JANUARY, 1918

Impovisations  
William Carlos Williams

Three Views of H. L. Mencken:
America’s Critic  
Mr. Mencken, Philistine  
Mr. Mencken’s Truisms  
Raoul Root

Mr. Mencken. Philistine  
Margaret Anderson

The Convalescent in the South  
Jessie Dismorr

Women and Men, I.  
Ford Madox Hueffer

Incidents in the Life of a Poet  
John Rodker

A Soldier of Humour, II.  
Wyndham Lewis

Thoughts from a Country Vickerage

The Reader Critic:
Vachel Lindsay
The Quintuple Effulgence
Ezra Pound’s Critics

Announcements

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I have just received the first three instalments of James Joyce's new novel which is to run serially in The Little Review, beginning with the March number.

It is called "Ulysses".

It carries on the story of Stephan Dedalus, the central figure in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man".

It is, I believe, even better than the "Portrait".

So far it has been read by only one critic of international reputation. He says: "It is certainly worth running a magazine if one can get stuff like this to put in it. Compression, intensity. It looks to me rather better than Flaubert".

This announcement means that we are about to publish a prose masterpiece.

Owing to the delays in the mails during the holidays the last number of "THE LITTLE REVIEW" did not reach many people until very late in the month, and our announcement of a raise in price came too late to allow them to act upon it. We therefore extend the offer until February 10. Any one subscribing on or before that date may have the magazine at the $1.50 rate.

After February 10 the price will be raised as follows:

Yearly subscription, - - - $2.50
Single copies, - - - - 25 cents
Canadian subscriptions, - - $2.75
Foreign subscriptions, - - - 12/
I.

So far away August green as it yet is. They say the sun still comes up o’ mornings and it’s harvest moon now. Always one leaf at the peak-twig swirling, swirling and apples rotting in the ditch.

2

My wife’s uncle went to school with Amundsen. After he Amundsen returned from the South Pole there was a Scandinavian dinner, which bored him Amundsen like a boyhood friend. There was a young woman at his table, silent and aloof from the rest. She left early and he restless at some impalpable delay apologised suddenly and went off with two friends, his great, lean bulk twitching agilely. One knew why the poles attracted him. Then my wife’s mother told us the same old thing, of how a girl in their village jilted him years back. But the girl at the supper! Ah—that comes later when we are wiser and older!

3

What can it mean to you that a child wears pretty clothes and speaks three languages or that its mother goes to the best shops? It means: July has good need of his blazing sun. But if you pick one berry from the ash tree I’d not know it again for the same no matter how the rain washed. Make my bed of witch-hazel twigs, said the old man, since they bloom on the brink of winter.
II.

1

Mamselle Day, Mamselle Day, come back again! Slip your clothes off,—the jingling of those little shell ornaments so deftly fastened—! The streets are turning in their covers. They smile with shut eyes. I have been twice to the moon since supper but she has nothing to tell me. Mamselle come back, I will be wiser this time.

If one should catch me in this state! — wings would go at a bargain. Ah but to hold the world in the hand then — Here's a brutal jumble. And if you move the stones, see the ants scurry. But it's queen's eggs they take first, tax their jaws most. Burrow burrow, burrow! there's sky that way too if the pit's deep enough — so the stars tell us.

Lulla-by! Lulla-by! the world's pardon writ in letters six feet high! So sleep, baby, sleep!

2

How smoothly the car runs. And these rows of celery, how they bitter the air — winter's authentic fore-taste. Here among these farms how the year has aged, yet here's last year and the year before and all years. One might rest here time without end, watch out his stretch and see no other bending than spring to autumn, winter to summer and earth turning into leaves and leaves into earth and — how restful these long beet rows, — the caress of the low clouds, — the river lapping at the reeds. Was it ever so high as this, so full? How quickly we've come this far. Which way is north now? North now? why that way I think. Ah here's the house at last, here's April, but — the blinds are down! It's all dark here. Scratch a hurried note. Slip it over the sill. Well, some other time.

How smoothly the car runs. This must be the road. Queer how a road juts in. How the dark catches among those trees! How the light clings to the canal! Yes there's one table taken, we'll not be alone. This place has possibilities. Will you bring her here? Perhaps — and when we meet on the stair, shall we speak, say it is some acquaintance — or pass silent? Well, a jest's a jest but how
poor this tea is. Think of a life in this place, here in these hills by these truck-farms. Whose life? Why there, back of you. If a woman laughs a little loudly one always thinks that way of her. But how she bedizens the country-side. Quite an old world glamour. If it were not for — but one cannot have everything. What poor tea it was. How cold it's grown. Cheering, a light is that way among the trees. That heavy laugh! how it will rattle these branches in six week's time.

3

The frontispiece is her portrait and further on, — the obituary sermon: she held the school upon her shoulders. Did she. Well — turn in here then: — we found money in the blood and some in the room and on the stairs. My God I never knew a man had so much blood in his head! — and thirteen empty whisky bottles. I am sorry but those who come this way meet strange company. This is you see death's canticle.

III.

1

Beatiful white corpse of night actually! So the north-west winds of death are mountain sweet after all! All the troubled stars are put to bed now: three bullets from wife's hand—none kindlier: in the crown, in the nape and one lower: three starlike holes among a million pocky pores and the moon of your mouth: Venus Jupiter, Mars and all stars melted forthwith into this one good white light over the inquest table, — the traditional moth beating its wings against it — except there are two here. But sweetest are the caresses of the County Physician,—a little clumsy perhaps—mais—! and the Prosecuting Attorney, Peter Valuzzi and the others, waving green arms of maples to the tinkling of the earliest ragpicker's bells. Otherwise—: kindly stupid hands, kindly coarse voices, infinitely soothing, infinitely detached, infinitely beside the question, restfully babbling of how, where, why and night is done and the green edge of yesterday has said all it could.

2

It is the water we drink. It bubbles under every hill. How? Agh, you stop short of the root. Why, caught and the town goes
mad. The haggard husband pirouettes in tights. The wolf lean wife is rolling butter pats: it's a clock striking the hour. Pshaw, they do things better in Bangkok, — here too, if there's heads together. But up and leap at her throat! Bed's at fault! Yet — I've seen three women prostrate, hands twisted in each others hair, teeth buried where the hold offered, — not a movement, not a cry more than a low meowing. Oh call me a 'lady and think you've caged me. Hell's loose every minute, you hear? And the truth is there's not an eye clapped to either way but someone comes off the dirtier for it. Who am I to wash hands and stand near the wall? I confess freely there's not a bitch littered in the pound but my skin grows ruddier. Ask me and I'll say: curfew for the ladies. Bah, two in the grass is the answer to that gesture. Here's a text for you: Many daughters have done virtuously but thou excelled them all! And so you do, if the manner of a walk means anything. You walk in a different air from the others, — though your husband's the better men and the charm won't last a fortnight: the street's kiss parried again. But give thought to your daughters' food at mating time, you good men. Send them to hunt spring beauties beneath the sod this winter, — otherwise: hats off to the lady! One can afford to smile.

Marry in middle life and take the young thing home. Later in the year let the worst out. It's odd how little the tune changes. Do worse — till your mind's turning, then rush into repentance and the lady grown a hero while the clock strikes.

Here the harps have a short cadenza. It's sunset back of the new cathedral and the purple river scum has set seaward. The car's outside. I'd not like to go alone tonight. I'll pay you well. It's the king's evil. Speed! Speed! The sun's self's a chancre low in the west. Ha, how the great houses shine — for old time's sake! For sale! For sale! The town's gone another way. But I'm not fooled that easily. Fort sale! Fort sale! if you read it aright. And Beauty's own head's on the pillow, a la Muja Desnuda! O Contessa de Alba! Contessa de Alba! Never was there such a lewd wonder in the streets of Newark! Open the windows — but all's boarded up here. Oud with you, you sleepy doctors and lawyers you, — the sky's afire and Calvary Church with its snail's horns up, sniffing the dawn — o' the wrong side! Let the trumpets blare! Tutti i instrumenti! The world's bound homeward.
IV.

1

Of course history is an attempt to make the past seem stable and of course it’s all a lie. Nero must mean Nero or the game’s up. But — though killies have green backs and white bellies, zut! for the bass and hawks! When we’ve tired of swimming we’ll go climb in the ledgy forest. Confute the sages.

2

Quarrel with a purple hanging because it’s no column from the Parthenon. Here’s splotchy velvet set to hide a door in the wall and there — there’s the man himself praying! Oh quarrel whether ’twas Pope Clement raped Persephone or — did the devil wear a mitre in that year? Come there’s much use in being thin on a windy day if the cloth’s cut well. And oak leaves will not come on maples, nor birch trees either — that is, provided —, but pass it over, pass it over.

3

Think of some lady better than Rackham draws them: mere fairy stuff, — some face that would be your face, were you of the right sex, some twenty years back of a still morning, — some Lucretia out of the Vatican turned Carmelite,—some double image cast over a Titian Venus by two eyes quicker than Titian’s hands were, — some strange daughter of an inn-keeper, — some ... Call it a net to catch love’s twin doves and I’ll say to you: Look! and there’ll be the sky there and you’ll say the sky’s blue. Whisk the thing away now! What’s the sky now?

V.

1

It is still warm enough to slip from weeds into the lake’s edge, your clothes blushing in the grass and three small boys grinning behind the derelict hearth’s side. But summer is up among the huckleberries near the path’s end and snake’s eggs lie curling in the sun on the lonely summit. But — well — let’s wish it were higher after all these years staring at it deplore the paunched clouds glimpse the sky’s thin counter crest and plunge into the
gulch. Sticky cobwebs tell of feverish midnights. Crack a rock (what's a thousand years!) and send it crashing among the oaks! Wind a pine tree in a grey-worm's net and play it for a trout; oh — but it's the moon does that! No, summer has gone down the other side of the mountain. Carry home what we can. What have you brought off? Ah here are thimble berries.

The little Polish Father of Kingsland does not understand, he cannot understand. These are exquisite differences never to be resolved. He comes at mid-night through mid-winter slush to baptise a dying newborn; he smiles suavely and shrugs his shoulders: a clear middle A touched by a master — but he cannot understand. And Benny, Sharon, Henrietta and Josephine, what is it to them? Yet jointly they come more into the way of the music. And white haired Miss Ball! The empty school is humming to her little melody played with one finger at the noon hour but it is beyond them all. There is much heavy breathing, many tight shut lips, a smothered laugh whiles, two laughs cracking together, — three together sometimes and then a burst of wind lifting the dust again.

What I like best's the long unbroken line of the hills there. Yes, it's a good view. Come, let's visit the orchard. Here's peaches twenty years on the branch. Not ripe yet! ? Why — ! Those hills! Those hills! But you'd be young again! Well, fourteen's a hard year for boy or girl, let alone one older driving the pricks in, but though there's more in a song than the notes of it and a smile's a pretty baby when you've none other — let's not turn backward. Mumble the words, you understand, call them four brothers, strain to catch the sense but have to admit it's in a language they've not taught you, a flaw somewhere, — and for answer: well, that long unbroken line of the hills there.

Coda

Squalor and filth with a sweet cur nestling in the grimy blankets of your bed and on the better roads striplings dreaming of wealth and happinesss. Country life in America! The crackling grackle
that dartled at the hill’s bottom have joined their flock and swing with the rest over a broken roof toward Dixie.

VI.

I

Some fifteen years we’ll say I served this friend, was his valet nurse, physician, fool and master: nothing too menial — to say the least. Enough of that: so. Stand aside while they pass. This is what they found in the rock when it was cracked open: this finger nail. Hide your face among the lower leaves, here’s a meeting should have led to better things but — it is only one branch out of the forest and night pressing you for an answer! Velvet night weighing upon your eye-balls with gentle insistence; calling you away, — Come with me, now, tonight! Come with me! now tonight . .

2

You speak of the enormity of her disease, of her poverty. Bah, these are the fiddle she makes tunes on and it’s tunes bring the world dancing to your house door, even on this swamp side. You speak of the helpless waiting, waiting till the thing squeeze her windpipe shut. Oh, that’s best of all, that’s romance — with the devil himself a hero. No my boy. You speak of her man’s callous stinginess. Yes, my God, how can he refuse to buy milk when it’s alone milk that she can swallow now? But how is it she picks market beans for him day in day out, in the sun, in the frost? You understand? You speak of so many things, you blame me for my indifference. Well, this is you see my sister and death, great death, is robbing her of life. It dwarfs most things.

3

Hercules is in Hacketstown doing farm labor. Look at his hands if you’ll not believe me. And what do I care if yellow and red are Spain’s riches and Spain’s good blood, here yellow and red mean simply autumn! The odor of the poor farmer’s fried supper is mixing with the smell of the hemlocks, mist is in the valley hugging the ground and over Parsippany — where an oldish man leans talking to a young woman—the moon is swinging from its star.
THREE VIEWS OF H. L. MENCKEN*
("A Book of Prefaces")
Raoul Root

A MERICA has "at last produced" a critic, or rather a native American critic has at last succeeded in extricating his mind from his surroundings to such a degree as to be able to envisage the said surroundings. This does not mean that we have coughed up a new aesthete who will remurmur, in rather more veiled and semidiaphanous tones, the same velleities which Arthur Symons uttered in 1891.

