



ap. 27'17

W.W. 8 poem
68 article
74
76
77
117 article
128

THE SEVEN ARTS

IN A TIME OF NATIONAL HESITATION
By John Dewey

MAY, 1917

NOTES ON NAMES.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON, more perhaps than any other novelist, represents the new generation in the West. He has already published three stories in *THE SEVEN ARTS* expressive of the spiritual groping among the inhabitants of a small Ohio town.

S. N. BEHRMAN is a beginner in the field of fiction. He is a graduate of Harvard and is at present attending courses in Columbia University.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENET is still an undergraduate in Yale College. He has already won a place among the younger poets.

JOHN DEWEY, through his achievements in thought and education, belongs with the world-philosophers. Among his recent books are "Democracy and Education", "German Philosophy and Politics", "Creative Intelligence". He occupies a chair at Columbia University.

KAHLIL GIBRAN is a native of Syria who has chosen America for his home. He is a painter as well as a poet and stands high as a national figure among his people.

MARSDEN HARTLEY is one of the group of radical young American painters who are increasing respect for this country in the artistic capitals of Europe. Recently, he has widened his activity to include criticism.

HORACE HOLLEY, although an American, was for long a resident of Paris where his craft-shop became a center of artistic endeavor. He is a poet as well as a critic. Among his books are "Baháism: The Modern Social Religion" and "The Social Principle."

LEO STEIN was closely associated with the experimental movement that centered in Paris about such men as Matisse and Picasso. At the beginning of the war he returned to America. His present paper is a contribution to the peculiarly scientific approach to American life.

CARL VAN VECHTEN has had a varied career as critic of music and the theater. He was for long associated with *The New York Times* and has recently published a book entitled "Music and Bad Manners."



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THE SEVEN ARTS



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MAY, 1917.

	PAGE
In a Time of National Hesitation JOHN DEWEY	3
Memories of Whitman and Lincoln JAMES OPPENHEIM	8
The Song of Ariel S. N. BEHRMAN	13
Bread-Crumbs WALDO FRANK	24
From Chicago SHERWOOD ANDERSON	41
Holy Russia	60
Road and Hills STEPHEN VINCENT BENET	62
Poems from the Arabic KAHLIL GIBRAN	64
Editorials	68
American Optimism LEO STEIN	72
Albert P. Ryder MARSDEN HARTLEY	93
Music and the Electrical Theater CARL VAN VECHTEN	97
Our Critics VAN WYCK BROOKS	103
<i>The Seven Arts Chronicle</i>	
The Fifth-Month Poet	117
New Books	119
The Passing of the Kneisel Quartet PAUL ROSENFELD	122
Playing a Joke on Broadway W. F.	125
Max Weber's Book HORACE HOLLEY	127

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In a Time of National Hesitation

By John Dewey

WERE I a poet, this should be, even at the dangerous risk of comparisons invited, an ode. But, alas, the passion as well as the art is lacking. I can but set down a blurred perception of immense masses stirring across great spaces. There is not even the assurance that the fogged outlines mark a thing beheld. They may be only felt, and felt with too much of an observing curiosity to find out what they mean to permit them to kindle into passion.

It is likely that our national hesitation will outwardly have been swallowed up in act before these words appear upon the printed page. But if I read the hesitation aright such a resolution of uncertainty will be but partial. We shall have decided a small thing, what to do, but the great thing, the thing so great as to cause and perpetuate our hesitation, may remain. We may still be uncertain as to our will to be. In the course of doing, we may, it is true, learn something of what we would be. But also it may turn out that even while doing deeds which are imperatively demanded of us our hesitation may grow into a greater doubt. For the hesitation which I see is that of a nation which knows that its time has not come, its hour not struck. The ripening forces have not yet matured, and like all vital processes they are not to be forced. The time of national hesitation is the time of slow and certain growth to an end which is not to be anticipated nor prevented. The day of fate tarries and not till it arrives will the authentic direction be spoken. Meantime suspense.

This is not the usual rendering of our course. The most

In a Time of National Hesitation

vocal among us tell us that our hesitation is at best the provincialism of ignorance and at worst a slothful cowardice bred of mammon-serving peace; that we hesitate from inner division and distraction; because we are not a nation, but a boarding-house of aliens; because we have been corrupted by overmuch prosperity and a sentimentally humanitarian pacifism. Our fiber is gone: we are spineless. We have been told that we are justly the objects of universal scorn and contempt, that our national hesitation is a national humiliation. When a fellow-citizen said, after the dismissal of the German ambassador, that now for the first time in two years could he stand straight and look others in the eye, he only said what the more vocal elements have been reiterating day after day, week after week. Such has been the obvious, not to say clamorous, explanation of our prolonged and penetrating hesitation.

Such statements are not material for argument or disproof. One only sees what one sees, and it is hard to tell even that. But these accounts prove too much. We are told that the nation pauses for lack of leadership, when heaven knows our ears have ached from the roarings of those who have told us what to do and who have exhausted the fishwives' vocabulary in scolding us because we have not done it. We have bowed our heads, and allowed the tempest of words to pass over. We have waited listening for something, just what we have not known, but assuredly for something else than what platform and press are dinning into us. Hordes and aggregates of accident do not wait and hesitate in this fashion. They respond with a stampede. The strident tone of our critics in its increasing shrillness is evidence that the inertia, the solidity of a people was there; for only those who are fused into a single being can wait enduringly in the midst of such clamor and world stir. We have continued to be uncertain just because we were certain that our destiny had not declared itself. Those who have offered themselves as prophets have shown that they were rather historians, reminiscent of a colonial age out of which

John Dewey

the people, the masses, had slowly grown. Those who lamented the lack of leadership proclaimed by their laments that a fused people had assumed its own leadership and was waiting in silence to issue its directions. Never has the American people so little required apologizing for, because never before has it been in such possession of its senses.

If there has been such impressive unification, why the prolonged hesitation? Because though we have become a single body—hence the inertia which the unknowing have taken to be apathy—and are in possession of our senses, we have not yet found a national mind, a will as to what to be. It is easy to be stampeded; it is easy to be told what one's mind is, and humbly to accept on trust a mind thus made up. It is not easy to make up the mind, for the mind is made up only as the world takes on form. We have hesitated in making up our mind just because we would make it up not arbitrarily but in the light of the confronting situation. And that situation is dark, not light.

This is itself proof that a New World is at last a fact, and not a geographical designation. We no longer can be spoken to in the language of the old world and respond. We must be spoken to in our own terms. I do not say this in a complacent or congratulatory mood, but record it as a fact. It is a disagreeable fact to many, and especially disagreeable to those with whom we feel most friendly. It cannot fail to be in some measure disagreeable to ourselves that we should have attained a state which is bound to be intellectually and morally unpleasant to those who are our near spiritual kin and who have, as against anybody but ourselves, our warm sympathies and best wishes. That the gallant fight for democracy and civilization fought on the soil of France is not our fight is a thing not to be realized without pangs and qualms. But it is a fact which has slowly disclosed itself as these last long years have disclosed us to ourselves. It was not ours, because for better or for worse we are committed to a fight for another democracy and

In a Time of National Hesitation

another civilization. Their nature is not clear to us: all that is sure is that they are different. This is the fact of a New World. The Declaration of Independence is no longer a merely dynastic and political declaration.

For this reason I hold that a termination of hesitation so far as to engage in overt war against Germany will not be of itself a conclusion of our hesitation. There is such a thing as interests being affected vitally without a vital interest being affected. As I write, we seem to be on the point of arriving at the conclusion that we cannot aid, by means of a passive compliance, the triumph of a nation that regards its triumph as the one thing so necessary that all means whatsoever that lead to that triumph are not only legitimate but sacred. Such a future neighbor we do not wish to be developed, certainly not by our aid as passive accomplices. So far our hesitation gives way to action, because so far the situation has declared itself. We but meet a clearly proffered challenge.

But it is vain to suppose that thereby our deeper hesitation is concluded; that on this account we join with full heart and soul even though we join with unreserved energy. Not until the almost impossible happens, not until the Allies are fighting on our terms for our democracy and civilization, will that happen. And so we shall still hesitate, for the huge slow-moving body does not see its goal and path. When the President spoke his words as to the conditions under which the American people would voluntarily coöperate in fixing the terms of future international relationships, something stirred within, but the whole bulk did not respond, not even though the appeal was couched in that combination of legal and sentimental phraseology which is our cherished political dialect. At the Russian revolution there was a more obvious thrill. Perhaps through some convulsion, some rearrangement still to come, there will be a revelation of the conditions under which the world's future may be wrought out in patient labor and fraternal comity, a disclosure so authoritative that in it

John Dewey

we shall see and know ourselves and recognize our will. More likely there will be partial events and partial conclusions. But one thing has already happened. The war has shown that we are no longer a colony of any European nation nor of them all collectively. We are a new body and a new spirit in the world. Such at least is the impression which has been forming in me, unbidden and unforeseen, concerning the time of our national hesitation.

Memories of Whitman and Lincoln

By James Oppenheim

"When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd"

—W. W.

LILACS shall bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.
Spring hangs in the dew of the dooryards
These memories—these memories—
They hang in the dew for the bard who fetched
A sprig of them once for his brother
When he lay cold and dead. . .
And forever now when America leans in the dooryard
And over the hills Spring dances,
Smell of lilacs and sight of lilacs shall bring to her heart these
brothers. . .
Lilacs shall bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.

. . .

Who are the shadow-forms crowding the night?
What shadows of men?
The stilled star-night is high with these brooding spirits—
Their shoulders rise on the Earth-rim, and they are great pres-
ences in heaven—
They move through the stars like outlined winds in young-
leaved maples.

James Oppenheim

Lilacs bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.

∴

Deeply the nation throbs with a world's anguish—
But it sleeps, and I on the housetops
Commune with souls long dead who guard our land at mid-
night,
A strength in each hushed heart—
I seem to hear the Atlantic moaning on our shores with the
plaint of the dying
And rolling on our shores with the rumble of battle. . .
I seem to see my country growing golden toward California,
And, as fields of daisies, a people, with slumbering up-turned
faces
Leaned over by Two Brothers,
And the greatness that is gone.

∴

Lilacs bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.

∴

Spring runs over the land,
A young girl, light-footed, eager. . .
For I hear a song that is faint and sweet with first love,
Out of the West, fresh with the grass and the timber,
But dreamily soothing the sleepers. . .
I listen: I drink it deep.

∴

Softly the Spring sings,
Softly and clearly:

Memories of Whitman and Lincoln

*"I open lilacs for the beloved,
Lilacs for the lost, the dead.
And, see, for the living, I bring sweet strawberry
blossoms,
And I bring buttercups, and I bring to the woods
anemones and blue bells . . .
I open lilacs for the beloved,
And when my fluttering garment drifts through dusty
cities,
And blows on hills, and brushes the inland sea,
Over you, sleepers, over you, tired sleepers,
A fragrant memory falls . . .
I open love in the shut heart,
I open lilacs for the beloved."*

. . .

Lilacs bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.

. . .

Was that the Spring that sang, opening locked hearts,
And is remembrance mine?
For I know these two great shadows in the spacious night,
Shadows folding America close between them,
Close to the heart. . .
And I know how my own lost youth grew up blessedly in their
spirit,
And how the morning song of the mighty native bard
Sent me out from my dreams to the living America,
To the chanting seas, to the piney hills, down the railroad
vistas,
Out into the streets of Manhattan when the whistles blew at
seven,
Down to the mills of Pittsburgh and the rude faces of labor . . .

James Oppenheim

And I know how the grave great music of that other,
Music in which lost armies sang requiems,
And the vision of that gaunt, that great and solemn figure,
And the graven face, the deep eyes, the mouth,
O human-hearted brother,
Dedicated anew my undevoted heart
To America, my land.

. . .

Lilacs bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.

. . .

Now in this hour I was suppliant to these two brothers,
And I said: Your land has need:
Half-awakened and blindly we grope in the great world. . .
What strength may we take from our Past, what promise hold
for our Future?

And the one brother leaned and whispered:
"I put my strength in a book,
And in that book my love. . .
This, with my love, I give to America. . ."
And the other brother leaned and murmured:
"I put my strength in a life,
And in that life my love,
This, with my love, I give to America."

. . .

Lilacs bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.

. . .

Then my heart sang out: This strength shall be our strength:

Memories of Whitman and Lincoln

Yea, when the great hour comes, and the sleepers wake and
 are hurled back,
And creep down into themselves
There shall they find Walt Whitman
And there, Abraham Lincoln.

. . .

O Spring, go over this land with much singing
And open the lilacs everywhere,
Open them out with the old-time fragrance
Making a people remember that something has been forgotten,
Something is hidden deep—strange memories—strange mem-
 ories—
Of him that brought a sprig of the purple cluster
To him that was mourned of all. . .
And so they are linked together
While yet America lives. . .

. . .

While yet America lives, my heart,
Lilacs shall bloom for Walt Whitman
And lilacs for Abraham Lincoln.

The Song of Ariel

By S. N. Behrman

VIOLET, the winter dusk filtered down between the towering files of office-buildings and pressed against the golden light from a thousand windows. Behind the windows desks closed, weary clerks shuffled from their seats, dragged on drab coats over soiled shirt-sleeves and crowded into the dingy elevators which bore them to the street.

Dave Soule moved slowly up lower Broadway to the Subway. But before the entrance he stopped uncertainly, hesitant. For the first time in years he did not join the stream that flowed into it but moved on past. Then he stopped again. At home they would be expecting him. Supper was waiting. And he had promised Ann to come over immediately after. Sooner or later he would have to tell her.

Nevertheless he moved on up Broadway. He wasn't hungry and he must have a little time to think. What would he tell Ann? Already she had waited two years for him. The extra expense of keeping his invalid mother and fourteen-year-old sister in school had made it impossible for them to marry. And now he must tell her that they would have to put off their wedding again. The raise he expected that day had not been forthcoming. The head clerk had just told him so.

Soule moved on up Broadway with the crowd. Ahead of him Madison Square opened like a fan rimmed by fairy buildings glowing through the purple veiling of the dusk. Motors curved and squirmed, crammed busses bumped and waddled past. More of grotesquerie and magic here than in any city of olden times colored by the imagination of the antiquarian.

The Song of Ariel

A tidal wave of humanity spewed from the spiring abodes of commerce and shot, fifty miles an hour by Subway and Elevated, to the infinite cubby-holes of the Bronx and Harlem.

But Soule, drifting along, was scarcely conscious of the teeming vistas through which he moved. With a few matter-of-fact words the man from whom he took his orders at the office had destroyed the planning of months. "How shall I say it to Ann?" he was asking himself. Uppermost in his mind was a perplexity about how to phrase to Ann this news, so unexpected, so fraught with disappointment. She had so counted on this. She lived in a home that she hated, with a step-mother and too many children. To sentence her to further imprisonment there when she had caught so near a glimpse of freedom, a home of her own,—how could he do it? And he himself who so wanted her—how could he go on this way? And yet he knew that he would go on; that he would refuse Ann when she asked him to let his sister go to work so they might marry. That he would never allow. Ella must keep on at school, must grow up educated, must be given the chance he never had—.

Symbolized in stone or in words Commerce and Industry are gods or goddesses (depending on whether strength or fecundity is the attribute emphasized); they have the titan limbs of a figure by Michelangelo; often they carry cornucopias, streaming bounties. But to the multitudes of lowlier workers in the service of these heroic deities such apotheosis must occasionally seem far-fetched. David Soule, known to be a faithful, earnest, unvaryingly reliable worker, was filled with a bitter resentment against his firm, against the whole fabric of his world. For the first time in his life he cursed the servitude that bound him.

