, insipid or bizarre, as represented in your publication. These are times for men to be attending to more serious things than aesthetic oddities.

[The above letter was written to us by one of the front citizens of a large city, on his club stationary, a men's club where old Betties gossip and criticize women's clothes. Yet he would say to men like Wyndham Lewis, and other of our contributors now in the trenches, that these are times for men to be attending to more serious things than aesthetic oddities.

How smoothly he has set down the attitude of the great average mind toward Art. No, I cannot say average. Average implies variation. It is the perfect contempt of the elderly gentleman art patron for the creative and the original. From long years of supporting museums of art, the city beautiful plan, opera organizations, etc., he acquires the attitude of the affluent married man toward his wife: whatever is supported by him must necessarily be a thoroughly understood subject, and even if inferior, must be the interpreter of his life.—jh.]

Radicalism and Conservatism

M. L. K.:

I am renewing my subscription to The Little Review, though I don't know just why. I don't understand you very well any more. I don't know whether I approve. You used to be very different. Sometimes you were great. Your own article "Life Itself" and Ben Hecht's "Dregs" I shall always remember. You used to show such fine sympathy for all kinds of social suffering. I cannot see how a magazine devoted only to what you call Art can have a very vital share in the solving of our present great problems. This is such a
splendid opportunity for your radicalism......

[Conservatism: to preserve the best. As a term of abuse, to preserve good and bad indiscriminately.
Radicalism: to get to the root of the matter. Usually to eradicate good and bad indiscriminately.
Besides they are terms filthy from contact with politics.—F. E.]

Too British

V. H., Maine:
I like the July number a lot. It's consistently good all through. The only thing I was disappointed in was the "Imaginary Letters". It's so damned British! It's very clever, there's no question—but to me at least it lacks beauty. The T. S. Eliot poems are in something the same vein but much more mature, and awfully well written. I like the Ezra Pound very much—in fact everything else.

[I can't see why Lewis's Letter is any more essentially British than Nietzsche's "Flies in the Market Place". And since it is very good writing why hasn't it beauty?—M. C. A.]

Reproach

......I am sorry about one thing,—you don't seem to be able to get rid of the propaganda. All the things Pound sends you are in a way propaganda. If not, what are they trying to do; just shock people? Eliot's poem about the Church is all right. That sort of thing ought to be said and he has said it so well that it will get over. But I think his "Lune de Miel" is disgusting, in one line simply impossible. I am terribly interested, but I do wish they would be a little more delicate.

[I am with you on the propaganda. Extermination seems simple and direct and lasting and the only solution to me. Shocking people I believe is a fever of extreme youth which cools very soon,—as soon as caught almost. If one could only shock them to the foundations there might be some interest, but they are never shocked beyond where they are always trembling anyway. Eliot is quite outside that kind of interest.
We are known, in magazine lingo, as a class magazine. At first I was puzzled as to what that meant. But when a distinguished
foreigner, a man who might have competed with the Jodindranath of Ezra Pound's article, said that that article was a "matter for police suppression". I thought that he was probably the only person qualified to understand it. There is that class. And then there is the other class,—the one expressed by the gentleman who laughingly said: "There is a number of such backgrounds that should be so exploited".—jh.]

War Art

B. C., Kansas:

*The Little Review* is the only magazine I have laid eyes on in months that hasn't had a word in it about this blasted war. How do you do it?

[Perhaps it's because none of us considers this war a legitimate or an interesting subject for Art, not being the focal point of any fundamental emotion for any of the peoples engaged in it. Revolutions and civil wars are different,...but that is a long story. There never has been a real revolution yet: peoples have revoluted but they have never seemed to hold on to what they have fought for. By the time the revolution gets to be history they are back behind where they started, staggering under the same kind of burdens. They are really hunch-backs, but they think that which bends their backs can be unloaded. And civil wars, whatever their pretext, seem always to be the fight of the self-righteous uncultivated against the cultivated and the suave.