H. L. Mencken has read his Mark Twain. It is a great blessing that at last some one with fibre tough enough to read Mark Twain, and intelligence enough to perceive the part which is not simple "Hee-Haw", has at last diagnosed Mark Twain's trouble. Pages 203-5 of Mr. Mencken's book show him to be a critic of no mean profundity. In these pages Mr. Mencken (or Dr. Kellner to whom he refers) has given a correct diagnosis. He has put his finger on the plague spot. My own detestation of Twain has stayed vague for a number of years; there were too many more important things to attend to; I could not be bothered to clarify this patch of vagueness. A detestation of a man's tonality does not necessitate a blindness to his abilities. And when a man's rightnesses have been so lied against as Twain's were in America, one could be well content to conceal a private and unimportant detestation. One could not express a dislike of any man, for instance, whose posthumous publications have been so lied about and distorted as Twain's final pessimistic expressions.

Mencken is in some circles considered a purely frivolous person because he edits, of half edits, a frivolous magazine. In a half-baked country one has to use what tools one can lay hold of. I would call one fact to the attention of the cognoscenti: namely, that The Smart Set is the only magazine in America that has ever reduced a circulation from 70,000 to 20,000 in a quixotic attempt to break through the parrochial taboo and give America free literature.

I have it on personal knowledge that Willard Huntington Wright went to London about five years ago determined to buy up the best stuff he could find. I do not in the least mean to imply that Mr. Wright and I would see eye to eye in questions of excellence. I may reserve my opinion that literature is not a commodity, that literature emphatically does not lie on a counter where it can be snatched up at once by a straw-hatted young man in a hurry.

An editor pleased with "Ozymandias", or with the fifth act of "The Cenci", might have rushed up to Shelley, for example, and found nothing in that worthy's desk but "The Sensitive Plant" (than which no poet of any reputation ever penned anything less desirable). Moreover, the better the author the greater his detestation of magazines and the less likely he is to believe in, or take the slightest interest in the success of, any magazine for which he has not some very personal security in his own private knowledge of the editors and the business management.

Let us remember that David Phillips had been shot by a fanatic, that various living writers were under contract elsewhere; and that The Smart Set did publish some of the first stories of James Joyce and some of the first short stories of D. H. Lawrence. Also that Wright resigned reasonably soon after he found that he was not free in his selection.

These huge mechanisms have to be kept going, if they are to remain huge mechanisms; in that condition they can be of very little service to literature until there is, what is almost unthinkable, a "really large" public intensely interested in literature.

The point I wish to emphasize, in part replying to the people who object to being asked the pertinent question regarding Whistler and Henry James and their protracted foreign residence, is that New York has a critic dealing with native affairs. Graham Phillips dealt with native affairs, in a style as crude as the types he depicted. He was painful to read, but he was working in honesty; and he was shot by a fanatic (not a New Englander). I don't know that he had been taken very seriously. Dreiser is taken seriously because the violent opposition to him has been longer; it has not been settled at the point of a pistol.

In all this the American hatred of liberty, their peculiar loathing of all forms of intellectual freedom, is striking and apparent. The last study in Mencken's book is full of fruitful suggestion; one animadverts to Franklin and Jefferson and remembers how carefully they are screened in school histories; how few Americans looking back upon the glory of America's founder have the slightest notion
of Franklin's ideas upon God, or of Jefferson's ideas upon dalliance. (Still they are represented in the standard school histories as men of great brilliance and acumen). Washington's intelligence is, I believe, left unmentioned, as are his personal law-suits regarding certain acerage.

On page 218 Mr. Mencken falls heavily, treats W. D. Howells and Henry James together, and shows a total inability to get any further with Henry James than the mentioning of a limitation which Henry James had himself better defined. I venture to suggest, very simply, that Mr. Mencken has read very little of the author, and that he is so intent on his main theme (wherein he is right in the main) that he has rather warped his idea of James to his own particular purpose and treated one superficial aspect rather than James in toto. If this error is not an oversight on Mr. Mencken's part, it allies him to the philistines he inveighs against, and shows him bit by the very baccilus that he is out to exterminate,—adding perhaps by this very misfortune to the cogency of his warning.

With the excision of this one excessive page, the essay can be recommended as a necessary text book in all high-schools, wherein there is now current too little plain-written history.

We should be grateful to Mr. Mencken for the actual names of the "dozen men", page 294. His history at this point is important enough to be worth a little documentation.

Mencken in this part of his book, at least, is guarded and careful in his statements. Whether he can preserve this gravity of tone sufficiently to be really effective, whether he is indeed what his adversaries would call "the chosen instrument of the Lord's vengeance upon them", I do not know; but his book is at least enough to convince one that whatever America's part in world war, and whatever its results to her, she is faced at home with a no less serious war for internal freedom, and for the arteries and capillaries of freedom, the mail-routes and presses.

It is a sinister and significant fact that even a campaign for the freedom of art becomes in American a "campaign", a sort of super-religious crusade; so does the actual genius of the country, the actual volk-geist, enforce its forms upon contemporary expression.

(As ever in prose, compare for example the wholly mediaeval and limited Dante of the prose works, modeled by and conforming with his time, with the lasting Dante who flashes out of the emotional passages in poetry . . . . passages which form only a part of his terza rima).
Mr. Mencken, Philistine

To a person who has not had the advantage of American ancestry and American traditions, it is at first a little confounding, but later it becomes quite right and logical, that Mr. Mencken should be the critic of just the men and things he has chosen to criticize. His treatment of Henry James does not seem to me an error but rather the stamp of the true democratic inability to distinguish "breeds" of things. Here he is writing in the best manner of the men he criticizes.

Mr. Mencken's Truisms
Margaret Anderson

In the real sense, I believe, Mr. Mencken cannot be considered as critic at all.

A critic does not believe that because an author's work is free of attempts to edify, to console, to improve, or to moralize, the author is free of the chief lacks which stand in the way of art. Mr. Mencken believes this: read the generalizations in his chapter on Conrad; read his estimate of Dreiser. A critic is not conscious that art has ever got mixed up with such matters, or that the absence of such matters would in any way help art to creep in. But Mr. Mencken calls Winston Churchill's Richard Carvel, "within its limits, a work of art", and The Inside of the Cup, because it is an outpouring of social and economic panaceas, "no more than a compendium of paralogy, as silly and smattering as a speech by William Jennings Bryan or a shocker by Jane Addams". Of course the first has no more art than the second. It is a charming and dashing story. But how did it come to be dragged into a modern discussion of aesthetics?

Next, a critic is not interested in the old discussions as to whether "deft craftsmanship" makes an artist. But Mr. Mencken talks always with a residue of these old and very unessential distinctions in the back of his mind. So when he comes to Kipling he grants him the craftsmanship, etc., but says he is not an artist in the sense that Conrad is because his ideas are those of a mob orator, while Conrad's ideas plough down into the sub-strata of human motive and act. All
this explains the difference in the minds of the two men. It does not touch upon the difference in what they have made.

A critic does not talk of "beauty per se" and of pure artists." He makes no distinctions between art and pure art, for the reason that there are none.

A critic is concerned, first, last, and always, with art emotions. Human emotions interest him, but he does not confuse the two. Mr. Mencken does almost nothing else. His valuations are nearly all those of the "radical"; that is, of the man who takes more naturally to ideas than to quality. This explains his feeling about Chopin; also his remark about Lizst's "plebian warts", which were no more plebian than his finely-cut nose; and his description of Poe's "congenital vulgarity and shoddy soul". These things hurt you as fiercely as all the other talk you hear from people who are congenitally unaware of quality.

A critic could no more summarize Dreiser's limitations, as Mr. Mencken very ably does, and then call Dreiser an artist than he could call an airship that didn't fly a successful airship. To prove that Dreiser gets his effects not by designing them but by living them, etc., etc., and then that he "manages" to produce works of art of unquestionable beauty and authority, is amusing. To say that he is still in the transition stage between Christian Endeavor and civilization, that his steps are made uncertain by a guiding theory which too often eludes his own comprehension,—to show him in fact as an ungrown, un-selfconscious, muddled, evangelical, naive man with "a solemnly absurd respect for Bouguereau", etc., etc., and then to say that he can interpret life in a way that is poignant and illuminating, is pathetic. Just as pathetic as the naive explanation of why Schubert was an artist, "though he was an ignoramus even in music"—which is merely talking like the college professors whom Mr. Mencken scorns. Even they have long been silent before the phenomenon that a man may be ignorant and still be a creator. What business has a modern critic to be interested in such truisms?

Mr Mencken's book should be read because of its chapter on American puritanism. Aside from that there are other things in it which may be useful for America as a statement of facts up to a point. But as a piece of aesthetic criticism it will have no interest anywhere else. There is not an ounce of original discrimination in it.
Out of the evil tangle of waters a faggot is tossed on to a couch of foam. I am bedded in the silken winter of the south: storm and fever have ebbed away. Oh, the lull of this security! I am emptied of my old violences. Never more will delirium nor ecstasy shake the perilous nerve of the brain. Tyranny has elicited sweetness; my eyes are dark with fidelity; Dog-like, I nuzzle at the knee of Power. Why should I disdain prescription and advice? Docile I drag my body over yellow paths. With ribbons and webs of sunlight that quaint effigy of bones is garlanded, the warmth pricks and pickles its coat of membrane. Caught at my breast, the frail rainbow of possibilities strains like a shimmering scarf. French games and ameliorations! This taste for delicate finery is a new thing. Once like a gay circus-rider I paraded the fine animal that belonged to me. All its bells and trappings clapping, it played its superb pranks. Oh, the rapt performance in a well of round eyes and lifted palms! Oh, the perfectly centralized stupidity of the arrived artiste! The adoption of this novel aesthetic punishes like a graft of new bone. I am the victim of my solitary perfectioning. Dismayed, I watch the coloured company of boon delights roll away in a rattle of wheels and dust. The involuntary stare of my elevation has cowed the creole and inconsequent mob. Oh, hilarity of the senses! oh, colour, enormity, ostentation of gold, your term has come!
A tardy primitivism supersedes the Renaissance of gifts.
The superb nullity of the body no longer arrogates command.
Reactive to disaster, it must assume the lesser style of the inanimate.
In it, as in a blackened tower, I sit morose and intelligent, the
reconnoitrances of my fine wits bring me flesh and honey.
I no longer turn under my tongue the cud of intensive valuations.
Wings carry my provision: vicissitude and long transit produce
strange flavourings.
My appetite covets the secrets of ten million lives in lieu of my
virginal stupidity.
Perfection alone balances perfection. My loss must be paid with
omniscience and final concepts.
I have abandoned the banality of choice; I pursue the last intimacy
with any stranger.
My personality unhedged admits the travelling seeds and dust of
unnumbered cultures.
Observation is no longer a complacent and mirroring lake;
It is a flame, blown by the spirit: nothing eludes the thrust of its
streaming tongues.
Oh, happiness, I have not yet done with you! By all means I must
preserve the attenuated thread of life.
I drag my body over yellow paths. The sunlight folds my emaciation
in a thread of gold.
THE OTHER DAY an author of some position came to me in a state of great anger. He had been asked by a woman-writer to compose a preface for her volume of short stories that was newly to appear. My friend H had written the preface. He had dilated on the fact that publishers said the short story in volume form did not sell. He had gone on to say that probably the publishers were right. But that was because short stories in England are simply not good enough, and he adduced the fact that when short stories were really first rate they sold in quantities really enormous. He instanced Messrs A, B, and C,—all authors of short stories with huge publics; then he went on to talk of the stories by the lady herself. He told me that he had made a good job of it and I dare say he had. The epilogue came when the publishers of the volume flatly refused to print the preface. They said that no honourable publisher would publish a word against any other publisher and they flatly refused to print in a volume published by them any flattering reference to any author not published by them. The authors A B and C whom my friend H had mentioned with admiration were all published, that is to say, by other firms.

My friend H was exceedingly infuriated. He said that it was an outrage to ask anybody to write a preface for nothing and then to cavil at its contents. He said that if publishers were to refuse to publish any comments on the habits of publishers they would thus be establishing a censorship which was utterly against all decency; under the cloak of it they would be able of course to commit any outrage. And, if all publishers were going to set up the pretention that in a book published by them no work by any author appearing through another publisher could ever be praised, there would be an end of criticism since criticism only exists by means of comparison. And Mr. H's fury became enormous when he spoke of the authoress. He said that this was what came of having to do with women. He said that no woman had any principles whatever.
The trouble was that Miss W — the woman writer in question, — had not been really excessively pleased with my friend H’s preface. She had expected him to devote the whole of that piece of writing to her own merits. She had wanted enormities of praise. Now my friend H happened to be a particularly intimate friend of Miss W. He said that one cannot apply butter with a trowel to the works of one’s intimates. It was not the thing to do; it was not honorable; it was not even polite. Miss W on the other hand wanted to know what a friend was for if he could not praise one’s books.