But only for a moment. The habit of years reasserted itself and his mind reverted to its normal adjustment. Things were this way—there was nothing to be done.

He plodded on. Suddenly he found that he was no longer

thinking of his disappointment. He tried to prod it back, but his mind refused to focus. He was very tired: the long day, the unc customary walk, the strain and worry, were telling on him. His mind was filled with a vague conglomerate of impressions; he was conscious of the rush about him, the occasional pretty face of a girl; he wondered at the confident, eager stride of some of the men. Behind the plate glass windows of motors profiles showed. But these impressions had no real meaning for him: actually they were as far-away, as mythical, as non-existent as things in a story. Were these people really living in the same world as he?

In front of a shop a knot of people was gathered. Mechanically Soule stopped too. Through the doorway came the full, rich sound of a woman's voice singing something on a phonograph. It was the *Vissi D'arte* from "Tosca." Something in the voice thrilled through Soule, stirring him out of himself. A painful nostalgia swept over him. The luxurious tones made him conscious of something beyond himself which he could never reach. . . . A vision of Ann came into his mind. He suddenly felt a great longing for her. So poignant and strange and overpowering was this new desire that he became for the moment faint and weak. The singer's voice rose powerfully, with a joyous mastery of strength. The melody fell over Soule as cascades of water play over a figure in a fountain. He wished that Ann were there so that she too might listen. Then she would understand what he was feeling. A great pity for her welled up in him—she meant so much to him, he wanted so much to make her happy and he could do so little! After a moment the singing stopped! It was as though a super-presence had been near him, touching him. He stood still, waiting. But the voice did not come again. Then he turned away and trudged wearily to the Subway.

Fred Rudnor, journalist, getting no answer to his knock on the door of Soule's sitting room, opened the door gently and peered within. Sitting at the table, hunched over a book, a

The Song of Ariel

girl was reading aloud and Rudnor stopped still a moment to listen.

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I,
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

As she reached the last line the girl was startled by a pair of hands clasped suddenly around her eyes.

"Who is it?"

"Mr. Rudnor."

"Guessed it the first time." He relinquished his hold and patted her on the cheek.

"You're reading Lamb's Tales, I see."

"Thank you so much for it, Mr. Rudnor."

"Like it?"

"I *love* it. I'm on 'The Tempest'. Isn't Ariel lovely? Does the prince marry Miranda?"

"Shouldn't be surprised—"

"Really?"

"Surest thing you know."

The small head dove back to the book in a flurry of light brown curls.

"Where's David?"

"He hasn't come home yet. He's awful late."

"Guess I'll wait for him—how's mother?"

"About the same."

Rudnor sat down in a rocking-chair, tipped as far back as he could, and directed the smoke from his pipe at the ceiling. Just outside the frowzily curtained windows the elevated trains thundered; it was a room such as you may see any evening from the "L" platform. Only secondarily did it convey the sense of poverty: the salient impression was of a mean insignificance—furniture with chipped, varnished surfaces, a

S. N. Behrman

glazed table-cover stamped with a pictorial presentment of the Brooklyn Bridge—the ugly factitiousness of the machine. On the mantel-shelf a vagariously tinted, papier-maché plant grew directly out of a round piece of wood, its tenderness protected from bacterial attack by a fly-speckled glass cylinder completely covering it. This ornament failed of decorative-ness. But it achieved much more than that; it possessed the dignity and pathos of a symbol.

From the next room a querulous voice, calling her, disturbed Ella at her reading. Reluctantly, almost without lifting her head from the book, she rose and went out. Rudnor, left alone, improvised a little tune for Ariel's song. He was rather short and given to stockiness and had lively black eyes with a gleam of humor in them. He wore a shiny, black, loose-fitting suit and a soft-collared shirt with a carelessly made four-in-hand tie. To the Socialist meetings and the editors of the radical press in the city Mr. Rudnor was not unknown. Even the critics of immaculate Eastern journals had patronised his stories of East Side life. This amused Rudnor vastly.

Soule, looking tireder than usual, interrupted the tenth variation of Rudnor's song.

"Hello, Fred," he said listlessly.

"How are you, Dave?—where've you been?"

"Walking."

"What's up?"

"Nothing—"

"Everything all right at the office?"

"Expected a raise today. Didn't get it."

"Make much difference?"

"Puts Ann and me off again."

"Tough!"

"Hard on Ann."

"Hard on you too."

"Wait a minute—I'm going in to see mother."

"Eaten yet?"

The Song of Ariel

"I'm not very hungry."

Soule went into the next room and Rudnor walked about the room, his face serious. Soule came back and slumped into a chair. Ella appeared at the door.

"Don't you want your supper, Dave?"

"I've had a bite down town. Go back to mother."

Rudnor looked out of the corner of his eyes at Soule staring ahead of him absently.

"What are you doing tonight?" he asked briskly.

"I was going over to see Ann. But I guess I won't. I'm thinking—"

"What?"

"Perhaps I oughtn't to stand in her way any longer."

"Beats all how the girls do want to get married! As a child wants a new toy—want to go with me tonight?" Rudnor broke in abruptly on his generalization.

"Where to?"

"I'm meeting some girls. We're going to Miller's for a dance or two."

"And a drink or two—"

Rudnor smiled. "It's not impossible. Want to come?"

"No."

"Why not! Do you good—"

"You know I don't do that sort of thing."

"The trouble with you is you lead too pious a life. You never have any fun."

"I'd be a nice one to go out with your crowd—when I'm going with a girl—"

"'Going with a girl' as you call it isn't doing you much good, Dave," said Rudnor quietly.

Soule seemed not to hear,—at any rate he made no response. Rudnor was emboldened to continue.

"The way I feel about it is this. Here you are thirty and over. Mother and little sister to support. You ought to be married but you can't. Now what's the answer—?"

S. N. Behrman

"No use, Fred. It wouldn't be fair to Ann—"

"If girls like Ann weren't so damn respectable—"

"Cut that out!" said Soule sharply.

"All right. Sorry you won't join me in my Saturday night festivities. It's my one chance in the week to see you and the kid and I thought I'd step in.—You know she's bright, that sister of yours—"

Something lit up in Soule's face.

"Think so?"

"You bet she is. Well, I'll be running along. Really going to stay in tonight?"

"I don't know."

"Well, so long, Dave."

"So long, Fred."

Rudnor stopped at the door.

"If you should change your mind about tonight—"

"I won't."

"I was going to say—you might come over to Miller's. You'll be welcome. So long."

The door shut to. As he heard Rudnor's steps retreating in the hallway Soule rose suddenly and started for the door. Half-way he stopped short. After a moment he turned and went back to his chair, sitting motionless, staring at the floor.

A faint knocking roused him. "Come," he called, and turned. A woman stood in the doorway, a woman of about twenty-five, pale, thinnish, with tightly-coiled dark hair and tense eyes.

"Ann!"

"What's wrong, Dave?"

"Why—nothing—"

"I've been waiting for you. I thought perhaps your mother—she isn't—worse?"

"No."

"Then why—?"

"It's just that—I was coming over in a few minutes, Ann."

The Song of Ariel

"I was sure it must be your mother. This is the first Saturday night in a year, I guess—something *is* wrong."

"It's that—"

"What?"

"That raise—"

"You didn't get it?" But she read the answer in his face.

Soule raised his arms in a helpless gesture.

"I'm sorry, Ann."

"Surely you don't mean—that we can't be married—even now?"

"If we wait a little longer—till the war is over—"

"Till the war is over!"

"I'm sorry, Ann."

There was a silence. She came close to Soule, her hands clenched at her sides, her eyes flashing.

"I wish she were dead!" she whispered passionately.

"Ann!" He threw a horrified glance toward his mother's room.

"I do. I do. Her life is over. She sits on there in that room, hanging on, eating up your money, robbing me of my chance—"

"You mustn't, Ann—"

"How long do you think I can go on this way?—while you keep spending your money for doctors and medicines that don't do her any good."

"You don't know what you're saying—"

"Don't I? When I came here tonight it was hoping she had died—so help me God!"

She stopped, staring at him defiantly. He looked back at her mute, agonized.

"I can't help it, Ann," he said finally, "I can't do anything. If you want you don't have to keep your promise to wait—"

She laughed bitterly.

"You're willing enough to break it off now, aren't you? After everyone knows I've been going with you and no one

S. N. Behrman

comes near me—”

“You know I love you, Ann—like anything—”

“Then why don’t you show it? If you let Ella go to work—”

“We’ve been over all that. Ella must have her chance. Besides—she’s not strong. She couldn’t stand the grind.”

“I stand it!”

“But, Ann,” he pleaded, “Ella’s only fourteen—”

She came near to him and put her arms around his neck.

“Don’t you love me any more, Dave?”

“You’re all I’ve got, Ann,—you’re everything—”

“We could be so cozy together—.” Her upturned face almost touched his. He clasped her to his breast, his lips pressed against hers.

“I’ll make you so happy,” she whispered, “so happy.”

“You darling—”

“I’ll take such good care of you, dear—we’ll be so cozy together—”

“Ann! Ann!”

“My boy!—You will do what I ask, won’t you?”

“If I only—”

“I’m so tired of waiting, dear. We’ll get married right away—promise me. I so want my own little place—and you. After all it will only be for a little while that Ella will have to work. As soon as you get your raise she can stop. Won’t you, Dave—won’t you?”

Her lips and the touch of her shut away from him the trouble and menace of the world.

“Yes,” he whispered.

A laugh broke from her, a laugh almost fierce in its triumph. Something of its harshness broke the spell she had woven. He drew away from her sharply.

“We’ll have to wait,” he said.

“But you just promised—”

“It wasn’t—fair,” he said simply.

“Then this is good-bye.”

The Song of Ariel

"Ann—please—"

"You must choose between us—"

"But don't you see—?"

"It's between me and them," she said finally.

"I can't do differently, Ann."

"All right. I'm going."

She had reached the door. He called her name. She turned.

"Which is it to be?"

He said nothing but his arms lifted in the old helpless gesture.

"I hate you," she cried. "You hear—I hate you! I never want to see you again—"

He wanted to stop her, to run after her but could not. He stood motionless staring at the door through which she had disappeared. Then he walked uncertainly to a chair and sat down. His face worked convulsively with the effort to master himself. Suddenly a low cry escaped him, and he leaned forward over the table, his head bedded in his arms.

For a long time he sat so—till he heard an uncertain stumbling step on the stairs and a voice calling his name. He rose quickly and opened the door to admit a new Rudnor, a Rudnor with flushed face and eyes aglow.

"There you are, old man! Saw the light and thought I'd come in to find out if you'd changed your mind. Met Ann on the street. She snubbed me. What's the matter? Quarrelled? Well, don't mope. Life's too short to mope. Come on with me. Cheer you up. Two ladies waiting outside—what do you say?"

"Leave me alone, will you?"

"Oh, come. Don't be so upset. Lots of sweethearts in the world. Come on along with me. Saturday night! Life—joy—romance—"

"You're drunk."

"Not much. Just enough to soften the edge of reality. Just enough to make the world beautiful. Just enough to make the ladies beautiful. Even if they're thin and their noses are sharp,

S. N. Behrman

a few drinks and they become round and misty and beauteous. Don't stand there like a stick. I tell you the ladies are waiting. A few drinks and the world will change—"

"All right," said Soule suddenly. "I'll come!"

"Get your coat."

"In a minute—"

He went into the next room and rushed out pulling his coat on as he ran.

"Let's go," he cried, "let's go."

Ella's voice calling her brother stopped them at the door.

"Where you going?"

But Soule had already disappeared and Rudnor followed him. Ella ran to the window and watched them till they were lost to her sight in the crowded street. Then she turned slowly away, a sadness in her eyes that made her look strangely old. The book Rudnor had given her was still in her hand. She sat at the table and started to read. But her attention wavered.

"Mother," she called.

"Yes."

"Are you all right?"

"Yes."

"I'll be in here reading if you want me."

Silence in the room save for the intermittent jangle of the "L" and the faint hum from the street. Lifting the lines in a hushed wistful voice she began reading aloud the gladsome song of Ariel:—

"Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough."

Her voice trailed off—the book fell to her lap; she sat staring ahead of her, her eyes a-dream.

Bread-Crumbs

By Waldo Frank

WHICHEVER way she moved—if it was possible with a turn of her head—Mrs. Silvester looked out on the street. Three children were romping there. They rolled and screamed and twisted gaily. Behind their fragile note was the thick texture of the City.

"I'd give them more sensible clothes to play in," she decided, "if they was mine. And just as nice, too!"

It was closing time—early. But the day had been good, the five o'clock bake was gone, and Joseph Silvester's leg was troubling him again. So she had sent him home, and the boy away. And as she worked, absently dusting, tidying, locking up, her eyes and her heart dwelt with the romping children. The impress of them was not glad, but it was sharp. Their fascination hurt her.

Still aloof from what she did, she went to the cash-drawer and lifted out the day's receipts. And then, as if by force, she turned her eyes from the children to the money. She counted it. She was smiling vaguely at what it told of success and comfort.

The children's laughter lay above the gray street like a little field of flowers. The woman made a bundle of the coins and bills. Then, she took two quarters from it and slipped them into the pocket of her skirt. Then, she completed the package and bolted the door behind her. She brushed past the children without attention. Quite suddenly they were uninteresting and annoying.

It was a walk of three minutes to her flat—one on the

Waldo Frank

avenue, two on the block. The warm Spring evening tinged the clamorous movement of the City, made it somehow gentle and glad and clean. Its smile was stronger than the street's stridency. Helene Silvester went unconsciously along. The crowd that clotted and upset her way with its thick drab was nothing to her. It was like inconsequential mud beneath her feet. She walked through the Spring evening. She was aware of nothing else. A thought of what she had so inexplicably done in the store strove to be noticed. But the part of her that thought was mute and impotent. She did not care, she did not care to know that she had taken the two quarters. The impulse that had caused her deed kept her from questioning its purpose. It seemed sure of itself. Altogether it ruled her, so that she was in no way troubled.

She found her husband ailing. She cooked his supper, and then made him go to bed. It was too early for her to follow. She put out the light. She sat by the window of her front room. Her eyes and that part of her that dreamed took their course outward through the window.

She seemed strangely strong and her reach had no sense of limitation. Directly before her was the brown mass of buildings, deep in a faint purple haze. Below, the street seethed with its myriad energy that drew in as it rose, and struck her like the sharpened crest of a wave. Her window had a slight square frame, and somehow she perceived herself within it, dull and small in her gray dress, with her cheeks pale against the air. And yet the sky welling above the street, which huddled like a swarming thing beneath it, was a more real measure. The sky seemed to catch her with its gleam that fell upon her window; seemed to carry her up and to unfold her. The frangent street was lost in the silence of her outspreading self. And now she no longer saw her little figure framed by the window. She saw a serene sweep of world, slowly murmurous; and of it she saw her life, a pulse in the wide rhythm . . .

B r e a d - C r u m b s

She had been married five years and she had been unhappy. Their trade had thriven. She had seen children romping like flowers in gray soil. She had stolen two silver quarters from herself. And in six months, she was to have—at last—a baby of her own . . .

The great sky rocked the world like a calm mother cradling an infant. The torn noises of the open windows and the block became a cry. Helene Silvester sat without further thought. And then she roused herself. She had been slumbering away, her face sheer to the air. And in her silly dream, she and the sky were one, the playful turmoil of the street was a single voice for which she waited.

Carefully, the young woman closed the window.

"It might rain," was her thought.

Then, she went to bed.

