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Margaret Anderson, Publisher

OCTOBER, 1917

Poems of Po Chu-I, translated by Arthur Waley
Cantleman's Spring-Mate Wyndham Lewis
Imaginary Letters, V. Ezra Pound
Exasperations Margaret Anderson
Improvisations William Carlos Williams
Editorial on Solicitous Doubt Ezra Pound
Style and American Literature Maxwell Bodenheim
Barbara Roscorla's Child Arthur Symons
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The Harper of Chao

The singers have hushed their notes of clear song;
The red sleeves of the dancers are motionless.
Hugging his lute, the old harper of Chao
Rocks and sways as he touches the five chords.
The loud notes swell and scatter abroad:
“Sa, sa”, like wind blowing the rain.
The soft notes dying almost to nothing:
“Ch’ieh, ch’ieh”, like the voice of ghosts talking.
Now as glad as the magpie’s lucky song;
Again bitter as the gibbon’s ominous cry.
His ten fingers have no fixed note;
Up and down—“kung”, “chih” and “yu”.*
And those who sit and listen to the tune he plays
Of soul and body lose the mastery.
And those who pass that way as he plays the tune
Suddenly stop and cannot raise their feet.
Alas, alas that the ears of common men
Should love the modern and not love the old!
Thus it is that the harp in the green window
Day by day is covered deeper with dust.

* Notes of the scale.
On the Way to Hangchow:
Anchored on the River at Night

Little sleeping and much grieving, the traveller
Rises at midnight and looks back toward home.
The sands are bright with moonlight that joins the shores;
The sail is white with dew that has covered the boat.
Nearing the sea, the river grows broader and broader:
Approaching autumn, the nights longer and longer
Thirty times we have slept amid mists and waves,
And still we have not reached Hangchow!

Immortality

Boundless, the great sea!
Straight down,—no bottom: sideways,—no border.
Of cloudy waves and misty billows down in the uttermost depths
Men have fabled, in the midst there stand three sacred hills.
On the hills thick growing,—herbs that banish death.
Wings grow on those who eat them and they turn into heavenly hsien.
The Lord of Ch'in¹ and Wu of Han² believed in these stories;
And magic-workers year by year were sent to gather the herbs.
The Blessed Islands, now and of old, what but an empty tale?
The misty waters spread before them and they knew not where
to seek.
Boundless, the great sea!
Dauntless, the mighty wind!
Their eyes search but cannot see the shores of the Blessed Islands.
They cannot find the Blessed Isles and yet they dare not go back;
Youths and maidens that began the quest grew gray on board.
the boat.
They found that the writings of Hsii Fu were all boasts and lies;

¹ The 'First Emperor', B. C. 259—210.
² The Emperor Wu, B. C. 156—87.
To the Great Unity and Lofty Principle they had raised their prayers in vain.
Do you not see
The graves on the top of Black Horse Hill and the tombs at Mo-ling?¹
What is left but the sighing wind blowing in the tangled grass?
Yes, and what is more,
The Dark and Primal Master of Sagas in his five thousand words
Never spoke of herbs: never spoke of hsien,
Nor spoke of climbing in broad daylight up to the blue of heaven.

The Two Red Towers
(A Satire Against Clericalism)

The Two Red Towers
North and South rise facing each other.
I beg to ask, to whom do they belong?
To the two princes of the period Cheng Yuan.²
The two princes blew on their flutes and drew down fairies from the sky;
Who carried them off through the Five Clouds, soaring away to Heaven.
Their halls and houses, that they could not take with them,
Were turned into Temples, planted in the Dust of the World.
In the tiring-rooms and dancers’ towers all is silent and still;
Only the willows like dancers’ arms, and the pond like a mirror.
At twilight when the flowers are falling, when things are sad and hushed,
One does not hear songs and flutes, but only chimes and bells.
The Imperial Patent on the Temple doors is written in letters of gold;
For nuns’ quarters and monks’ cells ample space is allowed.

¹ The burial places of these two Emperors.
² 785—805 A. D.
For green moss and bright moonlight—plenty of room provided;
In a hovel opposite is a sick man who has hardly room to lie down!
I remember once when at P'ing-yang they were building a great
man's house:
How it swallowed up the housing space of thousands of ordinary
men.
The Immortals¹ are leaving us, two by two, and their houses are
turned into Temples;
I begin to fear that the whole world will become a vast convent!

On Board Ship:
Reading Yuan Chen's Poems

I take your poems in my hand and read them beside the candle;
The poems are finished: the candle is low: dawn not yet come.
With sore eyes by the guttering candle still I sit in the dark,
Listening to the waves that strike the ship driven by a head-wind.

Arriving at Hsun-Yang

A bend of the river brings into view two triumphal arches;
This is the gate in the western wall of the suburbs of Hsiin-yang.
I have still to travel in my solitary boat three or four leagues—
By misty waters and rainy sands, while the yellow dusk thickens.

We are almost come to Hsiin-yang; how my thoughts are stirred
As we pass to the south of Yu-liang's Tower and the east of P'en port.
The forest trees are leafless and withered,—after the mountain
rain;
The roofs of the houses are hidden low among the river mists.
The horses, fed on water-grass, are too weak to carry their load;

¹ The Emperor's relatives.
² He was banished to this place in 815 with the rank of Sub-prefect.
The cottage walls of wattle and thatch let the wind blow on one's bed.
In the distance I see red-wheeled coaches driving from the town-gate;
They have taken the trouble, these civil people to meet their new Prefect!

**After Getting Drunk, Becoming Sober in the Night**

Our party scattered at yellow dusk and I came home to bed;
I woke at midnight and went for a walk, leaning heavily on a friend.
As I lay on my pillow my vinous complexion, soothed by sleep, grew sober;
In front of the tower the ocean moon, accompanying the tide, had risen.
The swallows, about to return to the beams, went back to roost again;
The candle at my window, just going out, suddenly revived its light.
All the time till dawn came, still my thoughts were muddled;
And in my ears something sounded like the music of flutes and strings.

**Last Poem**

They have put my bed beside this unpainted screen;
They have shifted my stove in front of the blue curtain.
I listen to my grandchildren reading to me from a book;
I watch the servants heating up the soup.
I move my pencil, answering the poems of friends;
I feel in my pockets and pull out the medicine money.
When this superintendence of trifling affairs is done
I lie back on my pillows and sleep with my face to the South.
CANTELMAN'S SPRING-MATE
Wyndham Lewis

CANTELMAN walked in the strenuous fields, steam rising from them as though from an exertion, dissecting the daisies specked in the small wood, the primroses on the banks, the marshy lakes, and all God's creatures. The heat of a heavy premature Summer was cooking the little narrow belt of earth-air, causing everything innocently to burst its skin, bask abjectly and profoundly. Everything was enchanted with itself and with everything else. The horses considered the mares immensely appetising masses of quivering shiny flesh: was there not something of "je ne sais quoi" about a mare, that no other beast's better half possessed? The birds with their little gnarled feet, and beaks made for fishing worms out of the mould, or the river, would have considered Shelley's references to the skylark—or any other poet's paeans to their species—as lamentably inadequate to describe the beauty of birds! The female bird, for her particular part, reflected that, in spite of the ineptitude of her sweetheart's latest song, which he insisted on deafening her with, never seemed to tire of, and was so persuaded that she liked as much as he did himself, and although outwardly she remained strictly critical and vicious: that all the same and nevertheless, chock, chock, peep, peep, he was a fluffy object from which certain satisfaction could be derived! And both the male and the female reflected together as they stood a foot or so apart looking at each other with one eye, and at the landscape with the other, that of all nourishment the red earthworm was the juiciest and sweetest! The sow, as she watched her hog, with his splenetic energy, and guttural articulation, a sound between content and complaint, not noticing the untidy habits of both of them, gave a sharp grunt of sex-hunger, and jerked rapidly towards him. The only jarring note in this vast mutual admiration society was the fact that many of its members showed their fondness for their neighbour in an embarrassing way: that is they killed and ate them. But the weaker were so used to dying violent deaths and being eaten that they worried very little about it.—The West was gushing up a harmless volcano of fire, obviously intended as an immense dreamy nightcap.