Miss W put up no sort of fight against the publisher. She just let Mr. H’s preface drop. It seemed to her that it was reasonable that publishers should refuse to allow other publishers to be commented on. She even said that that was why men got on better than women. They stuck together and realised that dog does not eat dog. And she was quite on the side of the publishers in their refusing to have anything to do with praising other publishers’ authors. She said that that was business common sense and that again was why men got on better than women. They knew the ropes better and she got in a nasty shot by asking why it was that my friend H got prices three times better for his books while she had a public twice as large.

At this point of his tale my friend H swore violently. He said again that this was what came of having to do with women. Miss W, he said, if she had been a man would have withdrawn her book unconditionally from the publishers. She would not have permitted him to be insulted. She would have taken her stand on the broad eminence of principles, honour and etiquette. But women, my friend H observed, had no sense of honour, of rectitude, or even of decency. Moreover, he continued, every woman was entirely wanting in the sense of what is honourable in men. Almost every woman was under the influence of some shocking bad hat or other. Miss W. was an instance in point. She got such low prices for her books because she was entirely under the thumb of X. X was the managing director of the publishers in question.

My friend H went on to say that he was perfectly convinced that X was a shocking bad hat and with his firm was absolutely dishonest. He had told Miss W this; he had told her innumerable times. He had begged her to take her books away from the firm which X administered. What X was up to now was no more nor less than trying to breed a quarrel between himself and Miss W. X had always hated to think that H should have any influence with Miss W at all. Miss W on the other hand was always in X’s
office and X was always pitching her some tale or other to prove
that her books did not sell. That was X’s way of doing business.
He got hold of a lot of women and had them there to tea every
day and all day long. And then he told them that their books did
not sell and got them on the cheap. And Mr. H. said that Mr. X
had always hated himself because X had once tried to swindle him
and had of course failed utterly. Now X had got the chance to
kick him in the face and by Jove! he had taken it.

“And the damnably irritating thing about it all,” Mr. H. con­
cluded vindictively, “as it’s the damnably irritating thing about all
women, is that Miss W is by now convinced that the fellow X is a
swindler. But how? — I have been trying to make her believe it
for years. I am a sane, honourable and fairly distinguished person.
Yet every word of warning that I have given her against X has
glided off her like water from a duck’s back. But the other day
some sort of a little chap who is a clerk in another publisher’s
office comes to call upon her to take away some pictures for repro­
duction. And this little chap tells her that X is dishonest. And im­
mmediately she writes off to me to say—that she had found X out.
A clerk had told her that he was dishonest. Now there you have a
woman! Would she believe me who am an expert in publishers and
publishing? Not a bit of it! But she takes the word of the first
understrapper that comes along. That is woman!”

And Mr. H in his agitation rushed away from me to tell his
tale to someone else. He said that he was going to write to the
Times. But as I have not seen his letter, I presume the editor of
that journal refused him hospitality in those respectable columns.
Mr. H went away so quickly that I had not time to tell him that
everyone in London knew perfectly well that he and Mr X had been
angling for the affections of Miss W for the last five years. In fact
they were just furiously jealous of each other. Mr. H had given
Mr. X the chance to kick him in the face and Mr. X, who was a
heavy man, had taken it with glee. I had wanted to tell Mr. H that,
since everyone that he could possibly speak to knew just what the
state of affairs was, Mr. H—would only be making himself ridicu­
lous by trumpeting what was after all simply his own folly. But he
gave me no time. I still sat reflecting in a deep chair and wondering
whether the club-waiter intended to bring me back the change for
my tea or whether he would conveniently forget it. And I was
wondering too, whether I should muster up the courage to tell that
menial that it was the third or fourth time that he had tried to play
that trick upon me or whether for the third or fourth time I should
let him pocket the sixpence. I began wondering why it was that all men are such cowards for club servants. And then I thought that if I had been a woman in a woman’s club I should have got that sixpence back in the twinkling of an eye. I never got that sixpence back. I do not know that I should not have had the courage to ask for it, but my attention was diverted. I do not honestly think that I should have asked for it.

But Reggie Spofforth was standing in front of the other fireplace at the end of the smoking room. He was trying to keep his broad fat face serious, but traces of smiles were peeping up at every minute round the corners of his mouth. Reggie Spofforth was the junior partner in the firm of Spofforth, Hawes and Spofforth, the old established literary advisers. He wore gold spectacles and what he did not know of literary gossip would go into a club wine glass. From an arm chair that was below him and hidden from me by a writing desk there went up the low babble of a monologue of which I could not catch the words. Mr. Spofforth continued to smirk joyously whilst he tried not very successfully to appear serious and concerned. And suddenly there burst forth in a voice of uncontrollable emotion the words:

"That is what it is to be trapped into having anything to do with a woman!"

— My friend H was once more rehearsing the story of his woes.

I began to reflect on H’s case. Something of the sort has happened to me several times — on at least three occasions. On each of these a young writer, publishing a first book, had asked me to write a preface for him. And on each of these occasions either the publisher or the writer himself had asked me to modify my preface because, as I hope sufficiently to demonstrate, I write very uncautiously and say exactly what I mean. On the other hand the only preface that I ever wrote which got through exactly as I wrote it was written for a volume of translations by a woman.

Looking at Mr. Spofforth’s face,—Mr. Spofforth is I should say exactly the average man, l’homme moyen sensuel,—I realised that, while Mr. Spofforth knew quite well of the jealousy between Messrs H and X, and while he was in consequence making allowances for both these gentlemen, he was at the same time exactly agreeing with everything that H said about Miss W as a woman. And suddenly it came in my head to consider that this is how we men and women build up our respective views of each other. For it is perfectly true that Miss W had treated Mr H with discourtesy, and without proper
attention to etiquette. But she had done it by the orders of a man. This Mr. Spofforth would omit to notice.

This incident happened several years ago and, since that date — because it awakened in me a certain train of thought — I have in my mind been gathering together material for this book. I tried in the beginning to reduce my intelligence to a blank. I tried to wipe the slate clean. I said to myself: Let me postulate for the sake of clearness of thought, that there is no difference between men and women. — And then, I began to gather together the illustrations. I gathered them strictly from my own experience or from what I have the right to consider as first hand information, — that is to say from the direct experiences of friends as they have related them to me. I have been trying to get at what, if any, is the essential difference between man and woman in the life that to-day we lead in Western Europe. I do not profess to have studied the matter historically. History is an excellent thing and, when it is treated by scientific historians it becomes infinitely more misleading than anything that I could hope to write.

The first writer who paid much attention to, who generalised much about the difference between, the sexes was of course Shakespeare. I do not mean to say that Shakespeare was the first who ever wrote that woman was not to be trusted, but that he is the earliest writer — and he is almost the only writer — who has any influence in this matter over the minds of gentlemen like my friend Mr. Spofforth. Let us just transcribe typical passages as to a gentleman's views respectively of the good and the bad of woman. Let the first be from Cymbeline and the first gentleman Posthumus:

"Could I find out
The Woman's part in me! For there's no motion
That tends to vice in man but I affirm
It is the Woman's part. Be it lying, note it,
The Woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers.
Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges her;
Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain.
Nice longings, slanders, mutability,
All faults that have a name, nay that hell knows
Why, hers in part or all; or rather all;
For even to vice
They are not constant, but are changing still
One vice of but a minute old for one
Not half so old as that. I'll write against them
Detest them, curse them, — Yet 'tis greater skill
In a true hate to pray they have their will
The very devils cannot plague them better."

I do not know of any particular quotation from Shakespeare as to the virtues of women. There are so many, and most of them are hackneyed. Possibly Iago in his "small beer" speech expresses what was really Shakespeare's opinion of women, — his balanced and level-headed view. But let us set against Posthumus's views of his wife when he was angry, his view when he was pleased. It will be observed that he is not so eloquent and that his opinion is reported for him by others:

_Iachimo._ That lady is not now living; or this gentleman's opinion, by this, worn out.
_Posthumus._ She holds her virtue still and I my mind.
_Iachimo._ You must not so far prefer her love hours of Italy.
_Posthumus._ Being so far provoked as I was in France, I would abate her nothing; though I profess myself her adorer, not her friend.

_Iachimo._ As fair and as good (a kind of hand in hand comparison) had been something too fair, and too good, for any lady in Brittany. If she went before others I have seen, as that diamond of yours out-lustres many I have beheld, I could not but believe she excelled many: but I have not seen the most precious diamond that is, nor you the lady.

_Posthumus._ I praised her as I rated her; so do I my stone.
_Iachimo._ What do you esteem it at?
_Posthumus._ More than the world enjoys.
_Iachimo._ Either your unparagoned mistress is dead or she's out-prized by a trifle.
_Posthumus._ You are mistaken: the one may be sold, or given; or if there were wealth enough for the purchase, or merit for the gift: the other is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods.
_Iachimo._ Which the gods have given you?
_Posthumus._ Which, by their graces, I will keep.

We thus arrive at an accurate impression of what was the equivalent in Shakespeare's view of a club man's estimate of woman. You will observe that it was pretty exactly the estimation that a South Sea Islander has of his god, who is an idol made of black wood
and mother of pearl. When his god pleases him this gentleman exclaims: "Oh divinity!" When his god fails to provide him with his desired meal of human flesh he takes a club and bangs the ugly object over the head. It is exactly in this way that we treat women to-day.

It is exactly in this way, only with this difference. When we are pleased with our women we exclaim:

"Oh divinity! You are different from all your sex!" But when we are displeased we say: "Hateful beast you are exactly like all the rest of your sex!" And this is a very subtle and a very significant distinction. Consider how differently we approach men. If a man pleases us, is honourable and all the rest of it, we say:

"Oh he is a good sort of chap!" On the other hand I had a friend who shared my rooms with me for some time. He was a great nuisance. His toilet articles filled my room to overflowing. I could not go into my bathroom without falling over half a dozen bottles of different scents. And on one occasion I heard a wild yell, a thud that shook the whole house. I rushed into my friend's bedroom and discovered this stalwart person — he was six foot two in height and weighed seventeen stone — stretched upon the floor in a dead faint.

He had perceived a mouse upon his bed! Yes, he had perceived a mouse and he had fainted!

No it did not immediately enter my head to say:

This infernal nuisance is as bad as all the rest of his sex. He uses an enormous number of scents. He is remarkably untruthful. He never tips the laundress of my chambers, so that I have to tip her double. He faints and he yells when he sees a mouse. He is like all other men?"

No, I did not say this. On the contrary I just said to myself:

"Poor fellow, what can you expect? He went to Harrow while I went to Westminster."

On the other hand I do not know that men come any better out of this particular struggle. For the defects which are supposed to be exclusively masculine are by women, scored up against my unfortunate sex in a manner much more subterranean but none the less obstinate. I had a great-great-aunt called Bromley. My great-great-aunt Bromley had a niece. This niece was very happily married to a gentleman called Tristram Madox. She had everything that in those days the wife of man could desire, — an elegant and substantial establishment, turtle soup once a week, limes for concocting punch,
The Little Review

a carriage and pair, and affectionate healthy and obedient children as well as a healthy affectionate and properly patronizing husband whom she always addressed as "Mr. Madox" and spoke of as "the "Master". One day she made the extraordinary discovery that her husband possessed also another establishment, a mistress and several children. All at once Mrs. Madox's happiness went to pieces. She still possessed her substantial establishment, the carriage and pair; Mr. Madox still patronized her, her children were still healthy, affectionate and obedient. But a blight had come over all these desirable possessions; the world appeared to her a desert. For consolation she sought my great-great-aunt. And Miss Bromley who was of great age and was accounted wise beyond most people,—Miss Bromley uttered these words that I was always taught to consider memorable:

"My dear," she said, "You can never trust a man when he is out of your sight."

And these words I was always taught as I have said to consider memorable. My grandfather would relate this anecdote upon every appropriate and upon many inappropriate occasions. And this remarkable speech, whenever he related it was always received with the most extraordinary applause. Yet actually no remark was ever more imbecile.

For of course you can trust nobody, neither a man nor a woman when he or she is out of your sight. I was talking the other day to a distinguished Russian exile, who has for many years lived in England. He purports to be a considerable observer of life. I dare say he is. At any rate he writes admired letters as to English social affairs once a week to the Petersburgkaia Viedemosti or some journal of the sort. My friend said that, upon his first coming to England he was immensely impressed with the orderliness and regularity of British marital conditions. All wives were faithful and devoted, it appeared to him, and all husbands faithful and attached. Everywhere there reigned a deep calm, — a sort of undreamt-of and holy Pax Britannica. He seemed to himself to have strayed into some Garden of Eden. Everywhere were smiles, politeness, concord. And this struck him as all the more remarkable because he came from Russia where as far as I could understand him there reigned a sort of orderly disorder. Apparently in that Empire the rule was that you married with the blessings of the Church and then quarrelled more or less outrageously with the partner of your joys and sorrows. Then by mutual agreement you separated and each of the parties contracted another union which was quite irregular because the
The Little Review

Russian Church does not admit of divorce. Nevertheless the second union,—as if the first had purged the parties by fire so as to render them comparatively tolerant of the fault and failings of others — this second union was as a rule permanent and satisfactory. But this terrible state of things was so normal in Russia that, as I have said, conditions in England struck my friend as those of concord surpassing belief. But that had been only for the first year or so. Apparently Count P was one of those mild and trustworthy persons to whom the unhappy come for confession and for consolation. I don’t know exactly who his friends in England were. But I could hazard a guess that they were mild and earnest creatures of advanced views and unsuspected respectability, — a sort of inverted society of puritans all wearing flannel next their skins. Count P assured me that he did not know a single household in England where beneath the surface conditions of domestic life were not absolutely appalling even to his Russian mind. On the surface these estimable married people went about together and smiled one upon the other. But what really upset my Russian friend was that apparently English people could not even be faithful in their irregular unions.