The following day, Joseph Silvester remained at home. Helene kept the store herself. The curious impulse of the day before did not return. She brought back her little bundle of money undespoiled. But the two quarters had stayed where she had tucked them.

Joseph was feeling better, so there were two that evening beside the window. The silence was no less. Helene's thrill had become her monotone.

"I feel so glad—so glad . . . " she had said half-aloud. "It's two lives, husband: my own—and—" she stopped.

Joseph sat there, gripping his black pipe with white teeth. They showed behind the dark droop of his moustache. Also faintly as he puffed, his mouth showed and his lips were thin. He was a tall and heavy man. He was ten years older than his wife: a silent man, knotted by his power, stifled in his lack of an outlet. As he sat there, languid and slow, he was the portrait of a veteran, retired and cluttered up in the kind parsimony of the present. His energy was the sort that longs to slumber. Now, he blinked at Helene's words. They were

Waldo Frank

the nonsense that had made him love her.

"He'll be a good, strong lad," he said with effort—the reach of his imagination.

"Husband—husband!" she was disturbed by the prosaic forecast. A good strong lad—? Others had merited that term.

The silence came again. Outside, the street was a harsh pagan a-frolic in the shadow of a church. But Helene's spirit chimed on. She had been thinking of her son. And now, she was reminded of the two quarters she had stolen from herself.

Light burst on her act. She was not amazed by it, now that she understood. But she was caught by the glamor of her impulse, as it came to her, radiant with her deed. That silver was for her son! Everything that she did and had was hers and her husband's together. The child also would be theirs together; and the clothes he wore and the care of him and the hope for his success. But the money was not theirs; it was hers! It was a bond with her child that birth would not sever.

She went no farther in her planning. She had no will to sound the sense of it. Why steal for her child, when everything that was theirs would be his? It was indeed a mute, foolish, guilty impulse. But Helene knew she would abide by it. Merely, since it was foolish, she would put it away. Since it was guilty, she would protect it. Since it was mute, she would love it.

The next day a quarter went into her skirt. At the month's end, Helene secretly opened an account in her own name, at the nearest bank for savings.

By no other thing was her life stirred from the course of waiting and of working. There had been one reason for her unhappiness. And it was going; each day it was going farther. And in its stead, there were a thousand reasons for being glad. Every detail of existence was quick now with a new throb of gladness; was like herself with the early throb

Bread - C r u m b s

of a new being. All life was tense and proud, was reticent and sweet with its sap of birth. She and all life were sisters. The baking and selling of bread, the brushing of her hair at night, the clothing of her breasts at dawn, the preparing of food, the gossip of her neighbors, the gentle pleasure of her husband—in everything was an unuttered song. A melody had come of the clatter and the travail of existence.

Helene walked through the cold sounds of life, outwardly quiet, inwardly a flame. But it was the flame that moved her. And the flame needed fuel. This was the reason of the now regulated theft.

The child was born in October. They baptized him William. It was Joseph's choice.

Helene's mood changed.

More and more, the business of the bakery devolved on her. During the early months of the child's life, Joseph was grumbling in his subterranean way. It was clear to Helene that she must overcome the tense hope of mothering more children. The peace of their life seemed to call for her unfailing presence. Joseph was lovable only when she allowed him to be passive. And only then did he appear to love her child.

He would say: "Work—worry—work—worry—for *him!*" when Helene had wished to stay at home. And such talk was unbearable to her. Besides, it seemed just that her husband should provide the color, the moral standard of their home; and that she should be its life. Gladly, she accepted whatever turn of events made him more the figure-head, herself more the burdened one. And it was not long before this unlevel distribution seemed a part of her comfort. For Helene was a woman with loyal faith in her own hands. Those whom she loved, she loved to feel dependent. Those whom she loved, she did not care to look on as dependable.

But with these full days she had changed. The wistful,

Waldo Frank

the dreamful in her grew more covert. All her activity was an outward feature of her dream. But as work amassed, that gentle strain retired from the surface. At marriage, she had been a girl with tender lines, frail almost—a soft curve to her forehead, and a petulant wave to her hair, and nervous hands. Now, she was ample, sturdy. She had seemed tall with her slenderness; she was now short with her solidity. Only the glamor of her tilted eyes and the elusive tremble of her lips remained as tokens of her nature. . . . And her eyes looked mainly at accounts; and from her lips came capable commands.

It was not hard for Helene to manage a safe arrangement for her secret Fund. It had become an altar with its daily offering. To serve it, Helene had taken over complete charge of the bakery's accounts. The store was entirely her husband's. But even Joseph knew that he no longer ordered it. His was the credit and the atmosphere. Helene held command; and, since the bakery thrived, she took her tithe.

The boy grew also, and the boy's Fund, as she now always thought of it. Helene was a careful mother. She was not lavish in attentions which warp and spoil a child. Strictly she measured her boy's nature, and planted a word or a sentiment, where, in her absence, it would grow. In a real way, William was her own. It was her taste and intuition that took root in the soil of his will. And yet, a great part of the mother went yearning and hungry. Helene did not have enough of her son. Almost, it seemed that her son was not enough for her. There were periods of rebellion against the store; hectic flights of her passion beyond life's meticulous plod; times when it was hard not to be altogether mother. But Helene held herself. The bakery needed her; life gripped her and reined her in. Her eager arms straightened against their fever to enclose her son; guarded against the lover in her breast. She remained housewife, manager, the restrained and careful parent. But in such phases, she height-

B r e a d - C r u m b s

ened the daily toll for her secret Fund. This was a way of outlet.

It had sprung from a mute source. It had grown to be a field for all the mute things in her—where they could play, where they could meet a sort of sun, where they could be.

For Helene would not have been so indispensable a helpmeet, had she not been many more things first. Into this pent shell she crowded a maze of murmurous life. She was a symbol of the stifled city. Athrob with a deep stream of power, she ran a bakeshop; all woven up in a panoply of dreams the least of which had a bright tip in the stars, she robbed small coins from her own cash-box. Her vision was that the dun streets were strewn with pied and playing flowers, yet she lacked force to win the communion that she needed with her child, to dare the venture of another. In all things, it is her like that had turned the glad fields into dolorous cities; and that give their golden lilt to the shambled gutters.

The Fund grew then; and into it, swelling also, flowed her thought and her impulse. But the sign of all this was merely her more rapt interest in the Fund. She knew of nothing else. She was a quite ordinary woman. Yet, it was the Fund that made her cramped life bearable. It was a way of revolt and of adventure: a way of having a separate life and of doing a silent thing. It had been Romance; it became Reality.

Joseph sat in his rocker and it was Sunday and he was unable to suggest their going anywhere.

"Don't you feel like an outing?"

"I'm tired, Helene. You go—with the boy."

She did not think of the drouth of her husband's life. A dart of pleasure at the fruitful sum she had put away tinged through her. This was enough.

Joseph plied her with questions, in the store.

"We must get another place for the cakes. Why don't the

Waldo Frank

Martins never come here any more? By the way, Helene, can you send our William with that extra delivery to number 393? I forgot it with the boy's orders."

William went. Helene answered all the questions.

"Ten cents extra for my child's having to do errands," she adjudicated grimly, as she made her theft that evening. So the inner rebellion was sloughed off.

Life was a dead thing. But her live fingers worked on it. Its dross was quick with her spirit.

After ten years, there was the Fund grown to four figures! And then, Helene fell sick.

Once more her life was unlit, unwoven dross. Its emptiness had a painful, echoing reverberation. And then, all of her limbs were lead; and her thoughts weighted her body which they had lifted up. And the air choked her breathing; and the pavements of the street struck hard against her walking. And her work was a tedium and love was an irony . . . It was the sort of illness Helene could be made to admit—the one sort. It sank her to her bed. And there it held her stricken for half a year, while the world slumbered and dreamed outside, and her spirit beat within. And only her hands were flecked with life, as if life had run down and low to that extremity.

Finally, she was washed up, a blanched shred of herself, with all of world and spirit to be made anew.

For twelve months, Joseph had the store and his son in his unaided hands. The task was beyond the man. Gradually, all these years, he had let his initiative dry away. He had settled into a state of half-decrepitude, of sweet inertia. It had been as much Helene's fault as his.

He strove heroically. He was all caught up in the stern business of command, and did not know that he was failing. He worked incessantly; he nursed his wife; he tried to be an active father; he got up at dawn. And while he worked, his

B r e a d - C r u m b s

mind was stiff with fear and worry—mute to recording. . . . When Helene came to herself, the bakery had fallen off from its prosperity. And Joseph Silvester was in debt.

Her healing was a sharp, slow birth. Her illness had been a guilty night. While her senses slumbered there was her household fallen away! All of it was like a mad interlude from faithfulness.

But now she was able to sit in her chair, while Joseph laid the events before her. Not until then was he sure himself of what had happened. What he knew best was that he had fought hard, admitted no breach in his hope. He stood beside her, a large, gentle man with his hair greying and his eyes poignantly moist and his lank hands faintly moving.

"Sit down, dear," she had to tell him. He sank awkwardly, and faced her. They looked calmly at each other. They seemed closer together than they had been. This dread thing, life, had played them an irreverent trick. It had tried to lay silence on them. But they were above the silence.

"I tried, Helene, to keep strict accounts of the business. But I was worried—I was so tired!" He gave her a batch of crumpled papers, blurred over with his pencil.

"Here are bills; I haven't paid them yet." He gave these to her, also.

She took them. "Go back to the store," she said, "while I study these."

Joseph got up and lingered. At the door he spoke.

"Helene——"

"Yes, husband——?"

"I—I wanted to say—it don't matter—none of the trouble—now; when I see you gettin' well."

"Of course, it don't!" she answered. And then she laughed.

The story of the crumpled sheets was an easy one for her trained eyes to read. The business of the bakery was dwindling. At the first outlay due to her illness, Joseph had retrenched. He had forced a diminution of his sales by a cur-

Waldo Frank

tailment of his supplies. It had been the one way he knew of to save money. And it had its logical result. His trade had shrunk. He had let it shrink. At each reverse, he had cut down the amount and the quality of what he had to sell. The vicious process had gained momentum. Expenses had risen. Everything else had lessened. And for each drop, the foolish man had had no wiser answer than to add a willed retrenchment of his own.

Helene shook her head.

"It's my fault," she said. "If he had been that silly when I married him, he could never have had a bakery at all! I've spoiled him." And then, "I had no business getting sick."

She got up from her chair to see if she was strong enough to walk. A pain shot through her temples; her mind sickened in a swirl of nausea. But her feet held her. She walked the length of the room, three times. Then she sank down in her chair. She wanted to rest on her bed. She had resisted that. That had been giving ground, not gaining it.

"In a week, I'll be good," was her decision. It had no link with the pain in her temples.

She nursed herself carefully, meanwhile. She knew that she was preparing for a battle. And all of that week, she laid her plans, she went over the conditions she would have to cope with, she marshalled her resources. During that week no thought or fact of her life seemed to escape her. All of her was quickened by the sharp emergency of her affairs. All of her was attuned to meeting it. Yet, she did not dream, one moment, of touching her secret Fund.

"If only we had saved some money," Joseph said to her, with a low shake of his big head, looking away. "We should have, wife. We have been foolish."

"It is a pity, husband," was her answer.

And then, the battle.

Her eagerness swept her along. She was content, being

B r e a d - C r u m b s

full-handed. She had no eye to gauge the direction of her struggle. But even hope had to stop to breathe; and in the pause Helene looked about her. What she found was strangely different from her hope.

The way of their life had been increase. Now, it was loss. To bring about that change, there had come a violent event—her illness. No effort seemed strong enough to turn them back to the old way. Helene learned that there was stubborn growth in a bad direction, even as in a good one. The tide was going out.

And while she labored, hands beating against the ebb, hope weaving a frail garb against the onslaught, her Fund was fat and peaceful with its interest.

There were five years of battle. Into it Helene flung all of her diligence and craft. For it her husband found a new bloom of obdurate resolution. They served merely to prolong the battle.

She had begun to fight, for her health's sake, too soon. She did not regain the full vigor she had lost. Once more, she was pale and thin, and her hands were nervous. Her work and worry ate up each new shoot of strength as it appeared. Again the dreamful fiber of Helene stood at the surface—stripped, like her life, of its substance. Without blossom of youth and lilt of growth, there she was as she had been at the naked outset. Only she had her son beside her, and the secret Fund in the bank for savings.

These, then, served in place of the hope and passion and power of fifteen years before. These alone remained. She clung to them with desperation. And her grip was that of a spent, scared creature in the dark. For Helene did not know what life was fashioning. But, although she did not understand, she thought no more of giving up her Fund than she did of giving up her boy. In some way, one group of feelings bound them.

Waldo Frank

And inexorably, failure had crept up.

They had worked body to body—she and her husband. The old easeful state of Joseph had shrivelled and gone away. He was a strong man, now. His will had burst forth. But the long sleep had atrophied his powers. He was intent on doing; he did not know what to do. He was more helpless in his blindness, because he was more active. His energies were new, but his skill was old. And, after all, even the Helene who had been, the woman merged into the substance of her will, with all of her vigor athrob and her strength unthwarted, had done no greater thing than this: to make a prosperous bake-shop prosper a little more.

But the blight of the year when she lay blighted also, had sunk too deep into the source of their affairs. About them had been too much life, strained to catch the sun where they drooped to the shadow. So now, at last, the time of deferring debts was over. The battle of five years swerved suddenly to a decision.

They sat facing each other, their hard stiff chairs against two walls. Joseph's rocker was empty. He was in no mood for it. Before them, in the center of the room, was a bare table. Their flat was darker, poorer than any they had occupied before. It was a Sunday afternoon. The morrow was the last day for paying certain creditors who had placed their ultimatum on legal paper. Joseph had the paper in his hands. It was his, because the property was his.

Beyond the window was a sordid street that stretched like a funnel to a little treeless park. Here their son was playing.

"Wife," Joseph said, "these are what's going to ruin us. Eight hundred dollars. If we could meet them——"

"The store is picking up."

"Yes; that's the sneering part of it. All of this fight, and the store picking up. And then—" he stirred the paper languidly, "then this."

B r e a d - C r u m b s

"What can we do, Joseph?" Only her mouth moved as Helene spoke.

"Yes; that's it—what can we do, Helene?" He seemed to be tracing her words, with a tired care, in order to comprehend them.

"We'll have to go to work," she said.

The big man trembled. He rose partly from his seat. And then, gripping himself, he rested back.

"You mean a job—for *us*?" Still he seemed to grope, fingering over her words.

"What else is there to do!"

Helene left her chair. She wanted to walk.

"Sit down, wife." His tone was an unmistakable command.

Helene caught it, amazed, and her seat found her.

"Do you know what you've said, Helene? Do you know what that'd mean? Do you understand——?"

His voice was shaken, but it was strong. He had outstretched his hand. It also was both strong and shaken.

"Joseph," Helene said, "how can I help knowing? Have I been outside? You talk——!"

All of her feeling ravelled into pain. After his wreckage, had she not given the sinew of her body?

"Listen, Helene. I'm over fifty years old. I've been a sober man. I've been a decent man. Do you want me to go out, like a laborer, now? Could you stand for me to do that, Helene——?"

"I'll be going with you, Joseph."

"Listen some more, Helene. Have I ever harmed you? Have I ever interfered with all you wanted. I know you was clever. I know I was lazy. You was the boss, Helene. And when you was sick, don't you think I was ashamed how I spoiled what you had done? Do you think, wife, I liked to see myself for what I was? This is my fault. That ain't easy, knowing!"

"We're in it together, like one, husband. We'll face it."