Cantleman in the midst of his cogitation on surrounding life, surprised his faithless and unfriendly brain in the act of turning
over an object which humiliated his meditation. He found that he was wondering whether at his return through the village lying between him and the Camp, he would see the girl he had passed there three hours before. At that time he had not begun his philosophizing, and without interference from conscience, he had noticed the redness of her cheeks, the animal fulness of the childbearing hips, with an eye as innocent as the bird or the beast. He laughed without shame or pleasure, lit his pipe and turned back towards the village. — His fieldboots were covered with dust: his head was wet with perspiration and he carried his cap, in unmilitary fashion, in his hand. In a week he was leaving for the Front, for the first time. So his thoughts and sensations all had, as a philosophic background, the prospect of death. The Infantry, and his commission, implied death or mutilation unless he were very lucky. He had not a high opinion of his luck. He was pretty miserable at the thought, in a deliberate, unemotional way. But as he realised this he again laughed, a similar sound to that that the girl had caused. — For what was he unhappy about? He wanted to remain amongst his fellow insects and beasts, which were so beautiful, did he then: Well well! On the other hand, who was it that told him to do anything else? After all, supposing the values they attached to each other of “beautiful”, “interesting”, “divine”, were unjustified in many cases on cooler observation: — nevertheless birds were more beautiful than pigs: and if pigs were absurd and ugly, rather than handsome, and possibly chivalrous, as they imagined themselves; then equally the odour of the violet was pleasant, and there was nothing offensive about most trees. The newspapers were the things that stank most on earth, and human beings anywhere were the most ugly and offensive of the brutes because of the confusion caused by their consciousness. Had it not been for that unmaterial gift that some bungling or wild hand had bestowed, our sisters and brothers would be no worse than dogs and sheep. That they could not reconcile their little meagre stream of sublimity with the needs of animal life should not be railed at. Well then, should not the sad human amalgam, all it did, all it willed, all it demanded, be thrown over, for the fake and confusion that it was, and should not such as possessed a greater quantity of that wine of reason, retire, metaphorically, to the wilderness, and sit forever in a formal and gentle elation, refusing to be disturbed? — Should such allow himself to be disturbed by the quarrels of jews, the desperate perplexities, resulting in desperate dice throws, of politicians, the crack-jaw and unreasoning tumult?
On the other hand, Cantleman had a little more human, as well as a little more divine, than those usually on his left and right, and he had had, not so long ago, conspicuous hopes that such a conjunction might produce a new human chemistry. But he must repudiate the human entirely, if that were to be brought off. His present occupation, the trampling boots upon his feet, the belt that crossed his back and breast, was his sacrifice, his compliment to, the animal.

He then began dissecting his laugh, comparing it to the pig’s grunt and the bird’s cough. He laughed again several times in order to listen to it.

At the village he met the girl, this time with a second girl. He stared at her “in such a funny way” that she laughed. He once more laughed, the same sound as before, and bid her good evening. She immediately became civil. Enquiries about the village, and the best way back to camp across the marsh, put in as nimble and at the same time rustic a form as he could contrive, lay the first tentative brick of what might become the dwelling of a friend, a sweetheart, a ghost, anything in the absurd world! He asked her to come and show him a short cut she had indicated.

“I couldn’t! My mother’s waiting for me!” in a rush of expostulation and semi-affected alarm. However, she concluded, in a minute or two, that she could.

He wished that she had been some Anne Garland, the lady whose lips were always flying open like a door with a defective latch. He had made Anne’s acquaintance under distressing circumstances.

On his arrival at Gideon brook, the mighty brand-new camp on the edge of the marsh, he found that his colleague in charge of the advance party had got him a bed-space in a room with four officers of another regiment. It had seemed impossible that there were any duller men than those in the mess of his particular battalion: but it was a dullness he had become accustomed to.

He saw his four new companions with a sinking of the heart, and steady gnawing anger at such concentration of furious foolishness.

Cantleman did not know their names, and he hated them in order as follows:

A. he hated because he found him a sturdy, shortish young man with a bull-like stoop and energetic rush in his walk, with flat feet spread out to left to right, and slightly bowed legs. This physique was enhanced by his leggings: and not improved, though hidden in his slacks. He had a swarthy and vivacious face,
with a sort of semitic cunning and insolence painted on it. His cheeks had a broad carmine flush on general sallowness. The mind painted on this face for the perusal of whoever had the art of such lettering, was as vulgar stuff, in Cantleman's judgement, as could be found. To see this face constantly was like hearing perpetually a cheap and foolish music. A. was an officer, but naturally not a gentleman.

B. he disliked, because, being lean and fresh-coloured, with glasses, he stank, to Cantleman's peculiar nose, of Jack London, Summer Numbers of magazines, bad flabby Suburban Tennis, flabby clerkship in inert, though still prosperous, city offices. He brought a demoralizing dullness into the room with him, with a brisk punctiliousness, several inches higher from the ground than A.

C. he resented for the sullen stupidity with which he moved about, the fat having settled at the bottom of his cheeks, and pulled the corners of his mouth down, from sheer stagnation. His accent dragged the listener through the larger slums of Scotland, harrowing him with the bestial cheerlessness of morose religion and poverty. The man was certainly, from every point of view, social prestige, character, intelligence, far less suited to hold a commission than most of the privates in his platoon.

D. reproduced the characteristics of the other three, in different quantities: his only personal contribution being a senile sing-song voice, from the North, and a blond beam, or partially toothless grin, for a face.

This was the society into the midst of which Cantleman had been dropped on his arrival at Gideon brook, ten days previous to this. They had all looked up, (for it was always all, they having the inseparability of their kind) with friendly welcome, as brother officers should. He avoided their eyes, and sat amongst them for a few days, reading the Trumpet-Major, belonging to B. He had even seemed to snatch Hardy away from B. as though B. had no business to possess such books. Then they avoided his eye as though an animal disguised as an officer and gentleman like themselves had got into their room, for whom, therein, the Trumpet-Major and nothing else exercised fascination. He came among them suddenly, and not appearing to see them, settled down into a morbid intercourse with a romantic abstraction. The Trumpet-Major, it is true, was a soldier, that is why he was there. But he was an imaginary one, and imbedded in the passionate affairs of the village of a mock-county, and distant time. Cantleman bit the flesh at the side of his thumbs, as he surveyed the Yeomanry Cavalry revelling in the absent farmer's house, and
The infantile Farnese Hercules, with the boastfulness of the Red, explaining to his military companions the condescensions of his infatuation. Anne Garland stood in the moonlight, and Loveday hesitated to reveal his rival, weighing a rough chivalry against self-interest.

Cantelman eventually decamped with the Trumpet-Major, taking him across to Havre, and B. never saw his book again. Cantelman had also tried to take a book away from A. (a book incompatible with A's vulgar physique). But A. had snatched it back, and mounted guard surlily and cunningly over it.

In his present rustic encounter, then, he was influenced in his feelings towards his first shepherdess by memories of Wessex heroines, and the something more that being the daughter of a landscape-painter would give. Anne, imbued with the delicacy of the Mill, filled his mind to the injury of this crude marsh-plant. But he had his programme. Since he was forced back, by his logic and body, among the madness of natural things, he would live up to his part.

The young woman had, or had given herself, the unlikely name of Stella. In the narrow road where they got away from the village, Cantelman put his arm around Stella's waist and immediately experienced all the sensations that he had been divining in the creatures around him; the horse, the bird and the pig. The way in which Stella's hips stood out, the solid blood-heated expanse on which his hand lay, had the amplitude and flatness of a mare. Her lips had at once no practical significance, but only the aesthetic blandishment of a bull-like flower. With the gesture of a fabulous Faust he drew her against him, and kissed her with a crafty gentleness.

Cantelman turned up that evening in his quarters in a state of baffling good-humour. He took up the Trumpet-Major and was soon surrounded by the breathing and scratching of his room-mates, reading and writing. He chuckled somewhere where Hardy was funny. At this human noise the others fixed their eyes on him in sour alarm. He gave another, this time gratuitous, chuckle. They returned with disgust at his habits, his peculiarity, to what he considered their maid-servant's fiction and correspondence. Oh Christ, what abyssms! Oh Christ, what abyssms! Cantelman shook noisily in the wicker chair like a dog or a fly-blown old gentleman.

Once more on the following evening he was out in the fields, and once more his thoughts were engaged in recapitulations. The miraculous camouflage of Nature did not deceive this observer. He saw everywhere the gun-pits and the "nests of death". Each
The puff of green leaves he knew was in some way as harmful as the
burst of a shell. Decay and ruins, it is true, were soon covered up,
but there was yet that parallel, and the sight of things smashed
and corruption. In the factory town ten miles away to the right,
whose smoke could be seen, life was just as dangerous for the poor,
and as uncomfortable, as for the soldier in his trench. The hy-
pocrisy of Nature and the hypocrisy of War were the same. The
only safety in life was for the man with the soft job. But that
fellow was not conforming to life’s conditions. He was life’s
paid man, and had the mark of the sneak. He was making too
much of life, and too much out of it. He, Cantelman, did not
want to owe anything to life, or enter into league or understanding
with her! The thing was either to go out of existence: or, failing
that, remain in it unreconciled, indifferent to Nature’s threat, con-
sorting openly with her enemies, making a war within her war
upon her servants. In short, the spectacle of the handsome English
spring produced nothing but ideas of defiance in Cantleman’s
mind.