I don’t know what may be the worth of Count P’s observations. He made them to me while we were watching the results of a late general election come in at Trafalgar Square. We were watching the magic lantern sheet of one of the great Liberal organs. Count P cheered wildly at every Liberal success and groaned in a becoming manner at the announcement of every Tory victory. Election results becoming scarce the magic lantern began to show portraits of prominent Liberal politicians all of whom Count P recognised. Suddenly there appeared an atrociously ugly caricature in pinks and greens. It represented a gentleman with an immense and purky nose, a huge eyeglass, and an expression of dismay at the result of, let us say, the Grimsby election. In the button-hole of the caricature was represented an enormous orchid. Beneath it was written:

“What price Jo, now!”

My Russian friend said: “Who’s that? Who’s that?” excitedly.

I explained whom the caricature represented. “No, no,” Count P exclaimed, “you don’t know English journalists. They are chivalrous gentlemen. The man you mention is ill, is disabled and dying. No English political journalist would permit himself to caricature an old dying statesman.”
The sheet continued to show pictures of the gentleman with the eyeglass and the orchid, — a whole series of them depicting him in various attitudes of degradation. Under each one was written:

"Jo!"

My Russian friend insisted that I did not know English journalists and that this could not be the politician familiarly denoted by those two letters. It must be the leader of the Irish party, the president of the United States or Lord Lansdowne. He repeated that no Liberal journalist would to-day caricature Mr. Chamberlain, — that no journalist in England would caricature a dying statesman, and he repeated that English journalists were chivalrous gentlemen.

I remembered that the day before a prominent English journalist had printed a private letter which I had incautiously addressed to him and I cordially agreed with Count P. And then Count P explained to me the reason why English journalists were so much more chivalrous than their brothers of Russia and more particularly of Poland. In Russia and more particularly in Poland politics are carried on, as far as the active side is concerned, very largely by women. The men are much more theoretic and Count P was careful to inform me that women have no sense of chivalry.

At that moment the sheet showed Mr. Chamberlain being sick into basin. And once more Count P repeated:

"You don't know English journalists; they are chivalrous gentlemen."

So that perhaps my Russian friend was not an exactly trustworthy observer. He may have viewed English matrimonial arrangements with a jaundiced eye, just as he kept a very rosy one for the gentlemen who daily instruct this country. I don't know. And I don't know that it all affects my argument. My great-great-aunt said that you can never trust a man when he is out of your sight. And this wise saw has been applauded by tens of thousands of women. It is accepted as a brilliant and indisputable discovery. Let me add another discovery which seems to me all the more brilliant and all the more indisputable because I believe it is a discovery entirely of my own. I have at least never met a woman to whom this singular fact occurred. But the fact is that no man ever went wrong in this particular matter without having a woman to go wrong with him. In the nature of the case the number of immoral women must be exactly the same as the number of immoral men. The statistics must come out exactly equal so that my great-great-uncle Madox might just as well have said:

"My boy, you cannot trust a woman out of your sight!"
And of course you can’t.

I am in the nature of things not as well acquainted with the psychology of women in this matter as I am with that of men. As I hope later to point out — since I am writing what is only another volume of reminiscences — I have personally been treated badly by men who behaved as if they were wolves. On the other hand I have been badly treated by women who behaved as if they were hyenas. I do not know that there is much difference in the methods of these two animals. Wolves are more inclined to run in packs but the other quadruped has the more formidable teeth when it comes to crushing your bones. That is why I have selected these two animals as illustrations. For I have noticed that when men of that disposition imagined that I was “down”, as the saying is, they jumped upon me four or five or fourteen or fifteen at a time. The women on the other hand went about their jobs of stealing my furniture or my reputation or whatever it was they wanted,—they went about it as solitary beasts of prey, silently but much more efficiently. But that I am aware is largely because I am a rather observant person and have generally been able to prevent women from getting about me in packs. It is much more difficult for a man to prevent men doing this, because a man has to deal so much more frequently with bodies of men.

“Hommo homini lupus” the old writer says: — “man behaves to his fellow man like a wolf”. And when one has grasped this essential and necessary fact one has achieved something like heaven on earth, for one will have ceased to expect anything more of one’s fellows. So that I cannot for myself very well differentiate between man and woman in these particular aspects. Woman declares that she is more tender and more tactful than man, but the most careful tenderesses and the most exquisite tactfulness that I have personally met with have been at the hands of one or two men. Similarly man in the eyes of woman is a coarse and unimaginative animal. Yet certainly the coarsest person I ever met was a woman. And I have seldom met — I have met, but very, very seldom — a woman who possessed the instinctive gift of imagination which is sympathy. I am not, you understand, laying down any laws. Perhaps men are the coarser, perhaps women are the more tender. But the point that I desire to make is that having knocked about the occidental world in many corners and in half a dozen countries, having met more persons that I can well number, I cannot see that in these particulars or in any particulars woman differs essentially from man
Of course the female housekeeper of an English lord's castle will differ from a major in a German infantry regiment. The fact that she has stopped indoors for the greater part of her life will probably make her more hysterical. On the other hand I happened to meet the other day a major in a German infantry regiment who was the most hysterically sensitive being I have ever come across. He had fought more than twenty duels over imaginary insults and he was eventually cashiered after an occasion of the sort. But I do not mean to adduce from this that all German officers of the rank of majors are distinguished by hysteria and sensitiveness. As a rule they are not. But had I been an observer of mankind like my great aunt Bromley, and had I been possessed of the theory that all men were hysterical, I should have stored up that particular major in the note books of my memory and I should have neglected to notice any other man until I came across one who was distinguished by similar nervous eccentricities.

The subject is one singularly difficult to tackle. I have just put down that, in my personal experience, men have acted more frequently in packs when they have desired to victimise me and that women as a rule have operated solitarily. Now I am quite aware that there are certain sex-theorists — Weininger, Schopenhauer Ruskin, John Stuart Mill, Mr. Bernard Shaw, and Solomon the author of the proverbs being among them—who, if they do me the honour to read this work, will say at once: "Ha! here we find this author confirming what we have always said. Women are incapable of concerted action."

And I am perfectly aware that this statement of mine is the only one that they will notice, for they will set down the rest of this book as airy persiflage. So the sex-legend has been built up. By good Christians you will daily hear it alleged that woman is an inferior animal because she lacks physical and moral courage. They close their eyes to the fact in the story of the Crucifixion that it was the mother of Christ who took the risk of lingering last beside the Cross and of being the first to go to her son's grave. Palestine at that date was rather a dangerous place in which to manifest sympathy or concern for the seed of David. Yet the Virgin Mary was surely a woman. In the same spirit you will hear a good Frenchman declare that woman is necessarily an inferior animal because she cannot lead armies. And immediately afterwards he will go and lay a wreath upon the statue of Joan of Arc. Similarly the other day I heard an excellent English scholar and gentleman declare that woman was an inferior animal because no woman had ever been a
first rate poet. Immediately afterwards he became — he was in another mood then — almost lachrymose over the line

"I loved thee Athis in times past."

Yet this line is by Sappho!

My friend was at that moment trying to persuade me that Swinburne in translating these words had allowed all of their majesty, of their magic and of their mastery — yes, he said "mastery" — to escape. Yet Algernon Charles Swinburne was a man.

The fact is that no sooner does either man or woman approach this theme of the difference between the sexes than straightway all reason deserts him. He may be the most powerful reasoner such as was Schopenhauer; he may be a slightly hysterical novelist like Strindberg; he may be a great poet like Shakespeare. But the never-failing rule with man as well as with woman is to revenge in his public utterances his private wrongs against a sex. I was once in an omnibus with a lady and another man. A man got up to go out and the bus, skidding, the poor man on his feet was thrown against my charming friend. One of his boots considerably damaged her thin summer skirt and she was quite properly angry. But did she abuse the driver of the bus? Or did she say that motor-buses are horrible inventions because of their skidding properties? Not at all. She looked at me in whom she had a certain proprietary interest and she remarked:

"Why have all men feet as large as elephants?"

Yet, for the mere trouble of looking down she would have observed that the friend who was with us had feet actually smaller than her own. And he was a man. Quite a manly man; in fact he held the Oxford record for the mile. But indeed this gentleman's feet were so small that once, when he as well as the lady was stopping with me, I rang the bell to tell the servant to bring in his boots; when she brought them I blew her up because I thought from their size that they must be the boots of the lady in question. Yet actually they were the boots of my friend, the holder of the mile record. That was how I came to know that his feet were smaller than those of the lady who said that the feet of all men were even as those of the largest quadrupeds.

Similarly, having as I have already pointed out been outrageously robbed by several housekeepers and female dependents to whom I had been a great deal more kindly than was at all necessary, I might subscribe to the theory that women are incapable of concerted action for the purpose of plunder or for any other purpose. I
might say I have been robbed only by solitary females. Therefore the female of man is always a robber and always robs singly. She is a hyena not a wolf. I might with the light and skilful pen in that way revenge myself upon my late housekeepers by abusing the whole sex. If I do not do it, it is in part because I have a sense of humour. And I should say that in England to some extent, and in the United States enormously, very largely in Germany, very largely in Russia and Holland but hardly at all in France,—that generally over the occidental world the prime cause of the domestic misery and of the domestic dissatisfaction that exist is precisely that each separate household has as its theoretic base an association of dependent women packing together against the made head of the house. I can imagine nothing more terrible than the domestic conditions of the large bulk of ordinary, respectable and apparently tranquil middle-class families. Here you will have a good, honest, rather stupid, rather fat man.

He will be a mere machine all his life. At home there will be, say, five women and two sons. And this man from any intellectual, social, or political point of view will be worse than a log. He will be too tired to read a book, too tired to follow a political argument, too tired to join in an intelligent conversation. So he will be too tired all his life, and to what end? In order to support this monstrous regiment of five women and two sons who, because they are allied with the five women for the purposes of extracting money from this wretched helot, may be counted as only two more women. Even upon the surface it is a really hideous picture. But the moment you inquire a little deeper you discover that things are infinitely more repulsive.

For all those five women and their two allies will be linked against that sweating day labourer. Officially he is the master of the house. Actually he is “He” for all the household. And, because all his household—the wife, the daughter, the three maid servants and the sons—because they are all nothing more nor less than parasitic menials, they will have evolved a sort of freemasonry to extort always more and more money from the unfortunate camel who bears them all upon his back. And behind his back they will be perpetually whispering their servants’ discontent. They will be perpetually grumbling among themselves because he cannot afford them more and more useless luxuries. “He” won’t let the wife have a new carriage; “He” won’t let the cook have a new kitchen range, the daughter a new conservatory, the sons new golf clubs, the housemaid new silver cloths. And if “He” let them have all
these things entirely new to-morrow, they would want them all once more on the following day together with twenty more new, useless, and expensive things. There would never be any end to it, and so he staggers along to his useless and expensive funeral which is really all that he gets out of life. And all the while this regiment of women will have been whispering with their heads together all round him. They will have been bidding each other observe that "He" is stupid, coarse, gross, unintelligent, late for his meals, too fond of the pleasures of the table, inartistic, unpresentable, given to leaving his slippers in the dining room, a person whom it takes five women to tidy up after . . . . He is "He" in fact.

No! I will never subscribe to the doctrine that women cannot act in concert!

(to be continued)

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A POET

John Rodker

At seventeen he had made up his mind that Fate had destined him for a high sphere, yet how inexpressibly sordid Life was. He became a philosophical anarchist. Later, when he found that Shelley too had been an anarchist, his pride knew no bounds. Then the greatness of his destiny made it impossible to risk it by throwing bombs. Nevertheless he was convinced that bomb-throwing was the only panacea.

Fortunately for his self-respect he remembered that "The pen is mightier than the sword".

* * * *

At eighteen he was embarrassed by the frequency with which middle-aged women fell on his neck, hailing him as the poetical genius of the future. He began to take it for granted. Therefore he cut his hair; wore a bowler: did his utmost in fact to look like a stockbroker and man of spirit; for he thought—"since the greatness of my future is so certain, why waste energy in trying to look it. Besides what is more intriguing than a dark horse"?

Alas, the very women who had been the first to tell him of his divine mission, now spurned him. "We were mistaken," they said to each other; "After all, he has the mind of a stockbroker!".
At nineteen he was surprised by the frequency with which young women fell in love with him. Not because he was a man — nor even because of his art — but because, “he looked so girlish,” they said.

“Was it” he could not refrain from asking himself, “a refined form of Lesbianism”? His whole soul revolted at the idea.

He spent long hours pushing his chin forward: he got drunk quite frequently: he became a specialist in bawdy-houses.

He adopted a brutal and incisive form of speech with these women: and allowed no subject to be taboo in discussion.

Alas, they were only the more convinced of his profound femininity.

It was exactly the way they talked to each other.