I am not writing this as a "scholar of history." I am just wandering on when I don't very much want to. At least I do feel strongly that nine tenths of the stuff written is a rotten impertinence to be discouraged. Some reviewers call these efforts "deeply touching and of poignant appeal". Consider the morbid deadliness of the U-Boat and then this poem:—

You are a U-Boat you,
You're number 28,
U-Boat you're after me
U-Boat this is not war,
U-Boat you make me sore.

There are three stanzas supporting this chorus which are a matter of abnormal crime. And this is the effort of a woman educated in one of the best colleges in the country.—jh.]
To "jh"

Israel Solon, New York:

I see in your last issue: "After reading your article 'Push-Face' in your June number I have torn the magazine to pieces and burned it in the fire. You may discontinue my subscription".

We would destroy you instead of falling upon his face for the one red moment you tendered him. What is one to say to this?

Life would be hard to bear were it not that of this all life is made, by this all life destroyed.

Louise Gebhard Cann, Seattle:

...Mr. Pound's swashbuckling always sets me to crying, with my eye on the needy American public. "Encore! Encore!" But I am not tempted to reread him, except for the purpose of looking up in the dictionary the novel words he uses. However, since reading his Dialogue in the June Little Review, I have reversed my opinion; for I shall read that excellent chat between the student and Rabelais twice as many times as I read any one of John Davidson's "Tête-à-têtes".

I intended to interject quite parenthetically before that no one who conscientiously reads the author of "Jodindranath Mawhwor's Occupation" can fail to develop a vocabulary; and since the art of writing is the art of words,—that, given language, inevitably formal literature arises,—Mr. Pound is a high-pressure manufacturer of literature-matrix.

The May number was certainly an achievement,—the sort of thing we're hungry for; but we missed "jh".

Your "Push-Face" is precisely to the point. Its weakest part is your satire on clothes and appearance. To seize upon the merely external, to ridicule a woman because of her age, is the easiest and therefore the most journalistic form of humor. I am certain that in time we shall come into a form of wit so potent that it will deal with character as you deal with double-chins and tunics. You yourself attain this penetrating force of satire when you throw up against the Red-Cross activity the activity of the police in pushing back the little children from the slums beyond the Square.

|You seem to me to be a bit confused in your criticism of my "Push-Face" article. "It's weakest part is your satire on clothes and appearance"—and later you are certain that we shall come into a form of wit so potent that it will deal with character as I dealt with double-chins and tunics (appearance and clothes). But I
feel certain that we shall never come into a time when the reader will be penetrating enough to recognize psychology from a mere dealing with "externals".

The part you criticise was an attempt to strike through externals to suggest a psychology of anatomy,—a psychology founded on a theory that the definitive lines of the body take their intention from something more fundamental than will power. I have not read Dr. Adler's theory of the "fictitious goal". But I have learned from my study of the human body, in drawing from it, and from that eternal observation of it which becomes a tireless and almost unconscious preoccupation of the painter,—I have learned that it is possible for even the slightly intelligent to stamp his body with all the movement, bearing, and spirit of some cherished ideal or some protective colouring of himself which he wishes to present to the world. In great stress or in crises where the entire will power is overthrown or engaged elsewhere the body, like the mind, assumes its true lines and presence. On the stage this is a very simple way of unmasking a character,—you will say, an obvious way. Then why may not the fictitious role be obvious to the painter,—not a matter of "mere externals" but a legitimate thing to seize upon as a subject for satire or what you choose? This class of people—those of the fictitious role—are really the richest material for Art. It is only in cases where there is creative power back of the fictitious role that the thing itself becomes an art: in poets, musicians, painters, etc., when the fictitious becomes a thing created, where with mind and body they have created a wholly new, unshakable, well-designed character from themselves.

Byron, the unwanted, spiritless, club-footed child who created from this material a brilliant symbol of romantic manly beauty, "flashing a flaming heart across Europe".

But all this is too interesting and immense to deal with in a paragraph. Sometime perhaps I will go into it at length.—jkh:

The stag's voice has bent her heart toward sorrow,
Sending the evening winds which she does not see,
We cannot see the tip of the branch.
The last leaf falls without witness.
There is an awe in the shadow,
And even the moon is quiet,
With the love-grass under the caves.
—From "Noh", by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound,
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