As to Stella, she was a sort of Whizbang. With a treachery
worthy of a Hun, Nature tempted him towards her. He was drug-
ged with delicious appetites. Very well! He would hoist the un-
seen power with his own petard. He would throw back Stella where
she was discharged from (if it were allowable, now, to change her
into a bomb) first having relieved himself of this humiliating
gnawing and yearning in his blood.

As to Stella, considered as an unconscious agent, all women
were contaminated with Nature’s hostile power and might be
 treated as spies or enemies. The only time they could be trusted,
or were likely to stand up to Nature and show their teeth, was
as mothers. So he approached Stella with as much falsity as he
could master.

At their third meeting he brought her a ring. Her melting grati-
tude was immediately ligottted with long arms, full of the contra-
dictory and offending fire of the spring. On the warm earth con-
 sent flowed up into her body from all the veins of the landscape.
The nightingale sang ceaselessly in the small wood at the top of the
field where they lay. He grinned up towards it, and once more
turned to the devouring of his mate. He felt that he was raiding
the bowels of Nature: not fecundating the Aspasias of our flimsy
flesh, or assuaging, or competing with, the nightingale Cantelman
was proud that he could remain deliberate and aloof, and gaze
bravely, like a minute insect, up at the immense and melancholy
night, with all its mad nightingales, piously folded small brown
wings in a million nests, night-working stars, and misty useless watchmen. They got up at last: she went furtively back to her home. Cantelman on his way to camp had a smile of severe satisfaction on his face. It did not occur to him that his action might be supremely unimportant as far as Stella was concerned. He had not even asked himself if, had he not been there that night, someone else might or might not have been there in his place. He was also convinced that the laurels were his, and that Nature had come off badly. He was still convinced of this when he received six weeks afterwards, in France, a long appeal from Stella, telling him that she was going to have a child. She received no answer to that nor any subsequent letter. They came to Cantelman with great regularity in the trenches; he read them all through from beginning to end, without comment of any sort. And when he beat a German's brains out, it was with the same impartial malignity that he had displayed in the English night with his Spring-mate. Only he considered there too that he was in some way outwitting Nature; he had no adequate realization of the extent to which, evidently, the death of a Hun was to the advantage of the animal world.

IMAGINARY LETTERS

V

(Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn)

Ezra Pound

MY DEAR LYDIA:

Russians! No. William is matto over his Russians. They are all in the beginning of Fumée—all the Russians. Turgenev has done it: a vaporous, circumambient ideologue, inefficient, fundamentally and katachrestically and unendingly futile set of barbarians. Old Goff says of savages: "I like savages. They do nothing that is of the least use, they do nothing the least intelligent, they do nothing of the least interest. They are bored. They have ceremonies. The malice of boredom: the medicine man makes them dance in a ring for hours in order to degust their stupidity, per assagiarlo, to bask in the spectacle of a vacuity worse than his own."
I mistrust this liking for Russians; having passed years in one barbarous country I can not be expected to take interest in another. All that is worth anything is the product of metropoles. Swill out these nationalist movements. Ireland is a suburb of Liverpool. And Russia! The aged Findell comes back in ecstasy, saying "It is just like America." That also bores me. They say Frankfort-am-Main is just like America.

Paris is not like America. London is not like America. Venice is not like America. Perugia is not like America. They are not the least like each other. No place where the dew of civilization has fallen is "just like" anywhere else. Verona and Pavia are different. Poictiers is different. Arles is a place to itself.

Dostoevsky takes seven chapters to finish with an imbecile's worries about a boil on the end of his nose. Dostoevsky is an eminent writer. Let us thank the gods he existed. I do not read Dostoevsky. Several young writers have impressed me as men of genius, by reason of tricks and qualities borrowed from Dostoevsky. At length when the craze is over, I shall have to read Dostoevsky. And so on . . . . I have also read Samuel Butler. And Poetry? As the eminently cultured female, Elis writes me that her little cousin will have nothing to do with it. Rubbish! Her little cousin will read Li Po, and listen to the rondels of Froissart. I know, for I tried her.

Elis has imbibed a complete catalogue, with dates, names of authors, chief works, "influence" of A, B, C, on M, N, O, etc., etc., with biographies of the writers, and "periods". Buncomb! Her cousin, who knows "nothing at all", is ten times better educated. No? She "doesn't like poetry". Anglice: she doesn't like Swinburne. It is not the least the same thing. And she is worried by most of Dowson, etc.

Elis appeals to me as possessing "manner" or "prestige", i. e. professorial aspects, to coerce the rebellious infant.

She says I used to read Swinburne "so splendidly". Damn it all! I believe this to be true. The "first fine", etc. "The hounds of swat are on the wobbles wip wop". Magnificent sound. Now as a matter of fact I tried to read A. C. S. to the small cousin and broke down lamentably. The constant influx of "wrong words" put me out of it altogether.

And Browning is full of jejune remarks about God. And only parts of Landor are left us. And Elis says the girl will be no use to me whatsoever. (Neither she may, perhaps. But who is any use to me? Hackett I see once a month in a state of exhaustion, i. e. H. in a state of exhaustion). He makes two negative but intel-
ligent remarks, and departs before the conversation develops. Your spouse is afar from us both. We are surrounded by live stock.

I enjoy certain animal contacts... without malice. I have a "nice disposition". I pat them like so many retrievers... ebbene? I live as a man among herds... for which I have a considerate, or at least considerable, if misplaced, affection. "Herds" is possibly a misnomer. A litter of pups that amuses me. I am not prey to William's hostilities... save that I dislike ill-natured animals.

As for poetry:... how the devil can anyone like it... given, I mean, the sort of thing usually purveyed under that label?

The girl asked me the only sane question I have ever had asked me about it.

"But is there no one like Bach? No one where one can get all of it?"

That staves in my stratified culture.

The Odyssey? But she does not—naturally, she does not read greek. She is "wholly uneducated". That is to say I find her reading Voltaire and Henry James with placidity.

And Dante? But she does not read italian. Nor latin. And besides, Dante! One needs a whole apparatus criticus to sift out his good from his bad; the appalling syntax from the magnificence of the passion. Miss Mitford said "Dante is gothic." Out of the mouths of prudes and imbeciles! Gothic, involved, and magnificent, and a master of nearly all forms of expression. And what, pray, is one to reply to a person who after having read Maison Tellier, refuses to stand "The fifth chariot of the pole, already upturning, when I who had etc.,... turning as Pyramus whom when the mulberry had been tasted... not otherwise than as etc." The quotation is inexact, but I can not be expected to carry english translations of Dante about with me in a suit case. Dante is a sealed book to our virgin, and likewise Catullus, and Villon is difficult french... and Sappho... perhaps a little Swinburnian? Ille mi par esse... is possibly better than the Aeolic original; harder in outline. (If this bores you, give it to Elis). Chaucer writes in a forgotten language. One must read earlier authors first if one is to run through him with ease as with pleasure. What the devil is left us? What argument for a person too sincere to give way to the current mania for assenting to culture? The fanaticism of certain people who believe they ought to "read poetry" and "be acquainted with" art. A person, I mean, who has taken naturally to good prose; who is so little concerned with appearing educated that she does not know whether Shelley is a dead poet or still living, ditto, Keats. It is quite oriental. Ramdath told me
a tale from the Mahabharata, but it was only when I found it in the Mahabharata that I discovered it had not happened to Ram-dath's grandpapa. If people would forget a bit more, we might have a real love of poetry. Imagine on what delightful terms the living would compete with their forbears if the doriphory of death were once, for even a week or so, removed from the "brows" or "works" of the "standard" authors. No more Job and Stock's "Works of the Poets", series including Mrs. Hemans, Proctor and Cowper 7/6, 5/6, 2/6, hymn-book padded leather with gilding, real cloth with gilding, plain covers. The great Victorian age has done even better. Culture, utility!! I found in lodgings a tin biscuit-box, an adornment. It represented a bundle of books, of equal size, bound in leather, a series, the spiritual legacy of an era, education, popularity. The titles of the tin books were as follows:

- History of England
- Pilgrim's Progress
- Burns
- Pickwick Papers
- Robinson Crusoe
- Gulliver's Travels
- Self-Help
- Shakespeare

Is it any wonder we have Gosse cautioning us against De Maupassant's account of Swinburne, and saying that De M's unbridled fancy gave great offence when it reached the recluse at Putney. Or dribbling, i.e. Gosse dribbling along about "events at the Art Club which were widely discussed at the time" (italics mine) when he might have said simply "Algernon got drunk and stove in all the hats in the cloak-room".

Yours,

WALTER VILLERANT.
EXASPERATIONS
Margaret Anderson

CARL VAN Vechten has an article about Mary Garden in *The Bellman* which he prefaces with the aesthetic discovery that in her art Mary Garden leaves nothing to accident. Oh subtle critical mind! . . . . Mr. Van Vechten should write art notes for *The New York Times*—which I believe he has done. I remember once, in a discussion on music, I asked him furiously whether he knew anything about the subject, only to learn that he had been a *Times* music critic for years—which is quite as it should be.