* * * * *

Strangely enough, although his poetry was of heroic mould, he was a coward. The idea of physical injury made him sick and he could not bear to tread on a worm. (No, dear reader, he was not such a coward as to be afraid of it turning.) If he passed over a bridge where children were playing, his heart would stop beating and his knees liquefy under him at the thought that one of them would fall in, in which case he would have to dive the hundred feet or so into the water; perhaps get wet — even perhaps a cold, — risk his destiny for the sake of a slum brat: for unfortunately he could swim and dive too, but not very well.

One day at Margate (he was a poet whose destiny was to describe the life of his time), he had finished bathing and was in his machine looking out to sea. He saw a girl and a man swim out, with a tide strongly running. Then the man turned back and the girl threw up an arm, and cried “Help”. He was scandalised to see that the man had left her and that no one else went in. Feeling the world to be full of injustice he realised that after all he would have to go in. He dropped into the water casually — first putting on his wet costume (les convenances must be observed) — and pulled her out. He had to sweat over it, but managed it finally by swimming obliquely against the tide.

Both collapsed on the beach. Then the girl murmured “Thank you”, and disappeared. The crowd cheered. He went into his tent. He realised now how heroes were made, quite casually, just like that. He dressed himself, and after a proper interval left the machine proudly as befitted a hero; prepared to receive the acclamation, — perhaps even a collection — from the crowd who had witnessed the deed. At least, he thought, my photograph in the Mirror ought
to sell out those damned sonnets. And the girl — ah the girl — she would surely be waiting to throw her arms round his neck and be his bride.

There was nobody on the beach — he looked on every hand — not even a Mystic Choir anywhere. And the thin clapping of dead leaves mocked him.

* * * *

Of course he was in love: quite often in fact. Each new woman was that one for which his whole soul had longed. She alone was the one vision who had solaced his sleepless nights, visiting him in dreams. Never was poet so rhapsodical, never woman so idolised — never union more inspiring.

Alas, soon she began to cry "Give me bread, meat, children." He was, of course, penniless.

There was the usual scene. She said he had no right to be a poet without a rich father behind him. It was directly contrary to Novelette precedent. What about Shelley, etc.

I can't live on air, if you can!" She slammed the front door.

When he was thus deserted, he would question himself: "Am I unhappy?" Yes, there was no use denying it, he was. "Joy" he cried, "for only through suffering shall one gain eternal life", i. e. write eternal poetry.

While he wrote the sonnet inspired by the above, he was already seeing how it would go to the Editor. The postman would throw it into the "sanctum" with a pile of other letters. He pictured the Editor's amazement, when he opened his sonnet, read his letter, and how he would admire the dignity of the covering letter. "Dear Sir, herewith I beg to enclose you a sonnet which you may care to print. I am, Sir, etc." Here was the poet for whom the Editor had sought so long. He would rush out, hail a taxi, dash up to the poet's door, take him home and give him a square meal at last; buy all his other stuff at incredible sums a line.

Alas, his father died before ever he had a sonnet accepted, and he had put £2000 into the dying Réclame first. Therefore the sonnet appeared in The Réclame.

* * * *

One day he was in a bad mood. His anger grew with every word of the story he was telling to his large friend.

"'So then, she said, 'do you like my new frock?'"

"'Admirable,' I said.

"'And do you love me better in it?'"

"'No' I said, thinking of the sonnets she'd promised to print.
with the money, 'I think it's a nice frock, but not more pleasant than your other frocks, or no frock at all for that matter. One knows of course that people must have frocks sometimes.'

"'Yes,' she said. 'I simply had to. Just as sometimes I have to have smart hats, — just as I have to have you. They're all just as necessary to me as each other. Sometimes my only desire is a hat, or else it's a box at the theatre, or else it's a frock — or else —' and then she beamed at me — 'it's you'".

There was a ferocious silence which irked the friend, and to break it he said "Well, what did you say to that?".

"Say? I strangled her."

At twenty-one he decided the time had come for his Magnum Opus. It was to be a novel. At last the human soul would be torn bare, — disclosed in all its innate vileness and nobility.

With the object of unveiling Isis, he therefore said to his sweetheart: "Darling, there must have been times when you hated me; when you felt you'd burst if you had to see me ever again; and all because of things I had done unwittingly and which offended you the more because of it. It's no good denying it, because it always happens in all love.

"Yes, all right" she said. "But you tell me yours first".

"No, you first" he said.

"No you! then I promise I will."

"No you" he replied, "then I will."

"What must his thoughts have been like," she thought, "since he's so ashamed to own them"; and left him there and then and forever.

At the age of twenty-five he had written, in chronological order, a volume of sonnets, a novel, a play; believe me, all showing marked talent. Then his father providentially died. His first thought was to forswear the Muses. When he entertained old friends he took care to wear with his newly-acquired velvet dinner jacket an air of ferocious melancholy.

"Well, what are you writing now, John?" they would ask.

"Nothing" he would reply shortly. "What's the good of the damned game, I want to know? All dust and ashes. In a hundred years where is it all? No! I'm going abroad. I mean to have a good time — wine, women and song. I've talked about it long enough, heaven knows. The only thing that kept me at it in the old
days was the thought that the old man would go on till I was fifty or so and I'd have to keep going somehow."

When they had gone he remained in thought. An insidious voice whispered in his ear "That little scene now would make a good prose-poem. Not for publication, of course, but just interesting. It wouldn't take you a few minutes. Just the poet — now wealthy—literature forsworn for ever and ever, stretching out his hand to a sheet of paper.

"What an old hypocrite you are, John", he said as he went into the library.

* * * *

When his father died he went abroad.
His destiny went with him and gave him no rest.
Then he thought "Even if I rescue my name from oblivion for a hundred years only, it would have been worth while.
A hundred years — why the mere fact of printing a book gains it admission to the British Museum Library. Surely that institution must last as long as the British Empire, i. e for ever and ever —
So then, it would be quite a simple matter to last as long as any of the classics in that superb library.

He decided that the means of lasting to Eternity were too simple, too easily procured for one of so electric a mind as himself.
It was like preserving coprolites.
He was glad he could afford to forego Literature.

A SOLDIER OF HUMOUR
Wyndham Lewis

PART II.

BURGOS WAS to break my journey. But San Sebastian and Leon seemed eventually better halting places.
This four days journeying was an interlude—an entr'acte filled with appropriate music; the lugubrious and splendid landscapes of Castile, the extremely selfconscious pedantic and independent spirit of its inhabitants, met with en route. Fate was marking time, merely. On with the second day's journey I changed trains and dined at Venta de Banos, the junction for the line that branches off in the direction of Palencia, Leon and the Gallician country.
The Spanish people, while travelling, have a marked preference
for the next compartment to that that they have chosen. No sooner has the train started than one after another, heads, arms and shoulders appear above the wooden partition, and you occasionally have the entire human contents of the neighbouring compartment gazing gloomily into your own. In the case of some theatrical savage of the Sierras, who rears a dishevelled head before you in a pose of fierce abandon hangs there smoking, you know that it may be some instinctive pride that prevents him from remaining in an undignified position huddled in a narrow carriage. In other cases it is probably a naive conviction that the occupants of other compartments are likely to be more interesting.

The whole way from Venta de Banos to Palencia the carriage was dense with people. Crowds of peasants poured into the train, loaded with their heavy vivid horse-rugs, gaudy bundles and baskets; which profusion of mere matter, combined with their exuberance, made the carriage appear positively to swarm with human life. They would crowd in at one little station and out at another a short way along the line, where they were met by hordes of their relations awaiting them. They would rush or swing out of the door, charged with their goods and accoutrements and catch the nearest man or woman of their blood in their arms with a turbulence that outdid Northerners' most vehement occasions. The waiting group became at least twice as vital as ordinary human beings, on the arrival of the train, as though so much more blood had poured into their veins. Gradually we got beyond the sphere of this Fiesta and in the small hours of the morning arrived at Leon.

Next day came the final stage of the journey to the Atlantic sea board. We arrived within sight of the town that evening just as the sun was setting. With its houses of green, rose and white, in general effect rather subdued and faded, it was like some Oriental town in the nerveless tempera tints of a fresco. Its bay, thirty miles long reached out to the sea.

On the train drawing up in the Central station, furious contingents furnished by every little ragamuffin café as well as every stately hotel in the town were hurled against us. I had mislaid the address given me at Bayonne. I wished to find a hotel of medium luxury half way between the ghastly bouge and the princely hostelry. This was a method with me. The different hotel attendants called hotly out their prices at me. I selected one who named a sum for board and lodging that only the frenzy of competition could have fathered, I thought. Also the name of this hotel was, it seemed to me, the one the Patrona at Bayonne had mentioned. I had not then learnt to con-
nect Burgaleza with Burgos. With this man I took a cab and was left seated in it at the door of the station while he went after the heavy luggage. Now one by one the hotel emissaries came up; queer contrast between their fury of a few minutes before and their present listless calm. Putting themselves civilly at my disposition, they thrust forward matter-of-factly the card of their establishment, adding that they were sure that I would find out my mistake.

I now felt in a vague manner a tightening of the machinery of Fate—a certain uneasiness and strangeness in the march and succession of facts and impressions, like the trembling of a motor bus about to start again. The interlude was over.

After a long delay the hotel man returned and we started. The method I have spoken of consisted in a realization of the following facts:—when your means are very restricted, it is best to go to a cheap hotel and pay a few pesetas more a day for “extras”. This is satisfactory than affecting second class “houses.” You can never be sure in any hotel especially in Spain, of the menu not containing every dish you most loathe. But there is something private, almost home-made, about Extras. You always feel that a single individual has bent over the extra and carefully cooked it and that it has not been bought in too wholesale a manner. I wished to live on Extras—a privileged existence.

The cabman and hotel man were discussing some local event. But we penetrated farther and farther into a dismal and shabby quarter of the town. I began to have misgivings. I asked the representative of the Burgaliza if he were sure that his house was a clean handsome and comfortable house. He dismissed my doubtful glance with a gesture full of assurance. “It’s a splendid place! You wait and see; we shall be there directly.” he added.

We suddenly emerged in a broad and imposing street, on one side of which was a public garden; “El Paseo”, I found out afterwards, the Town-Promenade. Gazing idly at a vast palatial white building with an hotel omnibus drawn up before it, to my astonishment I found our driver also stopping at its door. A few minutes later, in a state of stupefaction, I got out and entered this palace, noticing “Burgaleza” on the board of the omnibus. I followed dumbly, having glimpses in passing of a superbly arrayed table with serviettes that were each a work of art that a diner would soon haughtily pull to pieces to wipe his moustache on—tables groaning beneath salvers full of fruit and other delicacies. Then came a long hall, darkly panelled, at the end of which I could see several white-capped men shouting fiercely and clashing knives, women answering shrilly and
rattling dishes—a kitchen; the most diabolically noisy and nauseous I had ever approached. We went straight on towards it. Were we going through it? At the very threshold we stopped, and opening a panel-like door in the wall, the porter disappeared with my portmanteau, appeared again without my portmanteau, and hurried away. At this moment my eye caught something else, a door ajar on the other side of the passage and a heavy wooden, clothless table, with several squares of bread on it, and a fork or two. In Spain there is a sort of bread for the rich, and a horrible looking juiceless papery bread for the humble. The bread on that table was of the latter category.

Suddenly the truth flashed upon me. With a theatrical gesture I dashed open again the panel and passed into the pitchy gloom within. I struck a match. It was a cupboard, quite windowless, with just enough room for a little bed; I was standing on my luggage. No doubt in the room across the passage I should be given some cod soup, permanganate of potash and artificial bread. Then, extremely tired after my journey, I should crawl into my kennel, the pandemonium of the kitchen at my ear for several hours.

In the central hall I found the smiling proprietor. He seemed to regard his boarders generally as a mild joke, and those who slept in the cupboard near the kitchen a particularly good but rather low one. I informed him that I would pay the regular sum for a day’s board and lodging and said I must have another room. A valet accepted the responsibility of seeing I was given a bedroom, and the landlord walked slowly away, his iron-grey side whiskers, with their traditional air of respectability, giving a disguised look to his rascally face. I was transferred from one cupboard to another. Or rather, I had exchanged a cupboard for a wardrobe—reduced to just half its size by a thick layer of skirts and cloaks, twenty deep, that protruded from all four walls. But still the little open space left in the centre would ensure me a square foot to wash and dress in, with a quite distinct square foot or two for sleep. And it was upstairs.

A quarter of an hour later, wandering along a dark passage on my way back to the central hall, a door opened in a very violent and living way and a short rectangular figure, the size of a big square trunk, issued forth, just in front of me. I recognized this figure fragmentarily—first, with a cold shudder, I recognized an excrescence of hair; then with a jump I recognized a hat held in its hand; then, with a shrinking, I realized that I had seen those flat pseudo-American shoulders before. With a tidal wave of surging emotion, I then recognized the whole man.
It was the implacable figure of the Fonda del Mundo.