Waldo Frank

His words hurt her. They had driven tears to her eyes. There was a tragic anger in this man's grief which she had never seen; which—of all of him—she could not master.

"You can stop it, Helene."

"What!"

He was standing over her. His big hands were clenched. And his body seemed alive in his flat clothes.

"I'm speaking, now! I watched you. I've known all along. I said nothing. Why should I? You deserved what you took. You would do no harm with it. I trusted you. I trust you, now, Helene. But save us! What's it all been piled up for, else? It's a heap of money, if you ain't spent it!"

His voice had been low. His words came ponderously. Helene was watching his clamped hands.

"Is it spent, Helene?"

"No, husband, it ain't spent."

Joseph lurched back, loosing his hands. "Thank God," he breathed.

"It ain't going to be spent! It ain't mine to spend! It's Willie's!"

Her words were quick. They were more shattering to him than all of his surprise had been to her. Rather than meet them, he contrived to doubt them.

"Then you don't understand."

"I do, husband. Who should understand, if I did not?"

"It's ruin! It's disgrace!" he was shouting now. "Here, with that bank-book!"

He thrust forth his palms. She was also on her feet.

"No."

"Here!" he once more lowered his voice.

"It's Willie's, I tell you."

"It's my money. Where did you get it from? My store—"

"You can't take it, Joseph."

"I don't mean to take it. You'll give it here."

They swayed close to each other. And then, she smiled.

Bread - C r u m b s

She had mastered him again.

"Sit down, husband. And let's talk."

Bewilderment was foremost in his senses. Long he had known of this. But always he had had two habits: a profound respect for the woman that he loved, a profound silence for what was close-woven in his life. He was ready, with the wreck of that life upon him, to listen to her words. With another, doubtless, all his slumbering mute strength would have flamed high with passion and a blind violence. He sat now, his body strained and aquiver, while his wife spoke, slowly.

"I never guessed you knew. Well, you do know. I thought it was my secret. I'm glad you never spoke to me about it. Thanks for that, husband. Your speaking would have spoiled it. I don't know why," she shook her head, "but it would. And it's true. And it's three thousand dollars"— She paused.

He measured his hope with her words, not daring to know their strangeness one to the other.

"Joseph," she went on, "think what it is—all that money—think what it means. It's the difference between you and Willie; it's what you never had. I love you, but what are you? What are either of us? It's what is goin' to make him stronger, better!"

"You see us on the edge of nothing. And you insult your husband."

"I don't. But our life's done. We can plod through, somehow. What'll that money do for us? Pay our debts—yes; and run our bakery. What's that to Willie? And what can it do for him? The money can give him an education! It can send him to college! Oh, don't you see?"

"And we——?"

"We'll work. It's your store. It's my money. I don't have to pay your debts with it. But Joseph, am I forsaking you? Have I done that yet? I'll work with you, husband. I'm yours, even if this money ain't. I'll care for you. Oh, what won't I go through with you!"

Waldo Frank

"You can save us."

"At his expense?"

Her face had been soft. It hardened.

"No, I tell you! That's his. That's his chance. If we got to go down, so he can keep on goin' up—why down we got to go!"

She stopped. There was an austere ring in her voice.

Joseph looked at his wife. He came up close to her, in order to look close. She seemed, this moment, the clear, single summary of all that she had been to make him love her:—all this, in what appeared to him the moment of betrayal.

Still, he said: "You're heartless, wife. You steal from me; years, you been stealing from me. And now, you think of making your son better than I was."

"It's true."

"You don't care for me. All your love's there." He waved to the street.

"I'm yours, husband," was her answer.

"Is this honest—for them we owe to?"

Helene smiled: "It's his, now. We'll work to pay off, if that's your will."

"You mean it, Helene."

"What do we count, Joseph? *We* can work—until we die."

The man's face flamed a moment; and from the fire came hardness.

"Where's your love o' life? Are we that old?"

She smiled at him again—a smile this time flushed with a great knowledge that hurt. Her mind raced back. She saw three children romping in the street before the window of her shop. She saw herself, grasping two silver coins. And now, her hands moved vaguely in the direction of the window near which she stood.

"Where's your love o' life?" he had asked her. Her waving was her answer.

She sank into her chair. She held her head in her two

B r e a d - C r u m b s

hands. She sobbed. For it seemed that she had understood.

Her husband wavered before the agony of her vision. He was disarmed. He, also, understood—but as one separate from life, seeing it, feeling its horrid beauty across a gulf. He stood there, silent.

And then, in Helene's grief-bathed mind the vision came, and her tears made it gleam. She saw herself and her husband. They were aged and bowed, and stained and stricken with dull toil. And they were clad as are the men and women who labor with their hands. And they were going forth through a black swamp. And before them was nothing. But behind them—impelling them to go, driving them on, was a child dressed all in white. It was their child.

From Chicago.

By Sherwood Anderson

I AM mature, a man child, in America, in the west, in the great valley of the Mississippi. My head arises above the corn fields. I stand up among the new corn.

I am a child, a confused child in a confused world. There are no clothes made that fit me. The minds of men cannot clothe me. Great projects arise within me. I have a brain and it is cunning and shrewd.

I want leisure to become beautiful but there is no leisure. Men should bathe me with prayers and with weeping but there are no men.

Now—from now—from today I shall do deeds of fiery meaning. Songs shall arise in my throat and hurt me.

I am a little thing, a tiny little thing on the vast prairies. I know nothing. My mouth is dirty. I cannot tell what I want. My feet are sunk in the black swampy land but I am a lover. I love life. In the end love shall save me.

The days are long. It rains. It snows. I am an old man. I am sweeping the ground where my grave shall be.

Look upon me, my beloved, my lover who does not come. I am raw and bleeding, a new thing in a new world. I run swiftly over bare fields. Listen! There is the sound of the tramping of many feet. Life is dying in me. I am old and palsied. I am just at the beginning of my life.

Do you not see that I am old, oh my beloved? Do you not understand that I cannot sing, that my songs choke me? Do you not see that I am so young I cannot find the word in the confusion of words?

I.

While he is still young and pregnant with life it behooves the artist who would stand unashamed among men to make his contribution to the attempt to extend the province of his art. And as his struggle as an artist is and must be inseparably bound up with his struggle as a man, the attempt may fairly be said to fall under the head of an effort to extend the possibilities of human life.

Here is a field of thought that should make the fingers of the young artist tremble as those of a fine lover tremble at

From Chicago

the approach of his beloved. What to the living is more sweetly vital than life? Fearing as all true artists do and must the danger of the approach of that self-satisfaction that is death, he will find upon this road difficulties that destroy self-satisfaction. Knowing that all about him in the world are men and women striving to fasten upon him their own insanity of conformity, the young and valiant soul will find here a constant demand for sustained clear thinking that will be to him a tonic against the insidious poison of association with the weak.

The driving impulse toward this attempt is, I should say, something like this—that the artist, having taught himself to look keenly and constantly at himself must realize that of all the figures in the world his is the most fortunate. Standing upon the high place and watching the struggle of his soul upon the wall of life, the artist among all men, so standing, knows that his soul has at least the chance of success in that struggle.

In a quite practical way also the artist is one upon whom riches have been bestowed. Does he arise in the morning half ill of the perplexities of his life, a half hour of fine surrender to his art impulse shall restore him. By a bridge near a river he stands and is stirred by the sight of the giant mechanism by which the bridge is raised for the passage of a ship. His quick imagination sees the workers in the great factories making the mechanism. If by good fortune he has been at some time also a laborer he hears in fancy the crashing blows of the great hammers and sees the beauty of the bodies of men absorbed in physical tasks. What to him at the moment is the fact that the laborer is cheated of the reward of his labor or that his own coat is somewhat shabby? In a flash his craft has restored to him the sweetness of a day. One of a million little beauties of every street scene or of every country roadside has revealed itself to him.

By his side stand men who are waiting for the footway over

Sherwood Anderson

the bridge to be reestablished that they may cross the river. One of them, a plumber, has a heavy wrench in his hand. He begins talking to a second man and speaking of the ship that is passing. He uses nautical terms, throwing them about with more zeal than skill. The artist turns quickly. A light dances in his eyes. He has seen behind the plumber who is young and muscular a pretty waitress. He knows that the young male is but swaggering before the female, that he is not trying to deceive the men in the crowd by his assumed knowledge of ships but is honestly striving to awaken admiration in the mind of the woman. One of the hundred little inter-plays of human relations with which each of the artist's living hours are colored has come to take his mind off the rather second-rate breakfast he must eat.

In all of the concerns of his life, in the perplexities of love, in the muddle of affairs that compel him to spend hours, to him divinely precious, in the treadmill of making a living, the craft of the artist, if he be a true craftsman, is as a strong arm protecting him.

And so the artist having within him youth and the courage that has made him an artist, begins to aspire, humbly and for the most part in secret to make to his own craft some returns for the riches that have been given to him. If he be a novelist (and you must get me as always thinking as a novelist although I know no reason why that should influence your judgment of the justice of my observations), if he be a novelist, I say, he will be at the first appalled by the difficulties of the task to which he has set himself. Old masters, men long dead, strong true men have put in his hand a tool so fitting to the work he wants to do that it seems at times absurd that he should strive to make for himself and for all the brothers of his craft who will follow him a better tool. The names of Fielding, Balzac, Tolstoy, Defoe dance before him. To attempt what they did not do seems a kind of sacrilege. If he be of a fine quality and set upon modesty the artist may make

From Chicago

the attempt but will make it in secret, not even speaking of the matter to his brother artists.

But the thing that I am asking for here is the attempt, the present day attempt, the American attempt, the attempt everywhere all over the world where the novelist with his ink pots and his lamps sits valiantly writing.

II.

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

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

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

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

What is the secret of the madness of the writer?

He is a small man and has a torn ear. A part of his ear has

Sherwood Anderson

been carried away by the explosion of a gun. Above the ear there is a spot, as large as a child's hand where no hair grows.

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

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

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

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

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

The talk with the store manager has inflamed the mind of

From Chicago

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is the dream of the novelist that he will make men understand the spirit of the woman they saw in the streets. He

Sherwood Anderson

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

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

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

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

III.

Consider the tantalizing difference in the quality of work produced by two men. In the first we get at times an almost overwhelming sense of proficiency in his craft. The writer, we feel, knows art forms, knows construction, knows words. How he slings the words about. His sentences stay in the mind. Word clings to word. Almost every one of his lines is quotable.

And this other fellow. His words do not cling, his art forms become at times shapeless, he stumbles, going crudely

From Chicago

and awkwardly forward.

And how breathlessly we follow. What is he doing that he holds us so tightly? What is the secret of our love of him, even in the midst of his awkwardness?

He is revealing himself to us. See how shamelessly and boldly he is trying to tell us of the thing that is a never-ceasing marvel to him—the march of his own life; the complete story of his own adventure in the midst of the universal adventure.

It is Sunday evening and I am dining alone in a restaurant. The day is cold and cheerless and since morning I have been at work in my room.

I have been revising a book that is partly good, partly bad. That it is at all bad has chilled the fires in me. The thing should not have been bad. What a fine figure I was as the labor leader. How strange and wonderful my thoughts as I went through the city nights, hurrying from place to place, stirring the soul of labor. And how feebly I have expressed my thoughts. In the restaurant I jab at the table-cloth with my fork. "I should have done more with myself in so fine a role."

In the restaurant, that faces Wabash Avenue, my thoughts wander away from the book and I begin to think of an incident that happened on the evening before.

Some two weeks before that evening I had met a woman in another restaurant. She was an Englishwoman with a long thin face and when I came upon her she sat at a table with a party of friends. One of the party beckoned and I went to sit at the table. I sat by the Englishwoman.

At the table the entire party was in a playful mood. Wine went about. Someone sang a song. From all sides a great clatter of voices arose.

Between the Englishwoman and myself much laughing talk went on. Here and there we turned, laughing and shouting at the people seated at the table.

Sherwood Anderson

And then in a moment all was changed. A new quality came to color our brief acquaintanceship. There amid the noise and the laughter our two minds ran out to meet each other.

I cannot remember the details of that change. I had said something of England and its position in the world, something to the effect that England would always succeed, that English national stupidity insured success. "All successful things are stupid," I declared, looking at the woman.

The Englishwoman looked away. When our eyes met again her eyes were troubled. "Ah!" I thought quickly, "she has the rare gift of earnestness. There is wisdom in this woman. She knows that life is too short to be spent in half moods. A moment ago she was completely in fun, now she is as completely in earnest."

Hastily I withdrew my poorly digested comments concerning her native land and we talked. For five, perhaps for ten minutes, we got at each other. Like two wide-eyed children in a world full of unaccountable peoples and impulses, we talked of England, of America, of our own lives, of the strangeness and loveliness of our minds, meeting and embracing in that great noisy place.

"We must talk a whole evening away," I pleaded. "After these few moments we would be fools not to do that."

The hand of the woman, lying on the table, trembled. Perhaps my hand trembled also. Even now as I sit writing of the woman, my hand, that plays back and forth on the paper, shakes with the memory of her.

We walked in Jackson Park here in Chicago, going along the paths in silence. Thoughts arose. In so brief a time there had been built up in each of us a background of much thinking. Already our two lives were colored, each by the other. After a time words came. She was lonely in America and talked of her own country and of a wide moor that ran away toward the sunset beyond her own town. On Sundays she had

From Chicago

gone upon the moor with the people with whom she lived and whom she loved. With a man she loved she had walked hand in hand and had talked as she and I had talked in the restaurant.

In the park it was cold and we met no people. Presently we got upon a wide open space. The dreary persistent wind roared in distant trees. In the night the open space was mysteriously vast.

Again we walked along in silence. I put out my hand and in it she put her own hand.

And then the old human problem presented itself to the woman and me. We had stopped beneath a small tree. Away in the distance a street car ran past the front of the park. It seemed immeasurable miles away. The cold wind beat about her slender figure.

I took the woman into my arms. In her face as it looked up into mine was all of the loveliness of woman. How men have ached and prayed and fought and whipped themselves to long lives of endeavor because of the unworldly beauty in the eyes of woman. Oh, there was unspeakable loveliness in her. How I longed for beauty within myself, beauty with which to match that beauty, that quiet, submissive, waiting loveliness in her.

With an impotent cry I turned and taking her by the hand led her back to walk again upon the gravel paths.

We talked then. How the words welled up in me. "Never," I cried, "shall I find beauty to match your beauty; your lover—he must have been very wonderful." Aimlessly I stumbled about, saying words, trying to make her understand how truly in my poor way I also loved her.

In the restaurant I pay my bill, and go out into the street. What matter if my hands tremble and I have forgotten to eat? What matter if the Englishwoman, met in that other restaurant, sailed for home two days after our meeting? What

Sherwood Anderson

matter if, on that Saturday evening, I suffered from a headache and walked alone in the windswept park? What matter if I never in all my life knew such a woman?

Is my story for all these reasons the less true? Is the moment in which I look down into the loveliness of a woman's soul less a part of my life because it happened in fancy there in the restaurant in Wabash Avenue?

Again and again I proclaim the richness of life that men miss. Have you not also walked in the street reconstructing the conversations, the meetings, the brief awkward moments through which you have passed?

You were making literature then. In the actual moment you had been crude and awkward and so as you walked muttering you reconstructed the moment, made it more lovely, more alive with meaning.

In the street as you walked the sentences you made were filled with meaning, your desires honest, your acts noble.

What care I whether or not you get money from the stories of your true life and whether or not you gain fame? Do you not see that as you, in your turn, dine in your Wabash Avenue restaurant I would have your hours touched with the beauty that has come to me here after this dull working day?