I UNDERSTAND that *The Seven Arts* is about to suspend publication because of the withdrawal of its chief patron, Mrs. Rankine, on account of an irreconcilable disagreement between her and the editorial body concerning a war policy. There are intelligent people, I hear, who are prepared to defend her action. But there is no conceivably intelligent defense for such an action. It is simply another case of the proverbial and astounding American “nerve”. In the case of a magazine of the Arts it is a truly colossal nerve. How dare Mrs. Rankine or any other patron take the responsibility of the several thousand readers who subscribed to *The Seven Arts* because they wished to read what its editors had to say? Whether they agreed or not with what was said has nothing to do with it. It is even conceivable that some of them may have enjoyed reading what they did not agree with, or that some of them (ghastly but possible) approved of the *Seven Arts* attitude toward the war. Only one thing is certain: that none of those subscribers read the magazine because of anything Mrs. Rankine contributed to its pages.

But a certain type of American mind is capable of anything. This moral nation is now facing the issue of prohibition. If the prohibitionists are successful great vineyards in California will be burned. To burn a vineyard!—is it conceivable? A vineyard is a beautiful thing . . . .

FOR MONTHS, everywhere I have looked for life I have found death—except in two cases: once in the instance of death itself, and once in the spectacle of an old woman.

The first was an “absurd and unmerited exile,” impossible to bear; and it gave me forever, though I could not be there, the picture of a woman with a high thin nose lying in a coffin,—part of that beauty which alone is indestructible. The second was Sarah Bernhardt in an act of *Camille*,—a thing immortal beyond any words that I can find.
IMPROVISATIONS

William Carlos Williams

I

If tools have big wombs. For the rest?—here is pennyroyal if one knows to use it. But time is only another liar, so go along the wall a little further: if blackberries prove bitter there'll be mush­rooms, fairy-ring mushrooms, in the grass, sweetest of all fungi.

II

For what it's worth: Jacob Louslinger, white haired, stinking, dirty bearded, cross eyed, stammer tongued, broken voiced, bent backed, ball kneed, cave bellied, mucous faced—deathling,— found lying in the weeds "up there by the cemetery". "Looks to me as if he'd been bumming around the meadows for a couple of weeks". Shoes twisted into incredible lilies: out at toes, heels, tops, sides, soles. Meadow flower! ha, mallow! at last I have you. (Rot dead marigolds—an acre at a time! Gold, are you?) Ha, clouds will touch world's edge and the great pink mallow stand singly in the wet, topping reeds and—a closet full of clothes and good shoes and my-thirty-year's- master's- daughter's two cows for me to care for and a winter room with a fire in it—. I would rather feed pigs in Moonachie and chew calamus root and break crab's claws at an open fire: age's lust loose!

III

Talk as you will, say: "No woman wants to bother with children in this country";—speak of your Amsterdam and the whitest aprons and brightest door-knobs in Christendom. And I'll answer you: "Gleaming door-knobs and scrubbed entries have heard the songs of the housemaids at sun-up and—housemaids are wishes. Whose? Ha! the dark canals are whistling, whistling for who will cross to the other side. If I remain with hands in pocket leaning upon my lamp-post—why,—I bring curses to a hag's lips and her daughter on her arm knows better than I can tell you; best to blush and out with it than back beaten after."
EDITORIAL ON SOLICITOUS DOUBT
Ezra Pound

VARIOUS people have expressed certain doubts as to whether...

The Little Review... etc....

Good people, be at rest: the price of The Little Review will never be raised for present subscribers or for those who subscribe before January 1, 1918. After that we can make no promises. The quality will not decline; if we give “twice as much of it” the new readers will have to pay more. If we had given you only Mr. Yeats’s fourteen poems we would already have given you more literature than is to be found in the “four big” magazines since the beginning of our present volume.

Next month you will have a whole play by Lady Gregory. Mr. Lewis, after having been in some heavy fighting is now in hospital, and that leisure has made sure the supply of his prose for some time. I have now at my elbow the first eighty-eight pages of the best book Ford Madox Hueffer has written. Why “the best book”? Five years ago Mr. Hueffer read me this manuscript, an unfinished work for which there was presumably “no market”. I read the typescript which was brought me last evening; so familiar is the text that I can scarcely convince myself that it is five years since I heard the even voice of the author pronouncing it. I do not think my memory is particularly good, I think there must be some quality in a man’s style and matter if it is to stay fresh in another man’s mind for so long. Mr. Hueffer’s Women and Men will run in The Little Review from January 1918 to May 1919 inclusive, unless interfered with by force majeur. Perhaps it is not his best book.

Lest there be any confusion about Olivers, Madoxes, Madox Browns, Francis Huesers, etc. Ford Madox Hueffer is the author of various novels, and of The Heart of the Country, The Soul of London, Ancient Lights, Collected Poems, of On Heaven, the first successful long poem in English vers libre, after Whitman. This poem appeared in Poetry for June 1914, and has certainly as much claim to permanence as, say, Meredith’s Love in the Valley.

Besides his own achievement, Mr. Hueffer has done one definite service to English letters. This service is unquestioned, and recognition of it does not rest upon any personal liking or disliking of
Mr. Hueffer's doctrines of writing. In 1908 he founded *The English Review*; for a year and a half he edited that magazine and during that time he printed work not only by the great men of letters, Anatole France, Thomas Hardy, Swinburne, Henry James, not only by men of public reputation like Wells, and Conrad and Bennett, but also by about all the younger men who have since made good. For example by Lewis (in 1909), and by other now well-known young men who have both made good and declined since that date. His editorship of the review marks a very definite period; at the end of it, as its glory was literary, not commercial, it was bought by certain jews, who thought Mr. Hueffer a damn fool (possibly because of his devotion to literature), and who gave the editorship into other hands. Comparison of current numbers of *The English Review* with the first numbers issued from 84 Holland Park Avenue, will give any thinking person all the data he wants in deciding between the folly of Hueffer and the folly of manufacturing, political jews. In fact, if a crime against literature could bring any shame upon that class of person, this family would go into penitence, which needless to say they will not. But the careful historian of literature will record and remember their shame. The files of the review being stored in the British Museum, the data will continue available. There will be no faking the records.

*The Little Review* is now the first effort to do comparatively what *The English Review* did during its first year and a half: that is, to maintain the rights and position of literature, I do not say in contempt of the public, but in spite of the curious system of trade and traders which has grown up with the purpose or result of interposing itself between literature and the public.

We act in spite of the public's utter impotence to get good literature for itself, and in despite of the efforts of the "trade" to satiate the public with a substitute, to still their appetite for literature by providing them, at a cheaper rate and more conveniently, with a swallowable substitute.

Whereanent a very successful journalist has said to me: We, i.e. we journalists, are like mediums. People go to a spiritist séance and hear what they want to hear. It is the same with a leading article: we write so that the reader will find what he wants to find.

That is the root of the matter; there is good journalism and bad journalism, and journalism that "looks" like "literature" and literature etc.

But the root of the difference is that in journalism the reader finds what he is looking for, what he, the reader wants; whereas
in literature he must find at least a part of what the author intended.

That is why "the first impression of a work of genius" is "nearly always disagreeable", at least to the "average man". The public loathe the violence done to their self-conceit whenever an author conveys to them an idea that is his, not their own.

This difference is lasting and profound. Even in the vaguest of poetry, or the vaguest music, where in a sense the receiver may, or must, make half the beauty he is to receive, there is always something of the author or composer which must be transmitted.

In journalism, or the "bad art" which is but journalism thinly disguised, there is no such strain on the public.

I am now at the end of my space. Of Remy de Gourmont's feeling toward such a magazine as we are now making I will write in the December number.

**STYLE AND AMERICAN LITERATURE**

Maxwell Bodenheim

American literature is divided into three plaintive continents: clear cold psychological data; sentimental unbeautiful lying; and social propaganda. The first is a photograph; the second, a pretty vase; and the third, a decorated sledge-hammer.