He moved along with wary rigidity ahead, showing no reciprocal sign of recognition. He turned corners with difficulty, with a sort of rapid lurch and seemed to get stuck on the stairs just as a large American trunk would, borne by a sweating porter. At last he safely reached the hall. I was a yard or two behind him. He stopped to light a cigar, still taking up an unconscionable amount of space. I manoeuvred round him, and gained one of the doors of the salle-a-manger. But as I came within his range of vision, I also became aware that my presence in the house was not a surprise to this sandwich-man of Western citizenship. His eye fastened on me, with ruthless bloodshot indignation, a crystallised eye blast of the Bayonne episode. I had distinctly the impression of being face to face with a ghost, he was so dead and inactive. And in all my subsequent dealings with him, this feeling of having to deal with a ghost, although a particularly mischievous one, persisted. If before, my anger at the trick that had been played on me had dictated a speedy change of lodging, now my anxiety to quit this roof had, naturally, a tremendous incentive. After dinner, I went forth boldly in search of the wonderful American enemy. Surely I had been condemned, in some indirect way, by him, to the cupboard beside the kitchen. No dungeon could have been worse. Had I then known, as I learnt later, that he was the owner of this hotel, the mediaeval analogy would have been still more complete. He now had me in his castle.

I found him, in sinister conjunction with the Proprietor or Manager as I suppose he was, in the lobby of the hotel. He turned slightly away as I came up to him, with a sulky indifference due to self-restraint. Evidently the time for action was not ripe. There was no pretence of not recognising me. As though our conversation in the Fonda del Mundo had taken place a half an hour before, we acknowledged in no way a consciousness of the lapse of time, only of the shifted scene.

“Well, colonel, “I said, adopting an allocution of the United States, “taking the air?”

He went on smoking.

“This is a nice little town.”

“I'm glad you like it”, he replied in French, as though I was not worthy even to hear his American accent, and that, if any communication was to be held with me, French must serve.

“I shall make a stay of some weeks here”, I said with indulgent defiance.
“Oui?”

“But not in this Hotel.”

He got up with something of his Bayonne look about him.

“No, I shouldn’t. You might not find it a very comfortable hotel.”

He walked away hurriedly, as a powder magazine might walk away from a fuse, if it did not, for some reason, want to blow up for the moment.

The upstairs and less dreadful dungeon with its layers of clothes, would have been an admirable place for a murder.

Not a sound would have penetrated its woolen masses and thick Spanish walls. But the next morning I was still alive when I woke up. I set out after breakfast to look for new quarters. My practised eye had soon measured the inconsistencies of most of the pensions of the town. But a place in the Calle Real suited me all right and I decided to stop there for the time.

This room again was a cupboard. But it was a human cupboard and not a clothes cupboard. It was one of four tributaries of the dining-room. My bedroom door was just beside my place at table—the entire animal life being conducted over an area not exceeding fifteen compact square feet.

The extracting of my baggage from the Burgaleza was easy enough, except that the rogue of a proprietor charged a heavy toll, sunk somewhere in the complications of the bill. As at Bayonne, there was no sign of the enemy in the morning. But I was not so sure this time that I had seen the last of him.

That evening I came amongst my new fellow-pensionnaires for the first time. This place had recommended itself to me partly because the boarders would probably speak good Spanish. They were mostly Castilians. My presence caused no stir whatever. Just as a stone dropped in a small pond which has long been untouched and has a good thick coat of mildew, slips dully to the bottom, cutting a clean little hole on the surface slime, so I took my place at the bottom of the table. But as the pond will send up its personal odour at this intrusion, so these people revealed something of themselves in the first few minutes, in an illusive and immobile way. They must all have lived in that pension together for an inconceivable length of time. My neighbour however promised to be a little El Dorado of Spanish; a small mine of gossip, grammatical rules and willingness to impart his native riches. I struck a deep shaft of friendship into him at once and began work without delay. He yielded in the first three days a considerable quantity of pure ore — coming from Madrid, this
ore was at least 30 carat, thoroughly thetaed and Castilian. What I gave him in exchange was insignificant. I taught him nothing. He knew several phrases in French and English, such as, “if you please” and “fine day”; I merely confirmed him in these. Every day he would hesitatingly say them over, and I would assent, “quite right” and “very well pronounced”, and then turn to extracting his natural riches from him for the next hour or two. He was a tall bearded man, head of the orchestra of the principal café in the town. Two large cuffs lay on either side of his plate during meals, the size of serviettes, and out of them his hands emerged without in any way disturbing them and served him with his food as far as they could. But he had to remain with his mouth quite near his plate, for the cuffs would not move a hair’s breadth. This somewhat annoyed me, as it muffled a little the steady flow of Spanish, and even was a cause of considerable waste. I tried to move the cuffs once or twice without success. Their ascendancy over him and their indolence were phenomenal.

But I was not content merely to extract Spanish from him. I wished to see it in use: to watch this stream of Spanish working the mill of general conversation, for instance. But, although willing enough himself, he had no chance in this Pension.

On the third day he invited me to come round to the café after dinner and hear him play. Our dinners overlapped, he leaving early. So, dinner over, I strolled round, alone.

The café Pelayo was the only really Parisian establishment in the town. It was the only one where the Madrilenos and other Spaniards proper, resident in Ponta Issandra, went regularly. I entered, peering round in a business-like way at its monotonously mirrored walls and gilded ceiling. This was a building that must contain prodigious quantities of Spanish every evening. Here I should virtually pass my examination.

In a lull of the music, my chef d’orchestre came over to me and presented me to a large group of “consommateurs”, friends of his. It was an easy matter, from that moment, to become acquainted with everybody in the café.

I did not approach Spaniards in general with any very romantic notion. Each man I met possessed equally an ancient and admirable tongue, however degenerate himself. He often appeared like some rotten tree, in which a swarm of words had nested. I, like a bee-cultivator, found it my business to transplant this vagrant swarm to a hive prepared — in which already two kindred swarms were billeted, as I have said. A language has its habits and idiosyncrasies just like a species of insect, as my first professor comfortably ex-
plained; its thousands of little words and parts of speech have to be carefully studied and manipulated. So I had my hands full.

When the café closed, I went home with Don Pedro, chef d'orchestre, to the Pension. Every evening, after dinner — and at lunch time as well — I repaired there. This lasted for three or four days. I now had plenty of opportunity of talking Spanish. I had momentarily forgotten my American enemy.

On the fifth evening, I entered the Café as usual, making towards my most useful and intelligent group. But then, with a sinking of the heart, I saw the rectangular form of my ubiquitous enemy, quartered with an air of demoniac permanence in their midst. A mechanic who finds a big lump of alien metal stuck in the very heart of his machinery — what simile shall I find for my dismay? To proceed somewhat with this image, as this unhappy engineer might dash to the cranks or organ stops of his machine, so I dashed to several of my formerly most willing listeners and talkers. I gave one a wrench and another a screw but I found that already the machine had become recalcitrant.

I need not enumerate the various stages of my defeat on that evening. It was more or less a passive and moral battle, rather than one with any evident show of the secretly bitter and desperate nature of the passions engaged. Of course, the inclusion of so many people unavoidably caused certain "brusqueries" here and there. The gradual cooling down of the whole room towards me, the dreadful icy currents of dislike that swept over the chain of little drinking groups — little eddies, or tiny whirlpools of conversation — from that mystical centre of hostility, that soul that recognised in me something icily antipodean too, no doubt; the immobile figure of America's newest and most mysterious child, apparently emitting these strong waves without effort, as naturally as a fountain: all this, with great vexation, I felt happening almost in the first moment. It almost seemed as though he had stayed away from this haunt of his foreseeing what would happen. He had waited until I was settled and there was something palpable to attack. His absence may have had some more natural cause.

What exactly he said about me I never discovered. As at Bayonne I saw the mouth working and I felt the effects only. No doubt it was the subtlest and most electric thing that could be found; brief, searching and annihilating. Perhaps something seemingly crude — that I was a spy — may have recommended itself to his ingenuity. But I expect it was a meaningless or rather indefinite, blast of disapproval that he blew upon me, an eerie and stinging
wind of personal unexplained scorn and hatred. He evidently exer-
cised a queer ascendancy in the café Pelayo, explained superficially
by his commercial prestige, but due really to his extraordinary char-
acter — moulded by the sublime force of his illusion.

His inscrutable immobility, his unaccountable self-control (for
such a person, and feeling as he did towards me) were of course the
American or Anglo-Saxon coolness and coldness as reflected, or por-
trayed, in this violent human mirror.

I left the Café earlier than usual, before the chef d’orchestre. It
was the following morning at lunch when I next saw him. He was
embarrassed. His eyes wavered in my direction fascinated and
inquisitive. He found it difficult to realise that his respect for me had
to end and give place to another feeling.

“You know Monsieur de Valmore?” he asked.

“That little cur of a Frenchman, do you mean?”

I knew this description of my wonderful enemy was vulgar and
inexact. But often with an ordinary intercourse it is necessary to
be vulgar and inexact.

But this way of describing Monsieur de Valmore appeared to
the chef d’orchestre so eccentric, apart from its profanity, that I lost
at once in Don Pedro’s sympathy.

He told me, however, all about him; vulgar details that did not
touch on the real conditions of this life.

“He owns the Burgaleza and many houses in Pontaisandra.
Ships, too. Es Americano” he added.

The American War was still fresh in the memory of all Span-
iards. But being obviously a Frenchman, they could allow them-
selves to admire in him all the commercial cunning and other quali-
ties that their disgusted souls admired in the Yankee.

Vexations and hindrances of all sorts now made my stay in
Pontaissandra useless and depressing. Don Pedro had generally al-
most finished when we came to dinner and I was forced to shut up
the mine, so to speak. Nothing more was to be extracted, except
uncomfortable monosyllables. The rest of the boarders remained
morose and inaccessible. I went once more to the Café Paláyo, but
the waiters even seemed affected. The new café I chose yielded
nothing but Gallego chatter, and the garçon was not gregarious.

There was little encouragement to try another pension and stay
on in Pontaissandra. I made up my mind to go to Coruna. This
would waste a bit of time. But there is more Gallego than Spanish
spoken in Galicia, even in the cities. Too easily automatic a conquest
as it may seem, Monsieur de Valmore had left me nothing but the
Gallegos. I was not getting anything like the practice in Spanish necessary, and this necessity infected the whole air of the place. I began to get neurasthenic about the necessity of learning this tiresome language. I would go to Coruna in any case. On the following day, some hours before the time for the train, I paraded the line of streets towards the station, with the feeling that I was no longer there. The place seemed cooling down and growing strange already prematurely and looked very cheerless. But the miracle happened, coming with a gradual flowering of beauty. A more beautiful checkmate never occurred in any record of exquisite war-fare.

The terrible ethnological difference that existed between Monsieur de Valmore and myself up till that moment showed every sign of ending in a weird and revolting defeat for me. The "moment" I refer to was that in which I turned out of the High Street, into the short hilly avenue where the Post Office lay. I had some letters to post, communications adorned with every variety of expletives about Spanish, Pontassandra and other opposite things.

On turning the corner I at once became aware of three anomalous figures walking just in front of me. They were all three of the proportion known in certain climes as "husky". When I say they were walking, I should describe their movements more accurately as wading — wading through the air, evidently towards the Post Office. Their carriage was slightly rolling, like a ship under weigh. They occasionally bumped into each other, but did not seem to mind this. Yet no one would have mistaken these three young men — for such they were — for drunkards. But I daresay you will have already guessed. It would under other circumstances, have had no difficulty in entering my head. As it was, there seemed a certain impediment of consciousness when any phenomena of that sort was concerned. These three figures were three Americans! — This seems very simple, I know, very simple. This was abstract fact, however. This very simple and unabstruse fact trembled and lingered before completely entering into my consciousness. The extreme rapidity of my mind in another sense — in seeing all this fact, if verified, might signify to me — may have been responsible for that. Then one of them, on turning his head, displays the familiar features of Taffany, a Mississippi freind of mine. I simultaneously recognized Blauenfeld and Morton, the other two members of a trio. A real trio, like real twins, is rarer than one thinks. It is one of the strangest and closest of human relationships. This one was the remnant of a quartet. I had met it first in Paris.
In becoming, from any three Americans, three of my friends,
they precipitated in a most startling way the vivid and full-blooded
hope, optimism, reinstatement of vitality, contained in the possibili-
ties wonderfully hidden in this meeting.

Two steps brought me up with them and my cordiality almost
exceeded theirs.

"Why, if that doesn't beat everything! How did you get here?"
shouted Taffany.

"Been here long? How do you like it? What do you think of
the town?" pressed Blauenfeld.

"Where are you staying? Have you struck a good Hotel?"
demanded Morton.

Optimism, consciousness of power (no wonder, I thought) surged
out of them. Ah, the kindness! the overwhelming kindness. I
bathed voluptuously in this American greeting — this real American
greeting. Nothing naturalised about that. At the same time I felt
almost an awe at the thought of my friends' dangerous nationality.
These good fellows I knew and liked so well seemed for the mo-
ment to have some intermixture of the strangeness of Monsieur
de Valmore.

However, I measured with enthusiasm their egregious breadth of
shoulder, the exorbitance of their "pants." They could not be too
American, or American enough, for me. Had they appeared in a
star and stripe swallow tail suit, like the cartoons of Uncle Sam, I
should not have been satisfied.