IV.

I am walking in the street at evening of a summer day. The rush of people homeward bound has passed and something of the jaded weariness of their faces remains in my mind. I go heavily along by an iron railing that guards a network of railroad tracks. The tracks run away between rows of grey brick buildings into Chicago's West Side. Beside the tracks is the river that flows from the lake into the land and that carries away the sewage of the city. The river is like a drain that takes the fetid matter from a wound and the city is a wound upon the prairie.

As I walk my mind becomes heavy and dull. I have passed

From Chicago

the middle age of life and I begin to measure the courage left to me as a traveler in a desert might look at the water in a water-bottle. I become afraid and tremble. Over a distant bridge that mounts high above the river and the tracks passes a long procession of wagons pulled by weary horses. From the wheels of the wagon dust arises. Behind the cloud of dust burns the sun, also flushed with weariness.

In a kind of desperation I begin letting my mind play with my own life, with what I have seen of the lives of others. Things seen, and that have been lying like spermatozoa in the sack of my mind, grow and are fertilized by the facts of my own journey through the world.

I am a boy who came to Chicago from a little place in Missouri. Like most boys raised in the hill country I was lean and strong. I was uneducated but much solitary riding of horses over lonely hills had led me into the habit of letting my mind play. It was a custom of mine to talk aloud and to sing at the top of my voice as I went along and at times it was difficult to restrain these impulses as I walked among the crowds in the city streets.

In the city I lived on the West Side with my sister who later went wrong and was lost in the maze of the life here. Our younger sister who is now married to a printer and lives in a suburb called Austin lived with us. She had blue eyes and a tiny hesitating voice and on Sunday mornings walked hand in hand with me in Washington Boulevard chattering away and asking questions that I could not answer.

What a struggle we had, the three of us, there in the city. For a long time I could not get work and we got into debt so that I had to write to my uncle for money. He sold three hogs that would have littered in the spring and sent the money to me. Sometimes I smile now as I think of that letter. How the words must have been misspelled and how amusing the arrangement of words. It might have been printed in a comic paper. Later, you see, I went to night school and rose in the

Sherwood Anderson

world.

But I am thinking of that first winter. I worked with other men on a pile-driver that drove piles for the foundation of a warehouse. The warehouse is now finished and stands near the mouth of the river where the boats come in from the lake. All day the waves washed against the long flat boat on which stood the engine that lifted a heavy weight only to let it drop again on the head of the log we were driving into the soft river mud. At first the log sank rapidly, a foot or more with each blow, but later it went slowly inch by inch.

How cold it was on the boat. In the morning I liked it out there. The slapping of the waves against the boat, the heavy thump of the weight on the head of the log and the puffing of the engine made it possible to talk aloud.

I talked out everything that came into my mind. Close beside the engine I stood and the words rolled out of me. In the midst of the many noises there was a great silence, so I talked into that, telling of my hopes, my dreams, my strangely impossible ambitions in life.

There was a woman of thirty-five who sang in the choir in a church on our street and I talked of her. When she sang on Sunday mornings she sometimes put her hand on the little railing of the choir loft and, from the seat where I sat with my younger, blue-eyed sister, I could see her fingers peeping out. When I talked of her hands, out there in the noisy place on the boat, I sometimes took off my gloves and looked at my own hands. They were strong but the skin was very coarse and in places the skin was broken so that red angry flesh looked through. The skin at the edge of the wounds was like the white of a fish. The water did that.

I am thinking of the winter nights when I came away from the boat, going to my place on the West Side. I went along the railroad tracks just below where I am standing now. It was dark and only the lights at the switches, the red and green

From Chicago

railroad lights, lighted the way.

On the boat at the edge of the lake I did not talk and sing after three o'clock in the afternoon. Those were the bad hours, from three until six, when we quit and went along boards to a wharf. From the wharf we stumbled up to a spur of the railroad tracks. Once I fell off the boards and had to be fished out of the water but even that did not increase my numbness.

All day the waves that beat against the boat sent a fine spray of water over us and this froze into ice. When the wind was off shore, however, it was not so bad. In the morning the heart beat stoutly but after three o'clock the feet and the hands and even the balls of the eyes became cold. I could not think of the woman who sang in the church choir after three o'clock and sometimes as I went along the tracks that ran into the West Side I could not see very well. How odd that a train did not hit me! I stepped away from trains like a horse that cannot be induced to run its head against a tree, even in the pitch darkness.

From the place by the railing at the edge of the tracks on the summer evening I return across the city to my own room. I am vividly aware of my own life that escaped the winter on the boat. How many such lives I have lived. Then I only made a dollar and a half a day and now I sometimes make more than that in a few minutes. How wonderful to be able to write words. I am enamored of myself because I can write words and can make my living by it. Now perhaps I could have the woman who sang in the choir and perhaps I would not take her if she offered.

In my room I sit thinking of courage—of the courage of men. The balls of the eyes of the boy on the track were numb and he could scarcely see. In the two rooms where he lived with his sisters there was a tiny coal stove by a window. It

Sherwood Anderson

was put there to stop the cold from coming through the cracks in the window sill and that necessitated a long stove-pipe having many joints. The pipe was fastened with wires and often at night it fell down scattering black coal soot on the bed where the boy lay. He could not eat when he came home but lay on the bed until his heart beat strong again and warmth came back into his body. At nine o'clock he arose, washed, had his supper, and returned again to sleep beneath the long stove-pipe.

On my desk in my room there is a black leather note-book with leaves that may be taken out. When the leaves are all written full I take them out, fasten them with rubber bands, and put them away. Then I fill the book with new white leaves.

In my room when I come back from standing by the tracks I think how I was afraid because I have reached middle age. There is a cunning satisfaction in my heart because I think that when my body is weary I shall take the leaves from the rubber bands and go on writing year after year as though I were yet alive.

There is satisfaction in this thought until another thought comes. Not as I stood weary by the tracks, but now, as I think of the hoarded leaves of white paper in the rubber bands, has the coward appeared. To myself I say, "Am I to be less stout-hearted than the boy who stumbled half frozen along the tracks?"

And so, although the night is warm I have a fire in the fire-place in my room. One by one I burn the white leaves I have saved.

Are we, who write stories, who paint pictures and who act upon the stage to go on forever hoarding our minor triumphs, like frugal merchants who keep a secret bank account; are we to be less courageous than our brothers, the laborers?

Tomorrow I am afraid that my courage will have failed.

From Chicago

And so, tonight, although it is warm here, I have a fire in the fire-place in my room.

V.

It is three o'clock of a winter's afternoon and I am lying in a nook among rocks on the side of a mountain in Missouri. I am clad in heavy boots that lace to the knees and they are covered with frozen mud. In a road far below an old Ozark mountaineer is riding a donkey to a distant town. He is a tall old man and his feet hang to the ground. I am in a sheltered place and the cold wind does not reach me, but across the prospect of barren hills it goes, shouting and roaring. Beyond the road that lies at the foot of the hill there is a river and along this there comes presently a raft upon which stands a man with a pole in his hand. He is singing a ballad of a country girl who went away to a distant city and there became the plaything of evil. There is a penetrating quality of beauty in the raftsmen's voice and my mind is carried away by it.

I begin reconstructing the life of the country girl of the song. She is tall and strong and very lean like the girls I have seen at the doors of the cabins along the roads that run through the hills. There is in her a kind of wild beauty, tempered by ignorance. She stands within the door of the cabin also singing, and outside the door, clad in a worn man's overcoat, is an old woman who smokes a pipe. As she sings the mountain girl looks at the old woman, who is hideous. The hunger for beauty, that will presently destroy the girl, that echoes in the heart of the lonely raftsmen on the river among the hills, comes up and possesses me. I turn about in my nook and stare long and hard at the cheerless hills. The oak trees have retained last year's leaves and these are now a dull red. I see death here as I have seen it so often in faces of men in the cities, but here the note of beauty has remained in the midst of death. The dull red leaves that rattle in the

Sherwood Anderson

wind are the visible signs of it. It plays in the minds of the raftsmen and the girl and in my own mind.

Again I begin the endless game of reconstructing my own life, jerking it out of the shell that dies, striving to breathe into it beauty and meaning. A thought comes to me.

When I was a boy I lived in a town in Ohio and often I wandered away to lie upon my back, thinking, as I am doing now. I reconstruct and begin to color and illuminate incidents of my life there. Words said, shouts of children, the barking of dogs at night, occasional flashes of beauty in the eyes of women and old men are remembered. I wonder why my life, why all lives, are not more beautiful.

Away to the city I take myself and I am sitting beside a woman in a room upstairs in a cheap apartment house. I am a grown man now, alive with vigor, and I am determined I shall make love to the woman. She has a tall boyish figure and strange grey eyes. Something in the eyes madden me. I rush to the woman, take her into my arms, and kiss her passionately. See, I have killed something that was lovely in the eyes of the woman. I have done my share toward putting that keen plaintive note into the voice of the ignorant raftsman. It was beautiful to make love to the woman but in making love I also killed beauty.

Again a turn of my mind. Back I come to these papers. I begin to see myself, to see all writers in a new aspect. My fingers tremble to begin explaining my thoughts.

When I was a boy in the Ohio town I was given a conventional American education which included not a few rather dreary hours in what is called God's House. As I grew older and pushed out into the world I no longer thought of the church and a peculiar, insistent something kept me from going there.

Since my twentieth year—and I am now, as I lie in the nook on the hillside, a man near forty—I have not been inside

From Chicago.

a house of worship. Before coming to the mountains I secured small editions of the four books by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and these I have carried in my pocket and read as I lay on wind-swept peaks, or sat at night by a camp-fire near some chattering river's shore. I had been curious concerning the telling of that same old story by the four men who, like the man of whom they talked, were artists, no doubt the most worthy among the hundreds who told the story.

On the mountainside thoughts crowd in upon me. I begin to sense the inner purpose of these papers. They are a kind of challenge to myself and to all writers. Why should we not begin, many of us, to tell in our own way and out of our own lives, that same story? Why should there not come from among us, men also worthy to stand up beside the old artists, a Henry Rodgers from Wisconsin or a Seth Williams of Virginia, to stand with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? It is not necessary that our man resort to the subterfuge of hiding behind the names of the disciples, the fishermen, and the collectors of taxes who went up and down with Him. Is there not in some one of us a testament, an inner story of struggle and failure, that, because of its truth, shall be found worthy to stand beside the story of another day, yes, even beside the masterful presentation made by John?

How afire I am, thinking of the fine courage of this thought. I want to tell my brother writers of it. My mind does not suggest that the stories as presented by our four predecessors are bare of the touch of life that is in the hand of the true artist. I am thinking only that time, the droning voices of the preachers, and the changing life of man has taken away some flavor that must once have been there. Have we not come into a new age filled with the stirrings of new life? Will we not forever be so coming? Why in our strivings should we be less bold than they? May we not, by the courage and nobility of our presentation of the inner story of our

Sherwood Anderson

lives hope finally to outdo them; outdo them in the truth of the presentation of the artist who must fail to the minds of our age?

On the hillside I arise from my nook and the wind plays about my shoulders. The dreariness has gone out of the day. I am looking forward to the coming of the new artist who will give us what the old men did not completely give, the beautiful and stirring story of the spirit that failed, just as the artist himself shall fail and who, like the Christ, on that dramatic night in the garden, must come at last to the facing of truth and know that he must always fail, that, even in keeping alive the memory of his struggle, all men shall fail.

Down the hillside to my own cabin I come, my mind saluting the four who tried so faithfully to tell the story of failure in the old past. I salute the four but, with the dream of the new men before me, I do not bow down to them. Firmly I stand upon the right of the new brood of writers to attempt all, to tell the story of struggle and failure so vividly that there shall come from among them many disciples; perhaps, in his turn, one so daring, so bold, and so faithful in his facing of failure, that he also shall be called the Christ.

Holy Russia

RUSSIA is born. Before her birth we knew her—we who have never seen her face. In her books she came to us: and in her youth: and in her martyred men—practical men—men by whose hands youth's Dream could come alive. We knew Russia, and loved her. We welcomed her, when she was yet unborn.

We understood when they told us of tyrannies and pogroms and corruptions. These were facts. These surely will long be facts. We possessed Russia's truth. We knew her to be unborn. We had learned a lesson well from Russia: from the voice of her art in the world, and the glow of her youth in the world,—where they had been cast out.

The youth came to us. They had been tortured. They had been thrust into cells so small that they could neither stand in them nor rest. They had been stripped of their speech. Their sisters had been taken away from them. And they had bought escape, not with the truth that they were clean and clear, but with a piece of gold. So they came to us, loving Russia.

They came to us, and we welcomed them. We gave them honor. We healed their bodies. We brought them new comrades—new sisters and new brothers. And over there, they had been despised and destroyed. Yet, always, they came to us, loving Russia.

We read their books. Terrible Russian books. Books of pestilent prisons: of poverty and disease. Suffering lay like

Holy Russia

black grass over the grey plains of Russia. Suffering and death and sin. But the books came to us, bringing love of Russia. Deeper and greater than these—love for Russia.

We heard their songs. Songs of the Volga, songs of the murmurous moujiks—their interminable sleep and their fierce dreams in grovelling corners. And we heard the music of their masters: weaves of passion, panoplies of rebellion, hot interludes from peace. And the songs brought love with them: love of the rolling Russian mist over the soil; love of the suppliant Russian village; love of the vast, mastered Russian heart. Love for Russia.

We heard the voices of their prophets. Russia was dying! Russia was mad! The souls of Russia were transfixed on crosses. The souls of Russia were bloody and dead. Russia was fetid with the strewn carcass of her Dream. A dead Christ rotted in golden Russian cloth! Yet the hands of the prophets brought pity and peace, and brought love. Love of the Russians. Love for Russia.

Men and women, martyred and driven forth, came to us lingering and backward. Their arms were strained toward the land whence they had come. Their eyes were longing toward their agonies. And in their eyes was love.

Russia with her hate brought love: with her scourges branded love: with her poisons brewed love: with her massacres gave birth to love. What mystery was Russia?

O the loving wisdom of Russia's men and women! O the loving knowledge of Russia's books. O the song mothered by the songs of Russia. Russia has come to life. And the love of her flayed youth is clear. The gladness in the gloom of her tales, the prayer within her angry symphonies, the hunger of the sorrow of her prophets—all of the love of hating Russia is made manifest!

Road and Hills

By Stephen Vincent Benét

I shall go away
To the brown hills, the quiet ones,
The vast, the mountainous, the rolling,
Sun-fired and drowsy!

My horse snuffs delicately
At the strange wind;
He settles to a swinging trot; his hoofs tramp the dust.
The road winds, straightens,
Slashes a marsh,
Shoulders out a bridge,
Then—

Again the hills.
Unchanged, innumerable,
Bowing huge, round backs;
Holding secret, immense converse:
In gusty voices,
Fruitful, fecund, toiling
Like yoked black oxen.

The clouds pass like great, slow thoughts
And vanish
In the intense blue.

My horse lopes; the saddle creaks and sways.
A thousand glittering spears of sun slant from on high.
The immensity, the spaces,
Are like the spaces
Between star and star.

Stephen Vincent Benét

The hills sleep.

If I put my hand on one,

I would feel the vast heave of its breath.

I would start away before it awakened

And shook the world from its shoulders.

A cicada's cry deepens the hot silence.

The hills open

To show a slope of poppies,

Ardent, noble, heroic,

A flare, a great flame of orange;

Giving sleepy, brittle scent

That stings the lungs.

A creeping wind slips through them like a ferret; they bow
and dance, answering Beauty's voice . . .