The American Writer earnestly strives to accomplish something; he starts out with a fixed and lofty objective which ranges from a "portrayal of the soul of the masses" and an exposure of the iniquities of the present social system, to "an unfolding of the poetry that lies in simple people". He seizes upon ideas that have been current coin in Europe for the past century, writes them much worse than they were originally written, and is hailed as a genius. His characters are marvels of realism—stop any milkman on the corner and he will talk exactly as Dreiser's Witta talks, and act just as ordinary human beings in the "Arcadia Residence Hotel" or Winklehofer's Alley would act. He writes on the theory that human beings lack eyes and cannot see the conditions about them, but must be carefully told in lengths of four hundred pages that a grafting politician is looting a city, that a man can immerse himself in moneymaking and lose his soul, that working-people are unjustly treated, that women are asserting their economic independence, and that society people drink and have gossamer-morals.
If he is striving to educate people who are inclined to argue pro and con about these subtle matters, he could become a far more effective elementary teacher by compiling with his fellow-writers an encyclopedia which could be printed in serial form, or by having his work made into text books for schools and colleges. Since his aim is really the spreading of information about human beings, descriptive and psychological, his prose style is always simple, strong and clear, as the phrase goes, and he leaves imagination and beautiful word-mosaics to weak-kneed poets, who believe in making lyrical, elaborate lies about human beings and life in a desperate effort to escape the simple, strong and clear nightmares of conditions and sights about them. But what am I saying? Modern American poets have also become realistic in a different way. It has become a rigid shibboleth among American poets of the present day, that writing about a rose or a sunset inevitably proves that a man is a minor poet, and that steam-crane, shoe-string peddlars, farm-hands, the Panama Canal, ice-wagon drivers and machinists are the only fit subjects for a spirited poet. And so the most sincere of the present landslide of American poets write about these subjects in a bold and true manner, providing a sort of unadorned kindergarten which your soul is supposed to attend. And the least sincere among them sing of realistic sights, but seem a little ashamed of their content, hiding it with picture-puzzle styles, which you piece together only to discover that they lead to very simple meanings.

Then there is another class of contemporary American poets, who strive hard to achieve subtle meanings, not realizing that only literary style is subtle, and that meanings are all on about the same intangible level. These poets write poems that seem experiments in differential calculus, until you suddenly discover that they are in reality many simple concepts mixed in a temporarily baffling fashion. In their plaintive search for originality of thought and emotion American writers achieve only twisted echoes of old-world literature, for the simple reason that outside of scientific research and pure philosophy ideas are eunuchs drained by centuries, and dressed in variations of old costumes. Any modern writer with a little research can discover that some old Hindoo or Chinaman or European said exactly what he is saying, and in a far more imaginative and beautiful way. But literary style alone remains a comparatively untouched region, because the great majority of writers, since the beginning of the Christian era, have always been clutched by some great burning message which they fancied the world needed or by some new situation in which human beings would
act differently than they ever before acted, or by some important moral that required hundreds of pages for illustration. When they abandoned these important kingships it was either to lose themselves in aimless tears, to become vaguely exuberant, or to shrewdly analyze the mob-desires of their days and settle down to careful entertaining. In all of these aims, literary style became chief-cook-and-bottle-washer—an obedient servant, who was thoroughly whipped if he ever became rebellious, and achieved moments of sheer word-beauty, which failed to illuminate the aim of the writer, or which momentarily crystalized the writer's formless rhapsodies.

Therefore absolutely new and beautiful word-designs are possible, since words alone, unconnected with great messages or sentimental self-portrayals, have been practically ignored by writers of the Christian Era.

When American writers become thoroughly decadent, and are not ashamed to frolic ardently with words, writing in a passionate surge in which imagination becomes a tipsy priest, marrying words and meaning, and waltzing arm in arm down the road with them, beauty in American literature will have its inception. One critic claims that this situation is impossible, because of the complacent democracy of this country, in which every country bumpkin and rich man with a large library considers himself an infallible judge of literary values, among other questions of art. Because of this he believes that only those writers who deal in elementary social instruction or sentimental commonplaces, can secure a hearing. But even if a small aristocracy were in control of the literary situation here, beautiful books would have to be distributed free of charge and would gain very little in circulation, because the average American is an unmellowed self-confident nondescript who considers culture to be for sale at bargain-prices. Each European country has had centuries in which to condense into that quiet sophistication which demands in fiction and poetry other intangible food than economic sermons or descriptions of the surface facts of its daily life, or sentimental ecstasies, while the American is still a little growing boy, interested only in literary marble-games. The American political situation has nothing to do with this—if we changed to a kingdom or an economic utopia tomorrow the American citizen would still purchase tons of Governeur Morris and Edna Ferber, and would still wistfully and wearily try to wade through occasional volumes from writers who have been recommended to him as "highbrows".
CHARACTERS:
PETER ROSCORLA, aged 40
DR. TREVITHICK
SISTER AGATHA, a Nurse
ASENATH, an old woman who has been Peter Roscorla's nurse.

The action takes place in the dining-hall of Roscorla Manor, near the sea-coast of Cornwall. The hall is lofty, panelled with oak, furnished squarely with old oak furniture. There is an open hearth, with oak benches, on the right; beyond the fireplace is a door, leading into the house. In the centre of the hall is a long table, the end of which faces the audience. An oak arm-chair stands at the head, plain oak chairs at the sides. At the back, to the left of the table, is a door leading into a bedroom. On the left is a panelled screen which reaches two-thirds of the way to the ceiling and forms the whole of the wall. A door in the centre of it leads to the entrance-hall.

It is twilight in autumn. During the whole of the action BARBARA ROSCORLA is lying in bed, in the inner room. With her, during the first part of the play, is SISTER KATHERINE, a nurse. ASENA TH and SISTER AGATHA are seated by the fire; the old woman drowses.

The wind is heard as the curtain rises.

SISTER A.: (with a start) Asenath, Asenath, is that only the wind?
ASENATH: (rousing herself) Eh?
SISTER A.: Is that the wind?
ASENATH: It is the wind from the sea. It blew all night. You can hear the sea out beyond; sometimes you can hear
The Little Review

it louder than the wind. There's always been wind at sea when the Roscorlas were born; they bring trouble.

SISTER A.: The wind frightens me. I have never been quite myself since I came here.

ASENATH: Yes, yes, the Roscorlas come with the wind; they bring trouble.

SISTER A.: (nodding her head towards the closed door) Do you think she is going to die?

ASENATH: It isn't death I'm fearing; it's being born.

SISTER A.: Is that what she is afraid of?

ASENATH: It's a poor gift being born; if they that come could think twice, not many of them would take it.

SISTER A.: Is that what she is afraid of? I have never seen any woman who seemed to dread so what was going to happen. She lies there all the time as if she were seeing a ghost.

ASENATH: The wives of all the Roscorlas feared what they were going to bring into the world. Peter Roscorla's wife is only like all the others.

SISTER A.: I have never seen any woman who was so afraid of being a mother.

ASENATH: Any woman is wise to fear it; there's little joy and much care for any mother; but it's a bitter motherhood here in this house. She does right to fear it.

SISTER A.: She is such a little thing, and so young, and sometimes she trembles all over, so that the bed quivers.

ASENATH: She is thinking on that that's to be. Did she say nothing when you were with her?

SISTER A.: She said nothing; she lay there with her long black hair all over the pillow; her eyes were wide open, staring straight in front of her; I think she was listening to the wind.

ASENATH: The last that was born in this house was Gregory Roscorla, Peter Roscorla's brother; there was an evil wind when he was born, and the sea came up the village street as far as the market-cross.

SISTER A.: I have never seen Gregory Roscorla; does he not come to this house?

ASENATH: Not for these fifteen years. He was the best of them, Gregory; a fine lad, a wild lad; but he was his father's child, his father loved him the best. 'Tis his place here, by rights of love; but it's Peter's by rights of
law. Peter's the elder, and his father hated him for that, and now he hates his brother that's younger, and they haven't spoken a word for these fifteen years, and Gregory hasn't set a foot inside the house.

SISTER A.: Do they hate one another so much?
ASENATH: (leaning forward, speaking low). Shall I tell you a thing? Why do you think Peter Roscorla is so hungry for the child to come that's coming, and why has he been wild for joy ever since he had the hope of him, and why does he fear every minute of the day that his wife isn't cared for as she should be? Is it love for his wife, do you think? Is it just and only because he wants a son of his own? Oh, he loves his wife, and he's hungering for a son of his own; but it's to spite his brother as well, it's for fear his brother should come to take his place here after he's dead; it's because his brother shan't inherit Roscorla.

SISTER A.: Has his brother ever done him any harm?
ASENATH: Gregory never did any man harm; but the Roscorla blood's in Peter. Do you know what they say in these parts? "To hate like a Roscorla." Peter will have an evil child.

SISTER A.: And she, why is it she is so afraid of being a mother?
ASENATH: (as before, leaning forward and speaking low). Do you know how Peter Roscorla that was, died? No one knows how he died; his sons don't know how he died; I tended him, weeks and weeks, and he cried on God and the saints when he saw hell-fire coming near him; there was the smoke of it in his eyes, and he fell whimpering at the last, and he cursed the father that had begotten him. The child that's going to be born will curse his father.

SISTER A.: Do you mean that they are all—?
ASENATH: An evil race, bad sons, and bad fathers; evil in the blood. They come and they go with the wind, and it's the birth that's the greater evil.

SISTER A.: And she, does she know?
ASENATH: (keenly) Ay, she knows now.

SISTER A.: Didn't she know when she married him?
ASENATH: What does a young girl know? A little and sweet thing, like a young child, that I could take in my arms. But she knows now, (meaningly).