I felt rather like some Eastern potentate who, having been
continually defeated in battle by a neighbour because of the presence
in the latter's army of half a dozen elephants, suddenly becomes pos-
sessed of a couple of dozen himself. The amount of Americanism at
my disposal now was overwhelming. Talk of super-Dreadnoughts!
But there is no such thing as a super-American. It can't be done.
It is one thing that can't be supered.

Or I felt like some chemist who gets a temporary monopoly
of a rare and potent chemical substance. The amount of pure un-
adulterated American stuff in my possession at present would neu-
tralize the Americanism in Monsieur de Valmore in a brace of
shakes, and leave nothing but a scraggy little Gascon.

I must have behaved rather oddly to my friends. As a starving
man, unexpectedly presented with a shilling, might squeeze it tightly
in his fist and run along, for fear of its melting or escaping in some
way, till he gets to the nearest cook shop, so I cherished my three
Americans. I was inclined to shelter them as though they were
fragile, to see they didn’t get run over, or expose themselves to the sun. Each transatlantic quaintness of speech or gesture I received with a positive ovation.

All thoughts of Corunua disappeared. The letters remained unposted.

First of all I took my trio into a little café near the Post Office, and told them at once what was expected of them.

“There’s one of the ‘boys’ here,” I said.


“Well, he deserves to be. But he began too late in life, I think. He hails from the South of France and Americanism came to him as a revelation when youth had already past. He repented tardily but sincerely of his misguided early nationality. But his years spent as a Frenchman have left their mark. In the meantime, he won’t leave Englishmen alone. He persecutes them, apparently, wherever he finds them.”

“He mustn’t do that!” Taffany said with resolution.

“Why, no, I guess he musn’t,” said Blauenfeld.

“I knew you’d say that,” I continued, “It’s a rank abuse of authority and I was sure would be regretted at headquarters. Now if you could only be present, unseen, and witness how I, for instance, am oppressed by this fanatic fellow citizen of yours; and if you could then issue forth, and reprove him, and tell him not to do it again, I should be much obliged.

“I’m very sorry you should have to complain, Mr. Pine of treatment of that sort — but what sort is it, anyway?”

I gave a lurid picture of my tribulations, to the scandal and indignation of my friends. They at once placed themselves, and laughingly, their Americanism — any quantity of that mixture in their organisms — at my disposal.

I considered it of the first importance that Monsieur de Valmore should not get wind of what had happened. I took my three Americans cautiously out of the café, and as their hotel was near the station and not near the enemy’s haunts, I encouraged their going back to it. I also supposed that they would wish to make some toilet for the evening, and relied on their good sense to put on their baggiest trousers — I dreamed of even baggier ones than they had on — I knew that, unlike other nations, the smarter an American’s clothes, the more American they are.

My army was in excellent form. A rollicking good humour prevailed. I kept them out of the way till nightfall and then after an early dinner, by a circuitous route, approached the café Pelayo.
I have not yet described my forces. I will adopt the unusual method of describing what was in their pockets. What is in a man's pockets is generally the outposts of his soul; and being only a tenth of an inch below the surface and infinitely more accessible than the soul, I wonder that this compromise has never been hit upon in the history of exuberant and creative fiction. I feel it would have suited the clothes of Dickens' characters. The contents of a man's pockets is like a spiritual deposit just beneath the surface, or like bubbles from the deep well beneath.

Of course it will be only guesswork. But had I pretended to deeper insight it would be more so still. The soil of Taffany, if I may so describe his clothing, was of a rich uniform, brown earthern appearance, with little veins, like the trace of some attenuated mineral running down it. His trouser pockets contained a couple of knives, a revolver, a reckless mass of coin and some string. The form of these knives denoted at once a fierce and inventive nature. One of them was not unlike a "bowie" knife, although it had, I think, never been used for slaughter. No doubt in "whittling" a stick or paring his nails its appearance in his hand helped to the sensation of some blood-thirsty act. The other knife when opened was a little hedgehog of stumpy blades, skewers, poking and prodding implements and corkscrews. With this Taffany went through life prying open obstinate fruit tins, pulling out corks, manufacturing pipes, etc. The mass of money, silver and copper, accounted somewhat for the richness of the soil in which it lay (as I have mentioned) — although this may not tally with any known geology — also, along with the notes in the pockets above, acted as fuel to impel Taffany over wide lapses of land and sea. By its disposition and neighbourhood it should belong to a man who regarded it rather as water to draw, and in large quantities, often, according to the needs of life — a sober life — and for whom it had none of the attributes of wine or drugs — not even of beer! Just homely water, of which there must be much. The revolver was the only voice one would hear of the thoroughly roused Taffany.

This was the practical area. As one mounted higher in this mountainous soil one came to the sentimental and intellectual tracts about the breast, letters from his family, paper cuttings and so on. Blauenfeld had in his coat pocket the "Digit of the Moon". So had Morton in his. This book had been recommended to them by an American girl in a Paris studio. They had very seriously and gratefully made a note of it, after several weeks had procured it and were now reading it assiduously. Blauenfeld's money was in
strata — copper, silver, etc. He had more than Taffany, but paid more attention to it. A rich black enveloped him.

Morton possessed a little seraglio of photographs of ladies that his undecided and catholic fancy had made him indulge in. They all had great sexual charm, tactfully displayed. He had his favorite-photograph, of course. It was the least tactful, merely, I am afraid.

Then there was a card-case, a dictionary, a map, with much other matter. In fact, what was found in Morton's pockets was of such a complicated nature that it would be difficult to classify it. His soul, as it happened, was momentarily nearer the surface than the case of his companions.

That these three men were my willing instruments needs no explanation, as we were excellent comrades. A sense of humour is the chief and most inalienable right of the American citizen. It goes always hand in hand with Liberty. These three good fellows went campaigning with me, even put themselves under my orders, with enthusiasm. They were in sympathy with my cause, which was that of humour. We were all four Soldiers of Humour. But, as it was my magnificent discovery and patent quarrel, it was my battle, and they willingly marched at my heels, as I should have done at theirs had it been the other way about. The natural enemy of the Soldier of Humour, and against whom he carries on uproarious, endless and delighted warfare, is the man or the multitude bereft of that astonishing sense. This wonderful warrior, to make the battle more exquisite will even feign a dullness, and falling away from the keenness, of that sense. In my historic struggle with Monsieur de Valmore, sometimes I pretended to go down into the headlong cockpit of his unconsciousness, and grappled with him on equal terms.

But no doubt such encounters nowadays are mostly bloodless. I am sure that many of the soldiers and adventurers of the Middle Ages were really Soldiers of Humour, unrecognised and unclassified. I know that many a duel has been fought in this solemn cause. A man of this temper and category will, perhaps carefully "entretenir" or cherish a wide circle of accessible enemies that his sword may not rust. Any other quarrel may be patched up. But what can be described as a quarrel of humour divides men for ever.

It is usually conceded that Humour is the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon race. I felt this racial solidarity as I was marching on the Café Pelayo.

I revised my plan of action. Taffany and his two friends were to enter the café, establish themselves autocratically there, become acquainted with Monsieur de Valmore — almost certainly the latter
would at once approach his fellow-citizens, — and then I was to put in an appearance.

The Café was entered to the strains of

"There is a tavern in the town, in the town"
sung by my three allies.

I imagined the glow of national pride and delighted recognition that would invade Monsieur de Valmore on hearing this air. Apart from the sentimental reason — its use as a kind of battle-song — was the practical one that this noisy entrance would at once attract my enemy's attention.

I awaited events at a neighbouring café.

Ten minutes passed, and I knew that my friends had "located" Monsieur de Valmore, even if they had not begun operations. Else they would have returned to my place of waiting. I wallowed naively in a superb coolness and indifference; as a man who has set some machinery going, which can now run by itself, turns nonchalantly away, paying no more attention to it. I felt strongly the stage analogy. I became rather conscious of my appearance. I must await "my cue" but was sure of my reception. From time to time I glanced idly down the road, and at last saw Blauenfeld making towards me, his usual American swing of the body complicated by rhythmical upheavals of mirth into trampling and stumblings and slappings of his thigh somewhere in the folds of his clothes. I paid for my coffee while he was coming up, and then turned to him.

"All ready?"

"Yep! we've got him fine. Come and have a look at him."

"Did he carry out his part of the programme according to my arrangements?"

"Why, yes. We went right in, and all three spotted him at the same time. Taffany manoeuvred in the vicinity, and Morty and me coquetted round in his pro-pinquity. We could see his eyes beginning to stick out of his head, and his mouth watering. At last he could hold himself in no longer; we came together with a hiss and splutter of joy. He called up a tray full of drinks, to take the rawness off our meeting. He can't have seen an American for months. He just gobbled us up. There ain't nothing left of Taffany. He's made us promise to go to his Ho-tel tonight."

I approached the lurid stronghold of citizenship, with its pretentious palmy terrace, my mouth a little drawn and pinched, eyebrows raised, like a fastidious expert called in somewhere to decide a debatable point. This figure dictated my manner now. I entered the swing doors and looked round in a cold and business-like way,
as a doctor would in saying loftily, "Where is the patient?"

The patient was there right enough, surrounded by the nurses I had sent. There sat Monsieur de Valmore in as defenceless a state of beautilude as possible. He stared at me with an incredulous grin at first. I believe that in this moment of exquisite plenitude of life he would have been willing to extend to me a temporary pardon—a passe-partout to his café for the evening.

I approached him with impassive professional rapidity, my eye fixed on him (the physician analogy) already making my diagnosis. I was so carried away by this that I almost began things by asking him to put out his tongue. Instead I sat down carefully in front of him and examined him in silence.

In the midst of an enervating debauch, or barely convalescent from a bad illness, confronted by his mortalest enemy, no man could have looked more blank. But as such a man might turn to his boon companions or to his nurse or attendants for help, so Monsieur de Valmore turned with a characteristic blank childish appeal to Taffany. Perhaps he was shy or diffident of taking up actively his great role, when more truly great actors were present. Would not divine American speak, or thunder, through them, at this intruder?

"I guess you don't know each other" said Taffany, "Say, Mr. de Valmore, here's a friend of mine, Mr. Arthur Pine."

My enemy pulled himself together as though the different parts of his body all wanted to leap away in different directions, and he, with huge effort, were preventing such disintegration. An attempt at a bow appeared as a chaotic movement of various limbs and organs. The bow had met other movements on the way, and never became a bow at all. An extraordinary confusion beset his body. The beginning fo a score of actions ran over it blindly and disappeared.

"Guess Mr. de Valmore ain't quite comfortable in that chair, Morty. Give him yours."

And in this chaotic and unusual state he was hustled from one chair to the other, like a sack of mildly expostulating potatoes.

His racial instinct was undergoing the severest revolution it has yet known. It was somewhat in the state of a South American Republic which has had three Presidents and an Emperor in a fortnight and is just electing a provisional Dictator. It was as though an incarnation of sacred America herself had commanded him to take me to his bosom. And, as the scope of my victory dawned upon him, his personal mortification assumed the proportions of a national calamity. For the first time since the sealing of his citizenship he
felt that he was only a Frenchman from the Middi—hardly as near an American, in point of fact, as even an Englishman is.

The soldier of Humour is chivalrous, though implacable. I merely drank a bottle of champagne at his expense; made Don Pedro and his orchestra perform three extras, all made up of the most intensely national English light comedy music, such as *San Toy* and *Our Miss Gibbs*. Taffany, for whom Monsieur de Valmore entertained the maximum of respect — held him solemnly for some time with a detailed and fabulous enumeration of my virtues. Before long I withdrew with my forces to riot in barbarous triumph elsewhere for the rest of the evening.

During the next two days I on several occasions visited the battlefield, but Monsieur de Valmore had vanished. His disappearance alone would have been sufficient to tell me that my visit to Spain was terminated. And in fact two days later I left Pontaissandra with the Americans, parting with them at Tuy and myself continuing on the Leon, San Sebastian route back to France and eventually to Paris.

I was taking away with me a good deal of Spanish, but in a rather battered or at least fragmentary condition. I interpret Spanish now, among other things, but with a hesitating lack of finish that shows traces of the stress of this time I have just described.

Arrived at Bayonne, I left the railway station with a momentarily increasing premonition. It was already night time. Stepping rapidly across the square, I hurried down the hall-way of the Fonda del Mundo, and turning brusquely and directly into the dining room of the Inn gazed round me almost shocked not to find what I had half expected. I sat down, pilotting myself alertly and safely through the menu. Although Monsieur de Valmore had not been there to greet me, as good or better than his presence seemed to be attending me on my withdrawal from Spain. I still heard in this naked little room, as the wash of the sea in a shell, the echo of the first whisperings of his weird displeasure. Next day I arrived in Paris, my Spanish nightmare shuffled off long before I reached that hum-drum spot.
THOUGHTS FROM A COUNTRY VICARAGE.

I PRINT the following letter, or rather part of a letter, not because I wish to commit either myself or The Little Review to the opinions therein expressed. We are not a propagandist organ, and the religion of the multitude is not our affair. It is however our affair to take note of what things are thought by our contemporaries, and thus to leave as nearly as possible a true record of our time. Neither is the letter itself propaganda. It was written to a friend; as the Review is mentioned the letter was shown to me. I now print it with its author's permission. He is the vicar of a country parish in England, a vicar highly efficient and deeply respected by his parishioners. Despite Remy de Gourmont's "Ils comprennent cela en théologie" I think there is very little real toleration in America, which being so the reader may regard this communication as a sign of the times.