The horse whinnies. I dismount

And tie him to the grey worn fence.

I set myself against the javelins of grass and sun;

And climb the rounded breast,

That flows like a sea-wave.

The summit crackles with heat, there is no shelter, no hollow
from the flagellating glare.

I lie down and look at the sky, shading my eyes.

My body becomes strange, the sun takes it and changes it, it
does not feel, it is like the body of another.

The air blazes. The air is diamond.

Small noises move among the grass . . .

Blackly,

A hawk mounts, mounts in the inane

Seeking the star-road,

Seeking the end . . .

But there is no end.

Here, in this light, there is no end . . .

Poems from the Arabic

By Kahlil Gibran

(Kahlil Gibran was born on Mt. Lebanon, in Syria. As a young man he went over into Europe, living especially in Paris, where he came under the personal influence of Rodin. He is at present making his home in New York. He is both painter and poet. His poetry is written in Arabic, and is known very widely among the millions who read that language. He is as much the poet of the Near East as Tagore is of the East. THE SEVEN ARTS has from time to time published several of Mr. Gibran's poems, translated by himself. The following group, selected from his play, "The Madman," is brought together to give a fuller grasp of his great power.—ED.)

The Two Hermits

UPON a lonely mountain, there lived two hermits who worshipped God and loved one another. Now these two hermits had one earthen bowl, and this was their only possession.

One day an evil spirit entered into the heart of the older hermit and he came to the younger and said, "It is long that we have lived together. The time has come for us to part. Let us divide our possessions."

Then the younger hermit was saddened and he said, "It grieves me, Brother, that thou shouldst leave me. But if thou must needs go, so be it." And he brought the earthen bowl and gave it to him saying, "We cannot divide it, Brother, let it be thine."

Then said the older hermit, "Charity I will not accept. I will take nothing but mine own. Half the bowl is mine. It must be divided."

And the younger one said, "If the bowl be broken, of what

Kahlil Gibran

use would it be to thee or to me? If it be thy pleasure let us rather cast a lot."

But the older hermit said again, "I will have but justice and mine own, and I will not trust justice and mine own to vain chance. The bowl must be divided."

Then the younger hermit could reason no further and he said, "If it be indeed thy will and if even so thou wouldst have it let us now break the bowl."

But the face of the older hermit grew exceeding dark, and he cried, "O thou cursed coward, thou wouldst not fight."

My Friend

MY friend, I am not what I seem. Seeming is but a garment I wear—a care-woven garment that protects me from thy questionings and thee from my negligence.

The "I" in me, my friend, dwells in the house of silence, and therein it shall remain forevermore, unperceived, unapproachable.

I would not have thee believe in what I say nor trust in what I do—for my words are naught but thy own thoughts in sound, and my deeds thine own hopes in action.

When thou sayest, "The wind bloweth eastward," I say, "Aye, it doth blow eastward"; for I would not have thee know that my mind doth not dwell upon the wind but upon the sea.

Thou canst not understand my seafaring thoughts, nor would I have thee understand. I would be at sea alone.

When it is day with thee, my friend, it is night with me; yet even then I speak of the noontide that dances upon the hills and of the purple shadow that steals its way across the valley; for thou canst not hear the songs of my darkness nor see my wings beating against the stars—and I fain would not have thee hear or see. I would be with night alone.

When thou ascendest to thy Heaven I descend to my Hell

Poems from the Arabic

—even then thou callest to me across the unbridgeable gulf, “My companion, my comrade,” and I call back to thee, “My comrade, my companion”—for I would not have thee see my Hell. The flame would turn thy eyesight and the smoke would crowd thy nostrils. And I love my Hell too well to have thee visit it. I would be in Hell alone.

Thou lovest Truth and Beauty and Righteousness; and I for thy sake say it is well and seemly to love these things. But in my heart I laugh at thy love. Yet I would not have thee see my laughter. I would laugh alone.

My friend, thou art good and cautious and wise; nay, thou art perfect—and I, too, speak with thee wisely and cautiously. And yet I am mad. But I mask my madness. I would be mad alone.

My friend, thou art not my friend, but how shall I make thee understand? My path is not thy path, yet together we walk, hand in hand.

The Three Ants

THREE ants met on the nose of a man who was lying asleep in the sun. And after they had saluted one another, each according to the custom of his tribe, they stood there conversing.

The first ant said, “These hills and plains are the most barren I have known. I have searched all day for a grain of some sort, and there is none to be found.”

Said the second ant, “I too have found nothing, though I have visited every nook and glade. This is, I believe, what my people call the soft, moving land where nothing grows.”

Then the third ant raised his head and said, “My friends, we are standing now on the nose of the Supreme Ant, the mighty and infinite Ant, whose body is so great that we cannot see it, whose shadow is so vast that we cannot trace it, whose voice is so loud that we cannot hear it; and He is omnipresent.”

Kahlil Gibran

When the third ant spoke thus the other ants looked at each other and laughed.

At that moment the man moved and in his sleep raised his hand and scratched his nose, and the three ants were crushed.

God

IN THE ancient days, when the first quiver of speech came to my lips, I ascended the holy mountain and spoke unto God, saying, "Master, I am thy slave. Thy hidden will is my law and I shall obey thee forevermore."

But God made no answer, and like a mighty tempest passed away.

And after a thousand years I ascended the holy mountain and again spoke unto God, saying, "Creator, I am thy creation. Out of clay hast thou fashioned me and to thee I owe mine all."

And God made no answer, but like a thousand swift wings passed away.

And after a thousand years I climbed the holy mountain and spoke unto God again, saying, "Father, I am thy son. In pity and love thou hast given me birth, and through love and worship I shall inherit thy kingdom."

And God made no answer, and like the mist that veils the distant hills he passed away.

And after a thousand years I climbed the sacred mountain and again spoke unto God, saying, "My God, my aim and my fulfillment; I am thy yesterday and thou art my tomorrow. I am thy root in the earth and thou art my flower in the sky, and together we grow before the face of the sun."

Then God leaned over me, and in my ears whispered words of sweetness, and even as the sea that enfoldeth a brook that runneth down to her, he enfolded me.

And when I descended to the valleys and the plains God was there also.

THE SEVEN ARTS



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I OPENED my Walt Whitman the other night, after a hard day, full of confusion. War had just been declared, and I found one mood replacing another. At one moment it seemed America's Folly, the tragic loss of her rôle as peacemaker. At another, I thought of how impossible it is for this country to do anything, to say anything, without striking the attitude of a savior. We are trying to make this war, I thought, a social workers' affair; we are standing up as the world's Big Brother. But in another mood it seemed to me as if we were being pushed into an experience we need, no matter what name we give it: that now at last we transcendentalists, Christian Scientists, intellectuals, we optimistic Ameri-

The Seven Arts

cans, were going to know of a reality a little deeper. But then again I saw an amateur nation tangled in the skein of European dynastic politics, giving up its growing independence to be an instrument in the hands of keen transatlantic statesmen. These thoughts, and their feelings, and many others went through me in successive waves; and I wondered whether what I experienced was not typical of a widespread confusion.

AS I said, I opened my Walt Whitman in the evening. I turned naturally to "Drum-Taps": I wondered what he felt in 1861 and onward—in those years when at last the nation was drawn into one super-personal purpose from its individual tasks and desires. What struck me first was the note of intense conviction:

"Rise O days from your fathomless deeps, till you loftier, fiercer,
sweep . . .

Something for us is pouring now more than Niagara pouring,

Torrents of men . . .

How the true thunder bellows after the lightning—how bright the flashes
of lightning!

How Democracy with desperate vengeful port strides on . . .

"I waited the bursting forth of the pent fire—on the water and air I
waited long;

But now I no longer wait, I am fully satisfied, I am gluttoned,

I have witnessed the true lightning, I have witnessed my cities electric,

I have lived to behold man burst forth and warlike America rise."

I caught in this terrible martial music, the savage splendor of a great action, a national heroism. Every human drop in that storm was charged with electricity. It seemed something other than the account I read in the papers of how the House of Representatives listened to the speeches that led to our present decision. "Members lounged in their seats, even 'joshed' some of the speakers, and had to be admonished that they were not 'at a vaudeville performance, but in the midst of a solemn duty.'"

The Seven Arts

I FOLLOWED Walt Whitman on, and read this:

"Long, too long America,

Traveling roads all even and peaceful you learn'd from joys and
prosperity only,

But now, ah now, to learn from crises of anguish, advancing, grappling
with direst fate and recoiling not,

And now to conceive and show to the world what your children en-masse
really are,

(For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your children en-masse
really are?)"

These words might, of course, have been written today. If war is that experience which brings national greatness, who can explain the barren epoch behind us since the Civil War? It is a period spiritually burnt-out, as if all the fire had gone into that conquest of the rebellious South. It is the period of the glorified Captain of Industry and the rise of Christian Science. It contains not one name of preëminence in art or letters, in statesmanship or leadership. Evidently war wearies everyone except the practical man. But then our Industrial Captains, most of them, were already at work while the rest of the nation fought and bled.

ONE poem more of Whitman caught me. He wrote it after the dark years when he went down into the war-hospitals, with his baskets of fruit, and like a simple comrade, wrote letters home for dying boys, and kissed their eyes shut as they died in his arms. The poem is called "Reconciliation."

"Word over all, beautiful as the sky,

Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly
lost,

That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash
again, and ever again, this soil'd world;

For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,

I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw near,

Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin."

The Seven Arts

It helps little that we grieve over the immaturity and foolishness of human nature; that we marvel at man, who even yet can only learn through bitter experience and great sorrow; who even yet must have his enemy dead though he dies himself in the attempt; who even now, after so much of anguish in his uninterrupted thousands of years of war, can only rise over the dead bodies of men divine as himself, needy as himself, foolish as himself. So it is, and so, like those before us, we must go into the great fires, learning what was learned before, in the hope of the peace to be.

J. O.

American Optimism

By Leo Stein

THE obviously insistent fact about the expressions of the American spirit is their optimism. The stories, read by the upper ten million of the community, the plays they see, the things they say, the phrases on their lips, all correspond. And what is true of them is in an almost equal measure true of those who aim at finer and more carefully selected things. Not only the cheap literature, but the better and the best, is predominantly optimistic. The contradictory note is on occasion struck, but it becomes at once a matter for comment, and is by most critics noted, as un-American. There is of course in general a recognition of much and many evils, but beneath there is a sanguine hope. Every book almost, that is not frivolous, ends on the note of amelioration, and when, as in some of the modern poetry, there is no positive temper of expectancy, the spirit is that of enthusiastic, all-including, and impartial observation. Things either can be made good or else the moral values are ignored in recognition of the values of mere existence. To be, and to be alive, is then considered a sufficient justification. What, on the other hand, one rarely finds, is the note of utter tragedy, the note of stoicism, of mere acceptance, of renunciation. The optimism is inveterate and all but universal. It is also, it must be admitted, in general ignorant and biased. It accepts much without a rigorous examination of credentials, and minimizes the obstacles that it finds. In spots it shows itself courageous in acceptance, though on the whole it does avoid the test of a close examination of the facts that it should confront. Its cheerful carelessness is

Leo Stein

therefore something less than convincingly heroic, and its prevailing blindness makes one doubt its full validity; and one is forced to ask whether the courage is not in part a result of just that blindness. Could American optimism hold its own, if it would fairly measure the facts it has before it? Has it a deeper justification than inexperience? Do time and progress tend toward its endorsement or its refutation?

This note of persistent optimism in American letters, even at their best, contrasts sharply with the temper of the world's classic literature, in which the optimistic accent even when present is rarely dominant or exuberant. Rather one finds in it when it plumbs deeply the spirit of life and is not crushed by what it finds, the note of resignation, of noble submission to an overmastering fate. There is despair, there is serenity that surmounts despair, there is stoicism that accepts, there is ecstasy that exults in the mystery-enclouded, scarcely-revealed splendors of the divine wisdom, but in general for the life of man there is the felt term, the tomb that marks the boundaries of mortality, and confines the noblest flights of the spirit. The order of life is delimited and fixed, and the soul of man can, for a short while only, rejoice in the garden. Against the fate that ever threatens to turn paradise into a desert, there is a refuge in a heaven beyond, a life beyond life, where the spirit is made whole, from the bruises of this world of pain. Tragedy has at all times except the present, and especially the present of America, been looked on as the supreme expression in art, the deepest, fullest manifestation of man's sense of his life's meaning, the statement of his closest and most naked contact with the problem of his destiny. The only great transcendence of the tragic was the resurrection, the upspringing on the farther side of the tomb's horizon, the compensation for the woe-ful journey through the world. From lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence and famine, from battle, murder and from sudden death, good Lord, deliver us, was the prayer of those who lived under an earlier order. To them nature was

American Optimism

inexorable and supreme, the rule of things mysterious and inflexible, and they themselves the moment's tenants of the clay, beaten upon by all the forces of the world, and held upright only by the benignant finger of God. Such has been man in his deep and self-revealing moments.

To keep the balance true he has had the feeling of the flesh. If his tragedy was full of agony and despair, his comedy was not deficient in joy and radiance. The sculptors of Greece and the painters of Italy, of France and Flanders loved the body's sensuous magnificence as those of Holland the body's indulgence. Tragedy was only in small part the artist's concern, for the chisel and brush were better suited to illustrate the pleasures than the lacerations of the soul. The pageantry of earth was their greater theme, and they were soaked in the sunshine and shadow of a world of sense. Their subject was the obverse of the spiritually tragic realm of the great poets, and only rarely, as with Michelangelo, did they wrestle with the spirit's agony. For the poet as for the philosopher, nature was in large part the spirit's vestment and the means to its interpretation, for both laid their stress upon its inner meaning; but to the painter and the sculptor, nearer in spirit to the constructive genius, the engineer, the builder, and the man of science, nature was treasured more for its bodily values and for the beauty of its outward side.

Of this sensuousness, as of the tragic spirit, there is but little in American art. Its world of plastic forms is thin and bloodless, and its tragedy is only make-believe—a sighing reminiscence. It has been optimistic in the main and sensuously reticent—in matters of the spirit, and the flesh as well, it has stopped short of full acceptance of the facts before it. Optimism, as Walt Whitman has shown, can be robust; perhaps in time it may become both robust and rich, and wise. Its future hopes depend upon this consummation.

The optimism that prevailed in former days in America was very different from that which we know today, and

Leo Stein

differently conditioned. It took its rise when the decline of the New England Puritanism that had carried heavily, and painfully, its burden of sin, permitted the emergence of a more expansive spirit. Puritanism, as long as it continued to be seriously regarded, was essentially a denial of the spiritual value of opportunity, since it really meant that as long as destiny held the keys of salvation, no freedom and success could be genuinely real. It was only with the rise of Unitarianism and the greater range of spiritual experiment that culminated in the typical literature and social endeavor of New England that the optimism born of the American opportunity came into being. Men were then free for inner expansion, in consonance with their practical conditions. They came to realize the significance of their economic possibilities, and pitied Europe because of its kings, its crowds, and its poverty. In striking contrast, free land and free opportunity were to make of America, or for that matter had made of America, a uniquely favored world. Of course there were plenty of drawbacks and limitations, but these were more than compensated for by the sense the people had of citizenry in a chosen land, and the free movement determined by the vast ranges of unoccupied soil intensified the feeling of option and independence.