SISTER A.: She should never have known.
ASENATH: (fiercely) It was right for her to know; what I told her I told her for her good.

SISTER A.: (rising, in agitation). You? Do you mean that you told her?

(The door at the side opens and PETER ROSECRONLA enters. He is in riding gaiters, spotted with mud; he carries a whip which he lays down gently on a table near the door. He moves with clumsy care, glancing at the bedroom door, as if afraid of disturbing his wife.

ROSECRONLA: (going over to SISTER AGATHA and speaking rapidly and harshly). Why are you not with her? Has the doctor called?

SISTER A.: (standing stiffly). Sister Katherine is taking her turn to watch beside her; she was asleep when I left her. The doctor has not called.

ROSECRONLA: (taking out his watch and putting it back without looking at it). I went for him, but he wasn't there. When do you think he will come? (Takes out watch again and looks at it). You say she's asleep. Has she been quite quiet? said nothing? not wanted anything?

SISTER A.: She cried a little, but very quietly. She has said nothing.

ROSECRONLA: (makes a few steps, then turns—anxiously). When do you think he will come?

SISTER A.: The doctor promised to be here soon after five.

ROSECRONLA: (looking at his watch and speaking slowly). Five minutes to five. (He controls himself with an effort.) (appealingly) I suppose I mayn't go in?

(SISTER AGATHA shakes her head firmly, she sits down in her former seat, and turns to the fire. ROSECRONLA moves away and seats himself heavily in the oak armchair at the upper end of the long table. ASENATH has not taken her eyes off his face. He looks at her abruptly).

What are you staring at me for, like an old raven?

ASENATH: Mayn't old Asenath look at you, Master Peter? It's three generations of the Roscorlas that she's seen born. There was Peter Roscorla, your father, there was you, Master Peter, there was Master Gregory—
ROSCORLA: (his face convulsed with rage) Gregory!
(He is about to bring down his fist on the table when he stops, glancing aside at the closed door. ASENATH gets up and comes over to him slowly)

ASENATH: (shaking her head). No birth here comes to good. There's a wind at sea, Master Peter, there's a wind coming in from the sea; the wind's bringing trouble, it's bringing trouble to the Roscorlas; mark my words, it's an evil night, Master Peter, it's an evil night to be born on.

ROSCORLA: (angrily, looking up at her with an ugly sneer) You're the witch on the hearth, Asenath; you always bode ill-luck. But you're wrong; it's an ill wind, Asenath, but it's bringing good luck to me.

ASENATH.: (shaking her head). No birth here comes to good, Master Peter. Do you know what you're going to give to the child that's to be born?
(He stares at her with a puzzled look).

The legacy of the Roscorlas.
(As she speaks the door at the side opens and DR. TREVITHICK enters. He comes up to the table. ROSCORLA rises eagerly).

ROSCORLA: I am so glad you have come. And you will stay?

DR. T.: I have to see an old man in the village. But I can attend to that later. There is no change, Sister Agatha?

SISTER A.: (rising and coming forward) There is no change, doctor. She was asleep a little while ago. Shall I see if she is awake?

DR. T.: If you please.

(SISTER AGATHA opens the bedroom door quietly, and goes in. Part of the bed is seen as she opens the door).

(The Doctor turns to ROSCORLA, looking at him keenly).
Have you done exactly as I told you?

ROSCORLA: (meekly) Yes, doctor.

DR. T.: You have left her quite alone; not disturbed her in way? not let her know that you have any anxiety?

ROSCORLA: I have left her quite alone.

(SISTER AGATHA opens the bedroom door, and beckons to the doctor, who goes in. The stage has gradually darkened: ASENATH gets up and lights
several candles, which give a dim light.

ROSCORLA walks up and down uneasily; suddenly he stops in front of ASENATH, who is in the act of lighting a candle.

What do you mean by what you said just now?

ASENATH: (hypocratically) What was it I was saying just now, Master Peter?

(He goes back to the fireside. He follows her).

ROSCORLA: The legacy of the Roscorlas. What did you mean?

ASENATH: It was only a word that I said, Master, and there was no great meaning in it. Birth and death I've seen the coming and going of them for three generations. (Looking up at him and putting her hand on his sleeve). Are you not fearing this birth that's going to be?

ROSCORLA: (excitedly) Asenath, when I come in here holding my son in my arms—

ASENATH: Your son, Master Peter?

ROSCORLA: It must be a son. Hasn't the first-born here always been a son, Asenath?

ASENATH: Very true, Master; the first-born of the Roscorlas has always been a son; yes, it'll be a son, Master Peter, and the blood of the Roscorlas will be in him . . .

ROSCORLA: (triumphantly) Didn't I tell you? The legacy of the Roscorlas! Is that what you meant? It's old blood, good Cornish blood, the blood of gentlemen.

ASENATH: Ay, ay, old and gentle; do you know what goes to the seasoning of old blood among gentle-folk?

(The bedroom door opens, and the doctor comes out with a very anxious look on his face. He looks scrutinisingly at ROSCORLA before speaking to him. ASENATH looks suspiciously at the doctor, and mutters, shaking her head).

ASENATH: It's not the doctor that's wanted, but the power of God!

(ASENATH goes out by the door on the right).

ROSCORLA: Well, doctor?

(A pause).

DR. T: (sitting down at the side of the table and leaning his arms upon it) I must not hide from you that the case is grave.

ROSCORLA: She is worse! She is not dying?

DR. T: She is not dying. But she is not out of danger.
ROSCORLA: Only—you are going to save her!

DR. T.: I hope so, I think so. But, something may have to be done, as I feared. There are times when it is doubtful if we or Nature are the best physicians. Nature generally knows better than we do, but she is not always to be trusted to do what we want.

ROSCORLA: Something will have to be done!

DR. T.: May have to be done. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

ROSCORLA: I will answer anything you ask me.

DR. T.: Do you know I sometimes wish we physicians had the power that our rival, the priest, has; the power of getting at the truth, the real, inner truth of our patients. The body is so often little more than the slave of the mind And yet all we can say is: "Do you feel a pain here, a pain there?" the mere ache of the body. We dare not pry into the soul.

ROSCORLA: What do you mean?

DR. T.: If I were a priest, I would ask your wife to come to me for confession.

ROSCORLA: (proudly) My wife has nothing to confess.

DR. T.: Do not misunderstand me. Something has been preying on her mind; the mind has helped to take its own revenge upon the body; some shock, some brooding trouble; do you know of any?

ROSCORLA: (shaking his head blankly) No.

DR. T.: Something to account for what is certainly the fact: that she has a morbid horror of giving birth to a child.

ROSCORLA: Nothing possible in the world.

DR. T.: How long is it since she became melancholy, silent, brooding? Since she has expected the child?

ROSCORLA: She was filled with joy! Oh, it is not that. Something has changed her, but not that, about five months ago. I don't know what it was. There was no reason. There could have been no reason.

DR. T.: And since then?

ROSCORLA: (bitterly) She has been different, she has seemed as if she were afraid of something; afraid of me! But it's nerves, surely it's nothing but nerves? It's wild here in the Winter, the house is gloomy, it's too near the sea. She is rather afraid of the sea and the wind, but I'll take her to London, I'll do anything
she likes. I'm very fond of Barbara! All I want is one thing: my son. It will be a son. It must be. It's all I want in the world.

DR. T.: You want a son more than anything in the world? (A pause).
Do you know I don't always agree with people when they express that wish. There are some children who should never be born. (He looks at ROSCORLA keenly).

ROSCORLA: (excitedly) My son must be born. If I don't have a son, Gregory gets the land when I die.

DR. T.: Is that why you want a son so much, Roscorla?

ROSCORLA: (rising to his feet, in intense excitement, and leaning towards the doctor) Isn't that reason enough? Gregory shall never be master here, not if I'm alive, not if I'm dead. I keep him out now, and my son keeps him out when I'm gone.

DR. T.: What wrong has your brother done you?

ROSCORLA: (sitting down fiercely) Wrong? None! He exists.

DR. T.: Is that enough reason, in your family, for hating one another?

ROSCORLA: (jumping up in rage) Yes. (Sitting down again). Don't you know the saying: to hate like a Roscorla? It's a true saying.

DR. T.: I know it's a true saying. I was by your father's bedside when he died.

ROSCORLA: They sent me away when he was dying. I was young then. I never heard much about it.

DR. T.: When I said to you just now that there were some children who should never be born——

ROSCORLA: Yes?

DR. T.: Do you know much about your family history, Roscorla?

ROSCORLA: I've got the pedigree; it's in the drawer, yonder. I never went beyond it.

DR. T.: I don't quite mean that. Your father, your grandfather, his father: do you know much about them, about how they lived and died?

ROSCORLA: (with a laugh, which he tries to render careless) Now you're talking to me like Asenath. What are these riddles, Doctor?