"I think the churches have little influence; and that little is declining: it will decline more as education spreads. But the clergy are still aggressive and mischievous; and they are exploiting the present distress, although their theology has brought them into a false and absurd position. Of course entire pacifism and non-resistance are the only logical deduction from the principles of Jesus, so far as we have any record of anything he said; but the churches have never been able to accept these principles: facts have always been too strong for them. And only a few fanatics dare enunciate them now. The majority of the clergy have to talk the twaddle which they circulate about reprisals, and to resist the application of military service to themselves. For all these follies they will pay dearly in the end; but, in the meanwhile, pacifists and sabbatarian fanatics are doing harm.

"I suppose the majority of people are neither brave nor logical enough to see that Christianity is not compatible with things as they are. In fact, it is a doctrine of death; and the more thoroughly it is applied, the more destructive it becomes. If the sermon on the mount were carried out it would lead mankind through idleness, ignorance, and barbarism to extinction. I don't know whether the
latter would be any loss to the universe; but the journey would be unpleasant for us.

"The old testament begins with a cosmology which we know to be untrue. The new testament begins by saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, which two thousand years have disproved. Even this does not convince a fanatic, or confute a theologian. The only justification for the sermon on the mount is the speaker's belief that the existing order was to disappear at once, and a new society was to be inaugurated, in which the ideal would displace the real. As the premise was unsound, the conclusion is erroneous, or worse. These errors took a very large part in wrecking civilization, fifteen centuries ago; and, so far as they were able to prevail they made a hell of Europe for over a thousand years. The same principles would hand us over again to the same barbarians, if they were as influential now as they were in the fifth century, which fortunately they are not; but they are still mischievous and prevalent enough, so I hope Pound and his allies will go for them with their sharpest weapons, though I think only clubs and stones are effective against the density of theologians: 'satire or sense, alas, can Sporus feel'."

The rest of the letter is concerned with English politics. I think there is a slight misunderstanding of \textit{The Little Review} implied in the last expression of desire. We are not out either to support or destroy any religion. We stand simply for the free right of expression. A certain view is excellently and pithily put in this letter.

In so far as repressive measures, measures against the freedom of literary expression have proceeded, and often proceed, from remnants and superstitions of religion, in just so far would we stand against the erroneous opinion than any given religion is ubiquitous or undoubted, or subject to all men's approval. The question whether the fall of the Roman Empire was due to Christianity, or the spread of Christianity due to the fall of the Empire and the ensuing ignorance must be referred to the research of historians. I believe I have somewhere expressed the latter view, or ascribed it to some character in a dialogue, but I am, or he is, subject to correction. It is significant that the letter quoted comes from a churchman and not from an amateur in theology or a person uneducated.

E. P.
THE READER CRITIC

Mr. Lindsay

Whoop golly-ip Zopp, bop BIP!!
I'm Mr. Lindsay with the new sheep-dip,
I'm a loud-voiced yeller, I'm a prancing preacher,
Gawd's in his heaven! I'm the real High Reacher.
When Moses to the Red Sea came
He yelled to Jehovah and the answer was the same:
"I will lead you onward, in a pillar of flame".

Oh, the little red fox whistled,
Tho' my heart was like gristle,
The little red fox whistled and smoothed his reddish breeches,
There's a wide wind blowing in the Illinois beeches.

    Gawd in the fire,
    Gawd in the wind

SAYD:

Moses slew the Egyptian,
"Mr. Moses, you have sinned
AND YOU SHALL NOT SEE
The Promised Land."

Thus Gawd he sweared it
An' he spat on his hand:
    Moses Shall NOT SEE
    The promised land.
But I seen me saviour comin'
And saw his watch-chain plain,
    Gawd in the lightning!
    Gentle Jesus in the rain!!
He looked like the porter on a "B. & O." train;
So fine an' portly was the Lord OF Hosts
Who likes the smell of
    Baked meats
Of barbecues and roasts
An' purple an' silver
And gold and fine linen
And loves the dirty sinner
And loatheth shameful sinning.

When Daniel came to the lion's DEN
The big lion sniffed him
And his missus said:
   "Say when!"
"For big Buck Lindsay will put us in a song,
"I'd like to make a meal of this
"But we musn't get in wrong."

Then Dan'l in his corner
Softly crooned 'is 'ymn of 'Ate,
And yelled in the receiver:
   "HI !!!!! Belshazzer,
   "YOU'RE SHORT WEIGHT !!
   "The LORD has found you wantin'
   "And these lions wantin' too.
   "I will not stay a prophet
   "Unless you raise my screw.
   "KI, wung bang buzzah
   "Hi wobble oggle ZOO !!!!
   "I won't remain a prophet
   "Unless you raise my screw."

So Bellshazzy had him up
From the lions' gloomy cage,
And since then Dan'l's come to JEDGEMENT
Are the real Chicago CRAZE.

Abel Sanders.

(Time consumed in composition 4 minutes 31 seconds. "Try Sander's for celerity").

Interior Decoration of Chicago

J. B., Chicago:
I want to register a protest somewhere against those people who are permitted to experiment in interior decoration on the buildings of Chicago, when there are artists here who can do the thing. Mrs. Carpenter has just finished the Auditorium. It is shiny, shiny gold
everywhere, and red, red walls; the edge of the stage opening is a deep blue, almost black, which spoils the architectural effect of the whole proscenium arch. The colours sound well enough but they have no relation to the places where they are used. They are too profuse, too all over, to have any significance. I shall be glad when she has got through the experimental stage. It doesn't seem fair that she should have so much education at the expense of Chicago's beauty.

The Quintuple Effulgence
or
The Unapproachable Splendour

At a feast of honour to Masefield
The following people sat for their photograph:

Mr. Lawrence Housman,
Mr. Witter Bynner,
Mr. Cale Young Rice,
Mr. Edwin Markham,
Mr. Louis Untermeyer,
Miss Amy Lowell,
Mr. J. D. Something or other,
Mr. Masefield,
Mr. Noyes.

—S. O. S.

Ezra Pound's Critics

"... It is a tremendous shock to be hurtled into the company of devil-begotten Ezra Pound, put up between yellow boards by Alfred A. Knopf, under the nomenclature of "Lustra". This word "lustra" means one of two things, either expiatory sacrifices or morasses. Ezra Pound is too absolutely degraded to offer sacrifices, much less expiatory ones; therefore we must be content to consider the book a collection of morasses, quicksands.

Bogs the poems certainly are. There is an enormous charm about some of them, and one is in jeopardy of being lured to tread out upon them, and only when the hungry mud sucks a shoe off and
The Little Review

one gets a stocking slimy, realize one’s delusion. They have the appearance of poetry; the lines are all split up; and now and again there is a really delightful metaphor, to give the devil his due. This it is which has induced people out upon them, and has given Ezra’s corrupting influence a wide scope. As a rule these poems are not poems; beauty is never flippant . . . . — Leonard Cline.

[Who is this man in Detroit who thinks he can limit beauty? If it’s a sin to “make beauty flippant”, isn’t it a minor sin compared to limiting beauty? Mr. Cline is akin to all that brood who have lines inside of which beauty must move — the range of their vision. Beauty for them must be pleasing, pretty, decorous, obvious, and “clean”. I remember a similar criticism in another Michigan paper some time ago. When the Chicago Little Theatre Company played The Medea in one of its cities a critic wrote: “The Little Theatre gave a beautiful performance of The Medea, if tragedy can ever be called beautiful.”—jh.]

“In Ezra, thus, I have belatedly discovered a creature given over heart and soul to the art of writing. I have discovered in him, belatedly, of course, a decadent after my own fancy, a thin little, voluptuary of phrase, but a voluptuary none the less. I would he had more sonority to his rainbows (I refer, gentlemen, to the rainbow used by Demetrius as an oboe in summoning together the gods for conference). I would that he, Ezra, were a bit more luscious in his piquancies, more lyric in his outlinings. But given moonlight one should be reconciled to the absence of the moon.

There is in Pound, as he stands published to-day, a gift of irony and color which, wan though it be, is to be treasured like a full goatskin in the desert. He alone, of the few bards with whose work I am acquainted, preserves an exquisite balance in the current of his own emotions. Of material things he is never serious, of passions he treats with a sharp tongue held in his cheek. Of ideas, thoughts, meditations, he is drolly cynical, even when they are the product of his own enfevered fancy. And of color, wherever he finds it, he is properly rapturous. Nothing is too small to receive the salaam of an adjective. Nothing too unimportant to receive the touch of his illuminating phrases.” — Ben Hecht, in The Chicago Daily News.

Ezra Pound is the bite of the champagne. It is not the best part of the wine, but the most important . . .

He is the translator essentially unfaithful. His active intelligence goes beyond mere bookish imitation. When he brings the old wine
out of the bottle, the atmosphere in which he lives, his quick mind, naturally biting in its methods, in a word, the ardent quality of his whole personality, are fused in the old wine, and make this witty, delicate, often sarcastic effervescence. The wine itself, however, almost disowns this sparkle. Pound does not interfere with the genius of foreign work; but whatever intelligence and liberty of thought, the destructive spirit, and imagination can add to a work of art, that Pound adds.

If the name of Pound comes into all discussions on art it is because he has, to an unusual degree, certain qualities, and that at least two of them are very apparent and greatly appreciated.

He is free and without rhetoric—no one more so. His vision is direct; he does not use the image, but shows the things themselves with power. This is indeed a quality of the Imagistes. His independence comes from the fact that he has dug into the past with a keener mind, and more profoundly than is necessary for ordinary culture. The number of influences he has passed under have also freed him, and he has made his departure from the known with rare audacity ....

The poet is a sceptic madly in love, who wants in spite of everything to create his dream. Up to now Pound has beaten out a path for his creations; he uproots weeds of aesthetics and morals; he makes one look in front, not to the side, or through a veil of passive acceptance. Everywhere his poems incite man to exist, to profess a becoming egotism, without which there can be no real altruism . . . One must believe in one's own existence, and this faith begins with negation. One must be capable of reacting to stimuli for a moment, as a

The Eve of the Millennium

THE

Gleoh Wealyan Scriptures

or

The Word of the Lord as it Came to Cleohla Weal


Jule Jeranon

Care of Mrs. Bonhard, 964 St. Nicholas Ave., N. Y. City
real, live person, even in face of as much of one’s own powers as are arrayed against one, balanced by an immediate avowal:

And who are we, who know that last intent,
To plague tomorrow with a testament!

But a kind of disease called hope cannot be cut out of a man’s heart. He goes on believing in the successive moments. It is great poetry, the intimate drama of this struggle, to go on believing in spite of the appearance of optimism. The groans, the virile complaint, the revolt of the poet, all which shows his emotion — that is poetry . . . . Pound knows very well what awaits him. He has experience of the folly of the Philistines who read his verse. Real pain is born of this stupid interpretation, and one does not realize how deep it is unless one can feel, through the ejaculations and laughter, what has caused these wounds, which are made deeper by what he knows, and what he has lost. — Jean de Bosschère in The Egoist.

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A Greenwich Villager just like me.
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A PRIZE OF FIFTY DOLLARS is offered for the best and most beautiful original definition in poetry, — of poetry. This contest has been inaugurated by The Poetry-Lovers of New York City and is open to all. The winning Ms. becomes the property of the Poetry-Lovers and publication proceeds will be donated by them to the work of the Red Cross Ambulance in Italy, the country particularly dear to poets and poetry-lovers. The judges will be Edwin Markham, George E. Woodberry, Florence Wilkinson, Ridgely Torence, Edith Wynne Matthison and Robert Frost. The jury thus represents not only the fields of creative poetry, poetic criticism and the teaching of poetry, but also the art of the spoken word in poetry.

The conditions are as follows: the definition is restricted to thirty-five words, all words counted, and may be fewer than that number. Competitors may send in more than one definition. Ms. must be signed by a nom-de-plume only, accompanied by the name, address and nom-de-plume of the writer in a separate sealed envelope and must be received before noon, February 28, by

The Poetry-Lovers,
122 West 11th Street,
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“Truth when ’tis beauty, beauty when ’tis truth.”

William Dean Howells

in an extended criticism of American magazines of poetry
in “Harper’s Magazine,” devotes most of his article to
Contemporary Verse, mentioning no other poetry magazine by
name. Of this magazine he says, in part:

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by the variety and quality of its contributions. What is most
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highest and freshest beauty. One of the poems in this number
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The February number will be a new departure in American magazine making. No preliminary announcements of what it contains will be made. It will be ready the tenth of February, and on the newstands by that date.

The March issue will open with the first instalment of James Joyce's new novel, "Ulysses". It will have some further Imaginary Letters by Wyndham Lewis, the continuation of Hueffer's "Women and Men", reviews by Ezra Pound, special notes by "jh", etc., etc.

If you have read the announcements on page 2 you will be convinced of The Little Review's importance during 1918-19.

It is still possible for you to get those twelve numbers for $1.50. After February 10 you will have to pay $2.50 for them.

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