In Benjamin Franklin, the first important American writer, political and economic optimism voiced themselves, but there was in it nothing of the American scale. Except for the greater opportunity due to the fact that everything was still in the making, and to a certain freshness due to the variety of interests in a community in which a man of conspicuous practical intelligence had plenty of scope, Franklin was sufficiently typical of the highest grade of self-made man in any Anglo-Saxon society. It was the opportunity that seems singularly American, rather than the man and his ideas. With Emerson, however, this was not so. He conceived the type of American optimism as something quite particular, and though himself

American Optimism

a New England villager, he had the vision of the American continent. He felt the originality of the occasion, and of the opportunities that it offered, and he demanded the freedom to avail himself of it. His thoughts were those of a philosophical idealist, conditioned by the economic, political and social outlook of America, not that America only which his countrymen had up to then discovered, but, more extensively, that which the American scene made possible. He felt so strongly the greatness of the occasion, the fulness that life offered to him who would put out his hand and take, that he on the whole ignored the difficulties of the enterprise, and assumed a perfectibility that he could not prove.

Next came Walt Whitman, the Parsifal of American literature, who drew in eloquent terms the picture of the perfect America, not perfect in the sense of perfected, but perfect rather in the sense that all of it was good. The imperfect equally with the perfect he sang, and everything was good for the mere reason that it was. He radiated with delight over the great length and breadth of the continent, over everything that grew on it, or walked or scampered across its surface. Never before had there been such an undiscriminating ecstasy, such an exuberant wallowing in the actuality, not of existence as such, but of the existence of things. Things were good, any old thing, and the more things there were the better, and hence a large part of his verse is not even description—it is a mere catalogue of things, a list of all the things that memory could recall or fantasy suggest in enlargement of the original theme.

This tone, which Walt Whitman made effective in art for the first time, had long been characteristic of American political and social oratory. The notion of munificent plenty and all of it admirably and wonderfully American—the little red school house with its range of democratic promise out-reaching far the hopes of the old world, the hampered generations of Europe, with their limitations in the present and

Leo Stein

the future, contrasted with the optimism-inspiring reaches of America—all this was continually held up to view.

There was, however, an important difference in the reception accorded to the Fourth of July oratory, and that accorded to the poetry of Whitman. The oratory really represented public sentiment on matters social and political, whereas Walt Whitman's self-styled "barbaric yawp" represented nothing that the public recognized or wanted. What stood between him and his countrymen was simply the fact that in matters of the soul's utterance, Americans did not want America. They hungered for romance, for the grace and charm of Europe, for its color and its emotional riches. Lectures and clubs for the dissemination of culture were found throughout the land, and culture always meant the culture of Europe. The attitude toward it was largely sentimental and its passion was attenuated in transmission, for people did not really feel their own identity in kind with the men and women overseas. They yearned for Europe as a Mecca, as the bearer of emotional values utterly different from the commonplace of home, and in their more acceptable art they echoed its expressions. America was felt to be too new, too raw, to be the matter and stuff of beauty, and when as in the case of Cooper and Irving the American scene was utilized, it was done in the spirit of related English forms. Hawthorne's tragedy was romantically remote and sentimental rather than real. Except in spots our literature has been in spirit a translation. Americans felt themselves to be, culturally, expatriates, and their souls yearned for their spiritual home. They could not yet conceive of freedom otherwise than as political or economic.

In the course of time, however, it was found necessary to revise the primitive attitudes towards the economic and social freedom, and the optimism that they had inspired, for this older optimism had gone on the assumption that America had shortcircuited many of the deepest difficulties of Eu-

American Optimism

ropean life. It assumed that such economic and social troubles as afflicted America were the results of crudity, of hurry, and of imperfect assimilation; but that all this would correct itself in time, and that in the main America was safe. But after the decades of expansion and corruption succeeding the Civil War, things got worse instead of better, and in the nineties many persons, who before had been self-confident, began to doubt whether America was really the paradise that had been so extensively advertised. It began then to be felt that the Topsy period was over and that America would not grow to beauty, virtue and goodness, unless some one took it in hand. This was the period of Bryanism and of the beginnings of sustained efforts to achieve administrative reform. Even the Constitution, which, till then, had enjoyed an almost undisturbed reverence, fell under suspicion, and the Fathers began to totter a little on their altars. A newer optimism was grafted on the old, but its roots had grown in a very different soil, and it had had a very different history.

This root was science, and the history was that of invention and discovery. I am of course not at all concerned to trace this history, but only to consider some of the ways in which its progress affected the temper of the last century and our own. And this was done not merely by the positive achievement of the sciences, and by the products that they put at man's disposal, but rather by the way that the mere fact of solving difficulties which up to then had either not been looked upon as matters for solution or had been utterly beyond solution, altered the character of thought and feeling with respect to man's range of faculty and his relation to nature.

Before the end of the eighteenth century science had been essentially a subject for men of science, and except for its philosophical implications, of very little interest to others. Outside of a few applications of mathematics and astronomy to navigation and to engineering, its results affected very little the daily life of men. Opinion and authority, modified

Leo Stein

by the results of direct rule-of-thumb practical experience, ruled men's lives. But with the invention of the steam engine and the discovery of modern chemistry, conditions were entirely changed, machinery and innumerable substances of value to industry became rapidly available, and from then on, instead of haphazard and occasional progress, the advance in the mastery and control of material conditions became orderly and continuous.

The natural consequence of this has been the greatly increased power over nature that has in large part determined specifically the temper of our time; and since the wireless and the aeroplane have been invented and radium discovered, it is almost impossible for skepticism to prevail against our quite unlimited confidence in the range of scientific understanding and utilization.

But though the rate of scientific progress has vastly outstripped all that the wildest prophecies could have anticipated, another of the benefits from the machine that was as hopefully expected has not been realized at all. The social benefits that were so confidently predicted have failed of realization, and a disillusioned century learned that not alone the engine, but the engineer also, would have to be transformed, in order that a social revolution should keep society advancing at a rate proportionate to the progress in mechanics. The mastery of matter was triumphantly achieved, but a victorious science was halted at the threshold of society; and its pretended advance into that further field was only the pseudo-science of political economy. In reality, authority, tradition, prejudice, continued to rule, as they had always done.

This was the social tragedy of the nineteenth century, that such increase of power should have come about and that so little should have been achieved to make intelligent direction of that power possible. There was no lack of interest in the subject, but those who took one side or those who took an-

American Optimism

other in the endless controversies that arose were helpless to adduce decisive reasons. Nothing was available except opinion illustrated rather than proved by fact, and even if at some moment the movement was in a right direction, it could never be depended on to continue so. What opinion can at one moment do it can in the next moment undo, and so the older cultures were a series of progressive and recessive movements, wherein the beliefs developed, at one moment, were overthrown and rendered invalid and incapable of function by beliefs that happened to come after. Good theories could be overwhelmed by bad, good practices forced from the field by worse, because these were for temporary reasons more in harmony with some prevailing conditions or emotional trends.

To this continual flux of capricious alteration, science opposes a vital contrast. Its results are verified and in part experimentally determined, and eventually embodied in utilities. They prove their value or their lack of value in use, and either go into the scrap-heap as unavailable or else remain in service on their merits, and it is only in so far as genuine test and understanding can be rendered applicable to things that the irresponsible mutations of opinion can be succeeded by the cumulative reasonableness of growth. The early optimists of the nineteenth century did not reckon with the fact that unilluminated egotism would defeat the nobler aspirations that had no warrant except nobility, and that the road to better things could not be successfully charted simply because of the possession of more perfect instruments. Science which had been embodied only in material utilities and had left man individually and socially as he had always been, had fulfilled only the lesser of its possibilities. The greater and more important task was still before it.

It was already in the middle of the last century, the time of Ruskin, Dickens and Carlyle, that the failure of a society built up on machines and political economy was getting to be recognized, but though many fulminated against it they developed

Leo Stein

nothing that could effectually oppose it. Mechanical invention was a fact, absolute and irremovable, not to be done away with but to be supplemented by increase of knowledge and such a mastery of conditions as should make an effectual science of society possible; and the beginnings of such an extension of our understanding were already on the way. It was by no direct road that one could pass from mechanics to sociology, and the approaches attempted from philosophy and ethics did not lead to much. Another and more humble subject which had come to be attacked with serious effort, and which the biological sciences were then transforming, offered a more effective opening. This was hygiene which has since then in its various aspects come to stand quite in the forefront of contemporary interest, which has in many ways, by its conquests, revolutionized our attitudes, and is as yet only on the threshold of its achievement. Indeed so infinitely various and so dominating are the influences of hygiene on the conduct of life in our time that ours might well be called the age of hygiene, of constant and deliberate concern with health. The services of the medical profession have been at all times great in forwarding the subjects with which they were but indirectly concerned, but in no field has their co-operation had a tithe of the importance that it has had in making possible a real and serviceable science of society.

However, it is not our affair to follow these achievements but to take count of some of their significant consequences in the life of the contemporary spirit. And in fact these consequences are enormous. Hygiene has freed the human spirit from some of its most oppressive horrors and rendered less fearful others that it could not utterly remove. Death and decay, the loss of power, and the loss of life, these have been endless themes of thought and objects of solicitude. "How death came into the world and all our woe," the mystery of pain, the aspirations of eternal youth . . . than these no matters have more profoundly stirred the minds of men. Nothing

American Optimism

has more deeply worked on their imagination than pestilence, that terror that walked by night and ravaged away the life of thousands. The image of death has shadowed the life of man and has moved him to many of his richest utterances and therefore there is no irrelevance in bringing into close connection with the consideration of contemporary feeling, in which are rooted all creative impulses, the influence of that hygienic progress which has made disease, especially the imaginatively most appalling forms, plague and in general, infectious disease, recede and become less and less a terror. We have now, thanks to Lister, Pasteur, and a host of others, reached the point where in our normal life neither death, disease or pain is felt, as genuinely impending, and their incidence is occasional and not constant. They have come to mean in turn adventure and regret rather than passionate fear and horror, and our spiritual atmosphere has altered accordingly. Many things have changed because of this, although we do not always recognize the close connection. The removal of an ancient incubus has made possible new constructions, that would have found no place on the old blood-encumbered soil.

Among these products are America's only creative contribution to religion, the new thought creeds of which the best-established is Christian Science. The older religions offered compensations for the pain and death that weighed so heavily upon mortality, when sin also was made effectively awful because its wages were death, but now that dangers of all kinds are normally becoming more remote, that disease is more controlled, and death no longer felt to lurk in ambush, we feel less need of the ancient comforts. Optimism in the present takes the place of resignation, tempered by a distant hope, and the new thought religions build their temples where Calvary once stood. The religious cheerfulness that wars upon neurotic symptoms and despises the lumbering steps of a material science, stands on the ground which that science has prepared.

And what is true of religion is true likewise of philosophy,

Leo Stein

which in this country has two characteristic tendencies. Pragmatism, the immediate child of scientific method, is, in its moral aspects, a philosophy of risk, and differs from the older philosophies, which were predominantly philosophies of assurance. When life was more dangerous, men sought in philosophy tranquillity and security or at the least an ideal progress, and only now when the unsought risks are relatively small have they substituted for the ideal of the peace that passeth understanding, the ideal of the turmoil that invites the soul.

And with the other movement in philosophy, the realistic, it is likewise true that its acceptance of the facts, its feeling for the objective real, so strikingly accordant with the tendency in much modern literature to accept reality simply and to describe it, is a recognition of the lack of terror in the facts. The realist, unlike the pragmatist, rejoices less in movement and adventure than in mastery and control. Realism means the spirit of fact predominant, and the sheer acceptance of reality.

So far then as hygiene, the control of pain and disease co-operating with the products of mechanical science, has helped to build up and sustain the characteristic cheerful hope of progress and increasing mastery, it has acted as a powerful determinant of contemporary life. It has let the sun and air into the recesses of disease and as a consequence a large amount of mental sun and air have followed.

But individual hygiene is a limited field and is a pathway to greater and more important conquests. Its masters were already men of scientific training, and therefore in some measure prepared for scientific methods. Besides they had at their command familiar sciences, chemistry and biology. But for the larger fields of social hygiene, neither the knowledge nor the men were to be had. And yet it was in this field that most was yet to be accomplished if the possibilities growing out of the achieved mastery of matter were to be realized. The hopes that grew and flourished in the early days of scien-

American Optimism

tific progress and invention were disappointed, for the society that wielded the instruments that science had devised, were controlled entirely by the methods of authority and opinion. A democracy however, a true democracy, must be more free than that; it must have better ground for action than tradition, and cannot trust to the wisdom of the men possessed of talent for political leadership to determine what its course should be. Nor is majority opinion adequate for such determinations, for though the tyranny of a majority may be in some sense more democratic than some other kind of tyranny still it does not truly serve as a solution.

A true democracy might be defined as a society where men have opportunity according to their talents, and rewards according to their services, and to discover the value of such services we need to know the worth of things. We cannot judge this worth by reliance on traditional taboo or primitive feeling, but only by long and carefully, critically studied effort. Only a social science that through knowledge leading to mastery can give us social health and clarify intentions, can give us also unity of purpose, that unity in matters on which men must agree, in order to live and work harmoniously together. Unless we can get that, authority and opinion which divide will rule, rather than understanding which unites.

Nothing has pointed out more sharply than our experience in social hygiene how far the values of opinion must yield to knowledge, how many things, generally considered matters of irreconcilable opinion, have proved in the long run to be matters of determinable fact. And so our social legislation and eventually a thousand other things that democracy requires and which may ultimately justify our optimism, will depend on ever widening circles of enlightenment. The notion of method and of ordered intelligence in affairs of public interest has become a very real issue, and though of course it is not commonly thought of in terms of science, yet it continually implies the science that it disregards. Our political

Leo Stein

reformers are not usually scientific men, but the new spirit of investigation, the conviction that it is possible by methodic and impartial effort to find right ways of doing things, has communicated itself far beyond the confines of the laboratory. The conception of the expert who experiments and learns instead of the amateur who guesses and prefers, is a contribution from the scientific spirit, and has helped to overcome the pessimistic hopelessness of those who realised that impulses expressing themselves merely in terms of authority and opinion, have their flux and reflux, without any assurance of eventual stable progress. But with knowledge in application something is progressively gained and fixed.

It has been characteristic of this country that a great part of the social amelioration which in Europe is matter for the attention of a paternal bureaucracy has required initial effort from the public, and that this interest and occupation has helped to give to those who read, and that means all the more or less educated millions, an acquaintance with the facts of the social and material world about them. There is in consequence no lack, in books and magazines, of vigorously effective description, in which the color, form, and outward aspect of body and mind are illustrated. This reportorial work is admirable, yet no one reading this literature can escape the conviction that in spite of its buoyancy, its husky energy, and its wide-flung intelligence, its interest in fact is only an interest in externals and that beneath the surface it is traditionally elementary. The outer aspect for mind and body both is realistic, but within we find the spirit of the fairy tale.

The fairy tale employs elementary situations, and deals with the large, basic objects of desire: wealth, power, love, and life. It deals with these in terms of simple conflicts between patently hostile agents. The hero ends in the possession of riches, kingdom, princess and eternal felicity. It is a perfectly coherent scheme, and the simplicity of the formulation is entirely in harmony with the simplicity of the desires. There

American Optimism

is in consequence no effect of triviality. But in the American story this coherence is lost. The souls of hero and heroine are only a trifle more complicated than those of the fairy tale, but the scene has become realistically elaborate. North, South, East and West, all classes and all occupations are pictured for us, and the picturing is admirably done. Unfortunately these simple souls do not belong in a world so complex and so strained. The scene is studied from the life, but the people are, in Kipling's phrase, "just-so" people, cast in a simple mould of spiritual consistency, and undisturbed by inner contradictions. Their conflicts, when they have them, are sometimes as deep as are the outer layers of the skin, and one can go quite to the bottom without danger of drawing blood. The soul of man is treated as though it were a simple thing, as though what one did not know would never hurt one, as though an optimistic faith required the sustaining force of ignorance and fatuity.