DR. T.: Asenath! What was she saying to you? She has been here since your grandfather's time, hasn't she?
ROSCORLA: Asenath is always saying she has seen three generations born, and the birth of a Roscorla brings trouble and talk of that kind. But you, Doctor, you are not going to tell me old wives' tales? (Excitedly) I want to know exactly what you mean.

DR. T: What I mean is this, that, as you must be aware, there is a certain strain in your family, call it a strain of eccentricity, which is not exactly healthy; perhaps from an abstract point of view, not exactly desirable to perpetuate. Have you ever thought of the responsibility of bringing a child into the world? (Meaningly) Has your wife ever thought of it?

ROSCORLA: (looking round at him in a dazed, awakening way) I begin to see what you mean. You mean (slowly) that we are all—(breaking off with a gasp of terror.)

DR. T: You see my point. You see the reason why I speak to you about it at this moment.

ROSCORLA: (haggard and dazed, shaking his head helplessly) No . . . . (His face slowly changes, and with a dull terror in his eyes he whispers) Is it in me?

DR. T: No, no, I don't mean that at all. One generation may escape, often does. It is the next that suffers.

ROSCORLA: The next!

DR. T: Now, I tell you frankly: I am not sure that I can save both your wife and your child. If the child lives the mother may die. Will you risk her life on a possibility, on such a possibility? Will you, after what I have told you?

ROSCORLA: (sullenly) I don't believe what you have told me. The family's a good family. You and Asenath are only trying to frighten me. I must have my son. And Barbara—(excitedly) Both!

DR. T: I am not sure I can save them both.

ROSCORLA: Barbara has been a good wife to me. There was no woman for me till I married Barbara. I shouldn't care much for life if she wasn't there. But my son—he's to live after me! If my son isn't born Gregory'll have the place. (Starting to his feet as if struck by a sudden thought) Do you think she knows anything about it? Is that why she's frightened of me?

DR. T: I think it is possible she has guessed something.
ROSCORLA: (in wild excitement) She wants to rob me of my child! She wants my child not to be born! They all want my child not to be born! They are all in league against me! But, I'll have my way. It's the way of Nature! I have that on my side they can't fight with. They're fighting against God. (Dropping into his chair as if exhausted) I must have my child.

(While he is speaking the door on the right opens, and ASENATH steals in quietly and makes her way unobserved to her seat by the fire. She listens to every word).

DR. T: At whatever cost?
ROSCORLA: At whatever cost!

DR. T: (rising and taking out his watch) I will return in half-an-hour. Mind, till then, quiet; above all, quiet.

(He goes out. ROSCORLA buries his face in his hands, and then sits staring before him with his elbows on his knees. After a pause).

ROSCORLA: What have you been saying to my wife, Asenath?
ASENATH: (as if she did not hear) Eh, master?
ROSCORLA: It is you that set her thinking on things there was no need to think on.

ASENATH: A young wife thinks her own thoughts; what should an old woman give her to think on? Maybe, it's the wind she's thinking on now, and the life that's coming as the wind comes.

ROSCORLA: How did my father die, Asenath?
ASENATH: He died hard; he cursed his own father.
ROSCORLA: And my grandfather, Asenath?
ASENATH: They took him away; he didn't die at Roscorla. The Roscorla blood was in him.

ROSCORLA: Does Barbara know all this, Asenath?
ASENATH: How should I know, master? It's whispered, it's not spoken.

ROSCORLA: (getting up and walking to and fro, and speaking half to himself and half to ASENATH) If it's true—but it's not true—it makes no difference. Do you understand, Asenath, it's not true! Have you been telling these lies to my wife?

(ASENATH makes no reply, but gazes at him fixedly).
The Roscorla family is the best family in Cornwall. What have you been telling her? (She remains silent).

She always believed everything you said to her. And she has been believing it; she hates to bear me a child because he'll be a Roscorla. He shall, he shall be a Roscorla! I am going to speak to her, she must see, it must be proved to her! She doesn't want my child to be born, Asenath. But he must be born.

(In suppressed excitement he goes up to the bedroom door, opens it and goes in).

ASENATH: What were they talking about? "Must have my child," he said; "at any cost," he said. Whose cost? Mistress Barbara's. It's the mother for the child, they mean. Is it? (she laughs). She shall know, she shall. She's a brave woman; she will do justice on the Roscorlas.

(SISTER AGATHA opens the bedroom door and comes out, accompanied by SISTER KATHERINE, who goes out by the door on the right. She goes over to ASENATH).

SISTER A.: He sent us away. Will he be quite quiet? He was quiet, but he looked strange. He said he had to speak to her alone.

ASENATH: It's lies that he has to tell her. But I am going to tell her the truth.

SISTER A.: Asenath, what is the truth? Is it something terrible? Why do you look at me like that?

ASENATH: Has she said nothing?

SISTER A.: She was listening, and she asked me if that was the wind, and I said yes, and she said "The wind from the sea. The wind of birth!" and then she said, "I don't want to die, but it would be better if I were dead. I am bringing life." And she turned her head over on the pillow, and lay quite still.

ASENATH: And that was all?

SISTER A.: No; I heard her say: "If I had only the courage!" I don't know what she meant. And she said, as if she were speaking to herself, "It would be the right thing, wouldn't it?"

ASENATH: She knows the right thing, and when she knows all she will do the right thing.

SISTER A.: Listen! He is speaking loud. O, he should not cry
out to her like that! I must go back. She was so frightened, and she is lying there between life and death, as if she had to choose between them.

ASENATH: (Rising) Child, let me go in to her. I can soothe her better than you can soothe her.

SISETR A.: If she could only sleep!

ASENATH: I will try to put her to sleep. But only if she chooses sleep.

(The bedroom door opens and ROSCORLA rushes out violently. ASENATH slips into the room and closes the door behind her).

ROSCORLA: (beside himself—to SISTER AGATHA) I told her it was alright; I told her the child must be born; I was perfectly quiet; I said “Look at me!” I was as quiet as possible, but she wouldn't hear; she shrank away from me; she said: “You, you I see it all; now I see it!” and that put me in a fury, and I don’t quite know what I said to her.

(A low wail is heard from the bedroom; they listen).

What was that?

SISTER A.: Asenath is trying to put her to sleep.

ROSCORLA: Why isn’t the doctor here?


ROSCORLA: He is coming!

(He goes towards the door; the doctor comes in, greets him, and, with a questioning lift of the eyebrows to SISTER AGATHA, goes into the bedroom, followed by her. After a slight pause, the doctor comes out, holding a phial in his hand. He says quietly):

I have come too late. She is dead.

ROSCORLA: (with a cry, falling on his knees by the table) My God!

ASENATH: (appearing at the bedroom door) hush! I have put her to sleep. She chose sleep. There will be no more trouble to the Roscorlas for a time now.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.
Letters from Ezra Pound

Chère Editeuse:

May I be permitted to leave the main part of the magazine, and reply in the correspondence columns to several other writers of letters?

A. R. S. Cher Monsieur: There is one section of our magazine devoted (DEEvoted) to "interpretation"; it is, if you have not divined it, The Reader Critic. It is, so far as I know, the only publication that ever has "interpreted" our native country. Never before has the intelligent foreigner been able to learn "what the American artist is up against."

V. H., (Maine). Chère Madam: Could Lewis but hear you, through his gas-mask, gazing at the ruins of one of the gun parapets of his battery, I think he would smile with the delicate and contented smile that I have at moments seen "lighting his countenance". There was once a man who began an article: "WE MUST-KILL JOHN BULL, we must kill him with Art". These words smote the astonished eyes of the British public. No other Englishman had ever before so blasphemed the effete national symbol. Neither had any one else very much objected to the ladies in nightgowns which distinguished Punch' caricatures. The writer was, needless to say, Wyndham Lewis. He will probably have died for his country before they find out what he meant.

L. P. Cher Monsieur: You ask "What sympathy can the majority of readers feel for the foreign editor, Ezra Pound, with his contemptuous invective against the "vulgus"? Are the majority of the readers "vulgus"? We had hoped the few choice spirits were gathered. Perhaps they have only migrated to this side of the ocean.

There was also a lady or mother who wrote to me (personally) from New Jersey, asking me to stop the magazine as Lewis's writings were "bad for her milk". (I am afraid there is no way of softening her phrase for our readers). Madame, what you need is lactol and not literature; you should apply to a druggist.

And there is the person who says all my stuff is "in a way propaganda. If not", what am I "trying to do", etc. Cher Monsieur: My propaganda is the propaganda of all realist and almost all fine un-realist literature, if I seek to "do" anything it is only to stimulate
a certain awareness. It would not distress me if the reader should suddenly look upon his surroundings and upon his own consciousness and try to see both for himself, in his own terms, not in my terms, nor in the terms of President Wilson, or W. D. Howells, or Scribner's, or any other patent cut-size machine, or home-mould or town-mould, or year-mould. Voilà toute ma petite propagande. It is so little propaganda that I am quite content if it has no such effects, and if two or three pleasant people are enabled to get through a dull evening more easily with the aid of my sketches; or those of the writers whom I have brought to this magazine. There are some people who are not entertained by Success, the Saturday Evening Post, The Seven Arts, The Dial and all that contingent. "Matter", as Lewis has written, "which does not contain enough intelligence to permeate it, grows, as you know, rotten and gangrenous." It is not everyone who enjoys the aroma of a dormant and elderly corporis litterarum, nor the stertorous wheezing of its breathing.

If I were propagating I should exhort you to get a decent international copyright law—though as my own income will presumably never equal that of a plumber, or stir the cupidity of the most class-hating, millionaire-cursing socialist, I have very little interest in this matter.

I should exhort you to enliven your universities. I should, whatever your nationality, exhort you to understand that art is exceedingly slow in the making, that a good poet can scarcely write more than twenty good pages a year, and that even less that this, if it be good, should earn him his livelihood. (This problem, with good augury I shall of course attempt to solve with this magazine.) I should, if you are American, exhort you, for your own good, to try not to drive all your best artists out of the country. (Not that I object to living in London, North Italy, Paris, or that my name need be dragged into the matter). I would ask you to try to understand WHY American literature from 1870 to 1910 is summed up in the sentence: "Henry James stayed in Paris reading Flaubert and Turgenev. Mr. William Dean Howells returned to America and read the writings of Henry James." And WHY Whistler stayed in Europe, although Chase went back to the Philadelphia Fine Arts Academy. These are simple questions which the serious reader will not try to shirk answering.

However these matters do not belong to the body of the magazine, which will at best, as the clubman complains, be devoted to "invention" if there is enough invention to fill it; and at worst to active cerebration.

Votre bien dévoué,

Ezra Pound.
P. S. An american author writes to me "You mix your damn foolery with sense, so you continue readable". Chère Editeuse, what does this person want? Does he wish it unmixed and therefore unreadable? Should he follow the sign "Seek safety first!"? Read The Spectator! Does he wish "sound opinion", cautious statement, the New Republic's guarded hazard that six and seven probably will make thirteen, but that, etc........?

This Approaches Literature!

Abel Sanders:
The enclosed document may be of interest to you, as showing the true nature of the forces against which we are arrayed.

SECRET

Committee for the increase of population
Notice No. 138756.

Sir:
On account of all able-bodied men having been called to the colours, it remains the duty of all those left behind for the sake of the Fatherland to interest themselves in the happiness of the married women and maidens by doubling or even trebling the number of births.

Your name has been given us as a capable man, and you are here-with requested to take on this office of honour and do your duty in a proper German way. It must here be pointed out that your wife or fiancée will not be able to claim a divorce, it is in fact hoped the women will bear this discomfort heroically for the sake of the War.

You will be given the district of ............ Should you not feel capable of carrying on the task allotted to you, you will be given three days in which to name someone in your place. On the other hand if you are prepared to take on a second district as well, you will become a "Deckofficer"* and receive a pension.

An exhibition of photographs of women and maidens in the dis-trict allotted to you, is to be found at the office of ...... You are requested to bring this letter with you.

Your good work should commence immediately on this notification. A full report of results is to be submitted by you after nine months.

* "Deck" possibly meaning "coverlet".
Worthy of Byron

Frank Harris, New York:

Hearty congratulations! I've read innumerable things of Ezra Pound in the last ten years and found nothing. He has tantalized me with the feeling that there must be some originality to explain if not to justify at least his preposterous name. And now in *The Little Review* his satiric poem, "L'Homme Moyen Sensuel", really enchants me: there are rhymes in it worthy of Byron.

That "infant tick who's now the editor of The Atlantic" is as good as the couplet on H. Van Dyke. When he praises (Henry James, for instance); he's not so convincing. Still I enjoyed the whole thing immensely and thank you for the treat.

Dry Bones

H. R., Trinidad, Colorado:

I enclose a subscription to *The Little Review*. Not because it is worth it. You know it is not. But because of my appreciation of the magazine when it first heralded the dawn of a new era. I knew the body and soul of it then and thought it the most significant, youthful and vigorous magazine in America. When your last number reached me I exclaimed "How the mighty have fallen!" It attempts to speak, but the voice is too feeble. Through its pages I find only bones, dry bones, sans life, sans youth, sans energy.

But as long as you are at the helm of the new adventure I have faith in *The Little Review*. I know it will emerge triumphantly.

Alienation

Otis A. Poole, Shidzuoka, Japan:

Sometimes I think you needlessly alienate the support of numbers of subscribers, possessed of rudimentary ambitions toward a better appreciation of Art in its various forms, by too roughly snubbing and scoffing at them, because they do not immediately swallow all the new "stuff" created in defiance of convention and precedent, without a grimace of dislike or a rational lack of faith in its worthwhileness as expressive of the present era's conception of truth and beauty in all that pertains to life as it is or might be; but "the Gods give my donkey wings", if herewith isn't an extension of my subscription to *The Little Review* in spite of it.

Art and the War

J. K. C., Boston:

The idea of *The Little Review* appealed to me immensely and I subscribed because I wanted to be friends. Altogether I like it:
especially your article on Isadora Duncan, Ezra Pound's stuff, and the Chinese poems. Also the book reviews, which, to use a phrase of Leon Daudet, are not "mere vague publicity" like most of them these days.

But I was very much surprised by the lack of appreciation and understanding shown by your comments on Le Feu by Henri Barbusse, but decided that you had probably never read that great book. What distresses me, however, is in the August number. Some one from Kansas writes congratulating you for not printing anything about "this blasted war". That you do not I have no quarrel with. It is a relief. But when in a superior way you say that you do not consider the war "an interesting or legitimate subject for Art" I cannot agree. The existence of Art and all its traditions depends on the outcome of the war, which is fundamentally a war of the ideal of these traditions against the ideal of power. Read Le Genie Latin, by Gugliumo Ferrero if you have not already done so. Think of the beautiful noble things inspired by the war in France: for example, among many, the articles of Barres in L'Echo de Paris and the poems of Paul Claudel. After your statement, to compare these writings with some that you have printed is quite laughable. And then Art needs something noble in it, and anything where noble self-sacrifice occurs daily is a fit subject for it.

[I don't understand what you mean by my lack of appreciation of Le Feu. The object of M. Barbusse was to show that the immense horror of war is not to be used for any object except for the destruction of that horror. As for the noble elements of daily self-sacrifice, etc., etc., he says: "It would be a crime to show the nobler aspects of war, even if there were any."

As for Art needing something noble in it: Art doesn't need anything; Art is the nobility. And of course I thought we needn't argue any longer about the vice of self-sacrifice.

But you have clearly misunderstood what was meant by the war not being a legitimate subject for Art. We will argue it fully in the next issue. Also I have a long letter from Stephane Boecklin about the artist's relation to the war, which will be printed in the November number.—M. C. A.]
ART AND CRITICISM IN AMERICA
(from the New York Press)

Tribune: "Edith Wharton's Summer (Appleton) is a masterpiece of accurate, graceful and fascinating composition . . . a climax of graphic power is reached which has seldom been approximated in contemporary fiction. But then—the pity of it all! the pity of it all! Was it worth while to use such gifts, to employ such rare and exquisite artistry, in the exploitation of so sordid and so seamy a side of life? . . . If now and then, and here and there, man must be so fallen and so lost, let us rather 'Walk backward with averted gaze and hide the shame.'"

Times: Mr. Lewis's (The innocents, by Sinclair Lewis. Harper) native endowment is essentially Dickensian, because his mental affinity is stronger for what is sweet and clean and bright, upward looking and forward pressing, in human nature, than it is for the rotten, the dour and the hopeless. He sees and duly uses these poisoned and poisonous elements of human life, but in his estimate of the forces that inspire, etc., etc."

(To get the full value of the reviews of Mr. Lewis's work one must read his countless stories and novels. But it would be well, perhaps, to mention that he is a rising young manufacturer of literary all-day suckers, who turns out a novel in about the time it took Flaubert to write a paragraph of Madame Bovary)—I. S.

Roosevelt's "The Foes of Our Own Household"

This is an invaluable book. It is a compilation of all the outworn thought of the last two generations.—jh.

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Poems from the Chinese of Li Po, by Maxwell Bodenheim
Imaginary Letters, VI., by Ezra Pound
Reproductions of Modern Sculpture and Drawings

DECEMBER:
A Letter from Remy de Gourmont
A Soldier of Humour, by Wyndham Lewis
T. S. Eliot: A Criticism, by May Sinclair

JANUARY:
Women and Men, by Ford Madox Hueffer.

James Joyce will begin a new novel either in the February or March number.

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