However modern science is showing with quite convincing power that it is precisely what we do not know that can hurt us most, and if we are to have a valuable democratic society and a significant democratic art we must learn to realize this terrifying truth. Nor must it be supposed that democratic is here used as a mere catch-word. It has a definite relevance and an intimate relation to the tendencies of modern social movement.

A democratic art in the conditions of modern life must differ profoundly from most of the art of former times, for that has been in the main of two kinds: peasant art and aristocratic art. A peasant art implies a stationary society, one where by slow and gradual modifications, motives derived from any source whatever were made effective and specifically relevant to the traditional feeling of the craftsmen that produced them. The craftsman himself was furthermore one of the group for whom he worked, and through the intimacy that prevailed between the workman, the material and the

Leo Stein

public, there developed that appropriateness, that rhythmic coherence, which we find so commonly in the art of peasants, barbarians and traditional workmen in general. We find there the same naively direct rhythmical adjustment that we find in children's drawings, and which can only be achieved when the disturbance due to complex solicitation of experience can be withheld. We all know how the child whose drawings are so marvellously just may show no taste whatever in selection, and that the peasant is notoriously at fault outside of his customary range.

We cannot have a peasant art. We have no stationary society, comparatively remote from foreign influences, nor is the desire for such a thing at all reasonable. The peasant and his art also belong to the past, to a time that can never more return; besides that, always, except among barbarians, it implied its opposite: an aristocratic art.

An aristocratic art depends upon the existence of a leisure class, a group of men born to consume the fruits of toil. They themselves produce nothing except occasional lyrics, but they are patrons and critics. Their need of a luxurious extravagance as part of their class manifestation leads to a corresponding need of variety and novelty. They require art to deck their own superiority and the artist to produce it. The artist is a craftsman and therefore drafted from the ranks of the middle classes, to which he is moreover so often maladjusted. In former times he was directly dependent on the aristocrat, but in time this close connection was dissolved, and there grew up the normal correlative of the aristocratic patron, i.e., the bohemian artist. Peasantry, aristocracy, whether noble or bourgeois, and bohemia, these are, roughly speaking, the conditions of modern European art production, and those that we, with very moderate success, have sought to acclimatize among us. The purpose has essentially miscarried, for we have in America neither the peasantry, the aristocracy, nor the bohemia, nor do we really tend toward

American Optimism

their production. If we are to have a native art we must look elsewhere.

Our culture and our social tendencies, our larger hopes and aspirations, point rather toward broader, leveling characters. We tend rather toward the large appeal and wider distribution. The smaller currents of esotericism, of delicate selection and choice exclusion, are not things of primary importance. They are pleasant as minor poetry is pleasant, but if they are to count in larger measure they must find a way for their currents into the main stream of national life. The kind of thing that we are energetically and commonly doing, but doing badly, must be done well. The parochialism of our soul's outlook must be enlarged, and we must get more insight and more understanding. The range of intelligent investigation must be extended, and we must add to the courage that is leading us to grapple with the hygiene of society, the greater courage that is needed to grapple with the hygiene of the soul.

This means, I take it, that just as hygiene of the body necessitated the admission of intelligence, and then of light and air, those greatest of purifiers and antiseptics, as hygiene of society required investigation, progressively more fearless and circumstantial, into those hidden regions, obscured behind a veil of social, economic and political conventions, which passed for those who profited and for those too supine or too stupid to protest, as necessary, so the soul's hygiene will require the admission of light and air into our individual depths. Hypocrisy means their exclusion, and whether conscious or unconscious, is the stupifier of the soul. We cannot move backwards to the innocence of childhood, and therefore we must move forward to a full maturity. We must learn to face the complexity of our inner life. A European with his older culture and his more mature experience is familiar with it. He knows that the only escape from hypocrisy is the recognition of his own inner multiplicity. He

Leo Stein

knows and has adapted his life to this variety of outlook, and he knows that he must have numerous standards, social, political and economic, if he is going to be honestly and truthfully oriented with reference to the vicissitudes of daily life. He is not afraid to let his right hand know what his left hand is doing, because he knows that the complexity of human relations is so great that what the left hand may be justified in doing the right hand may refuse to do, or do it differently. His recognition of his differences makes self-criticism possible, for self-criticism is nothing but the criticism of one of our selves by another. The American, however, pretends to a simplicity that is not real. He manages to think his right hand and his left identical and consequently remains extraordinarily ignorant of both. He cannot genuinely criticise himself, for his false consistency hides his soul from his own observation, and makes for hypocrisy in act and triviality in art. A man who cannot see himself from within can see himself only as reflected in a mirror, and then, of course, he can see nothing but the outside.

If we would reach a true simplicity, that ideal simplicity whose shallow substitute assails us from the pages of an anæmic literature, we must boldly take the last step to attain healthy-mindedness. We cannot go back to a peasant simplicity which as Americans we never had, and the only alternative is full self-consciousness. We must in some way do for ourselves the thing that we are seeking to do with reference to our social structure, that is, we must seek to clarify our individual depths. We should have profited more largely for our art if we had gained this knowledge through the stress and agony of painful growth, but since we failed to get it that way, we must get it any other way we can. And we are getting it in characteristic wise. What our experience did not teach us, for that experience was quite blunted against the armor of our optimistic complacency, we are about to learn from science. The newer individual psychology, especially

American Optimism

identified with the name of Freud, is telling us a number of things which in part at least we should have known, and it is probable that one of the reasons why it is being accepted so much more easily here than in the centers of a wiser and more reflective civilization, is that, on the whole, we feel rather less attainted by it. We feel it as discoveries in a new and interesting field rather than as something that tears deeply at our vitals. When we have learnt the lesson we may fairly expect some importantly new orientations. In life, our optimism will have to reckon with many radical difficulties that we have hitherto ignored, and in art we then shall find that the things we now produce are inept even for their own trivial purposes. However, if we succeed, upon the basis of such knowledge, in adding to the description of mere outward things an equally successful presentation of the inner, we shall produce a picture of our time, which even in the absence of transcending genius will be vital and sufficient.

And on another range of interest, a deeper insight would have important consequences, for it is not only in regard to spiritual depths that expression in America has been inhibited by the failure to plumb the soul's demand. It was a similar uncritical simplicity of thought and shallowness of feeling that justified the identification of the flesh and the devil. No chance was given to follow either of the two alternative correctives: that of the peasant or barbarian who can indulge freely both the senses and the spirit and find no contradiction or incompatibility, because his mind makes no demand for classification and consistency; or, on the other hand, that of a finer critical insight and experience which makes distinctions with a richer understanding. Our crude uncritical criticism and our dull middle-class moralities, intelligent in form without intelligence in substance, with neither frank brutality nor beautiful refinement, which sought to rule the future with the preconceptions of the past, and chained the deeper levels of the spirit while whipping the surface into an agitated

Leo Stein

foam, blown up with wind ; these have limited our sensuous, as they have limited our intellectual, life. Only a criticism that is intelligent and that ignores pre-established boundaries, and is prepared to drop its searchlight into the deepest recesses of our lives can set us free. There is already notable progress in that direction and our fondness for the dance, the pageant, for more light and color, and greater stretching out into the open spaces, are happy symptoms. They are some first fruits of that greater knowledge, almost the greatest critical insight, that all things are good when not displaced, and that the business of education is not to do away with things, but to find places for them. It is not chaining energy but harnessing it that is desired, and only life when running freely can measure the fulness of its possibilities.

It is not then optimism nor materialism either, as we often hear, that is the crying fault of American life and art, but shallowness. Its superficiality has kept its optimism from the ultimate test, but has not disproved it. And the growing materialism is a fiction. Wherever there is wealth and luxury available, people seek it. Therefore the increase in luxury is only evidence that more can be obtained. There is, however, tremendous increase of interest in physical well-being, in general welfare, and it is often pointed out that even the churches turn more and more to questions of social betterment than to salvation. But materialism is not a matter of geography, and the good old heaven was no less essentially material because it was not to be reached by flesh-encumbered men. For most of us today, heaven, if there be a heaven, must be found on earth, and there are proportionately more people in this country today and their number is growing daily, who give themselves to making such a one as they can manage to conceive. It is such action, when there is no crisis that compels even the money-changer in the temple to turn patriot and lover of his kind, that is the test of social idealism, and this country does not seem to fall short of reasonable

American Optimism

expectation. Nor is it of importance that some time ago proportionately more people were interested in Browning clubs than could be gathered together for that purpose today. Browning was for them a way of making larger contacts with life, and the membership was almost confined to women. Today there are a greater number of contacts that women have with living processes in society, which has made it possible for them to leave Browning where he belongs; that is, on the shelf, except, of course, when one is moved to take him down and read him.

Art is a comment, an expression, an extension of life, experience, and not a substitute for it, and it should not be taken with exaggerated seriousness. Real progress in art appreciation comes of dissatisfaction with that art which fails to answer individual needs. Therefore to create a need, and not a mere snobbish desire for profounder and spiritually richer things, we must enrich the soul. When people really need good art, and good art is available, they will take it, but if they take it for any other reason it does not make much difference. If, therefore, the search for social health leading to further social liberation will make the American mind more eager and more apprehensive, we may with confidence await the growth of a larger and more vital audience and an art production to supply their wants.

Albert P. Ryder

By Marsden Hartley

ALBERT P. RYDER* possessed in a high degree that strict passivity of mental vision which calls into being the elusive yet fixed element the mystic Blake so ardently refers to and makes a principle of, that element outside the mind's jurisdiction. His work is of the essence of poetry; it is alien to the realm of aesthetics pure, for it has very special spiritual histories to relate. His landscapes are somewhat akin to those of Michel and of Courbet. They suggest Michel's wide wastes of prodigal sky and duneland with their winding roads that have no end, his ever-shadowy stretches of cloud upon ever-shadowy stretches of land that go their austere way to the edges of some vacant sea. They suggest, too, those less remote but perhaps even more aloof spaces of solitude which were ever Courbet's theme in his deeper hours, that haunting sense of subtle habitation, that acute invasion of either wind or soft fleck of light or bright presence in a breadth of shadow, as if a breath of living essences always somehow pervaded those mystic woodland or still lowland scenes. But highly populate as these pictures of Courbet's are with the spirit of ever-passing feet that hover and hold converse in the remote wood, the remoter plain, they never quite surrender to that ghostliness which possesses the pictures of our Ryder. At all times in his work one has the feeling of there having lately passed, if ever so fleetly, some bodily shape seeking a solitude of its own. I recall no other landscapes impressed with a more terrific auster-

*Albert P. Ryder died March 28th, 1917.

Albert P. Ryder

ity save Greco's incredible "Toledo," to my thinking a finality in landscape creation.

There is quietude, solace, if you will, in Michel, in Courbet, but there is never a rest for the eye or the mind or the spirit in those most awesome of pictures which Ryder has presented to us, few as they are; for the Ryder legend is akin to the legend of Giorgione. There is always splendor in them but it is the splendor of the dream given over to a genius more powerful than the vision which has conjured them forth. It is distinctly a land of Luthany in which they have their being; he has inscribed for us that utter homelessness of the spirit in the far tracts that exist in the realm of the imagination; there is suffering in his pictures, that fainting of the spirit, that breathlessness which overtakes the soul in search of the consummation of beauty.

Ryder is akin to Coleridge, too, for there is a direct visional analogy between "The Flying Dutchman" and the excessively pictorial stanzas of "The Ancient Mariner." Ryder has typified himself in this excellent portrayal of sea disaster, this profound spectacle of the soul's despair in conflict with wind and wave. Could any picture contain more of that remoteness of the world of our real heart as well as of our real eye, the artist's eye which visits that world in no official sense but only as a guest or a courtly spectator? No artist, I ought to say, was ever more master of his ideas and less master of the medium of painting than Ryder; there is in some of his finest canvases a most pitiable display of ignorance which will undoubtedly shorten their life by many years.

I still retain the vivid impression that afflicted me when I saw my first Ryder, a marine of rarest grandeur and sublimity, incredibly small in size, incredibly large in its emotion—just a sky and a single vessel in sail across a conquering sea. Ryder is, I think, the special messenger of the sea's beauty, the confident of its majesties, its hauteurs, its supremacies; for he was born within range of the sea and all its legends have hovered

Marsden Hartley

with him continually. Since that time I have seen a number of other pictures either in the artist's possession or elsewhere: "Death on the Racetrack," "Pegasus," canvases from *The Tempest* and *Macbeth*. In that strange little world of chaos that was his home, his hermitage, so distraught with débris of the world for which he could seem to find no other place, I have spent some of the rarer and lovelier moments of my experience with this gentlest and sweetest of other-world citizens; I have felt with ever-living delight the excessive loveliness of his glance and of his smile and heard that music of some far-away world which was his laughter; I have known that wisdom which is once and for all wisdom for the artist, that confidence and trust that for the real artist there is but one agency for the expression of self in terms of beauty, the eye of the imagination, that mystical third somewhere in the mind which transposes all that is legitimate to expression. To Ryder the imagination was the man; he was a poet painter, living ever outside the realm of theory.

He was fond of Corot, and at moments I have thought of him as the heir and successor to some of Corot's haunting graces; but there was all the difference between them that there is between lyric pure and tragic pure. Ryder has for once transcribed all outer semblances by means of a personality unrelated to anything other than itself, an imagination belonging strictly to our soil and specifically to our Eastern geography. In his autographic quality he is certainly our finest genius, the most creative, the most racial. For our genius, at its best, is the genius of the evasive; we are born lovers of the secret element, the mystery in things.

How many of our American painters have given real attention to Ryder? I find him so much the legend among professional artists, this master of arabesque, this first and foremost of our designers, this real creator of pattern, this first of all creators of tragic landscape, whose pictures are sacred to those that revere distinction and power in art. He had in him that

Albert P. Ryder

finer kind of reverence for the element of beauty which finds all things somehow lovely. He understood best of all the meaning of the grandiose, of everything that is powerful; none of his associates in point of time rose to just that sublimated experience: not Fuller, not Martin, not Blakelock, though each of these was touched to a special expression. They are more derivative than Ryder, more the children of Barbizon.

Ryder gave us first and last an incomparable sense of pattern and austerity of mood. He saw with an all too pitiless and pitiful eye the element of helplessness in things, the complete succumbing of things in nature to those elements greater than they that wield a fatal power. Ryder was the last of the romantics, the last of that great school of impressive artistry, as he was the first of our real painters and the greatest in vision. He was a still companion of Blake in that realm of the beyond, the first citizen of the land of Luthany. He knew the fine distinction between drama and tragedy, the tragedy which nature prevails upon the sensitive to accept. He was the painter poet of the immanent in things.

Music and the Electrical Theater

By Carl Van Vechten

IN an article called "Music for Museums" I once complained of the unvaried fare offered to us by the programme makers of the symphony concerts, a monotonous round of the symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms, the overtures of Weber, and excerpts from Wagner's music dramas. There should be laws restricting orchestral organizations to one Beethoven symphony a season, I asserted, and I berated orchestral conductors for their tendency to give the old masters places that should be reserved, at least on occasion, for the younger generation. Since then the conductors themselves have apparently seen the error of their ways, for during the current season (1916-17) we have found Mr. Damrosch and even Mr. Stransky (in so far as he has been able so to do without upsetting the conditions of the famous Pulitzer will, which stipulated that the music of Beethoven, Liszt, and Wagner should be frequently performed at the concerts of the Philharmonic Society) vying with each other in an effort to discover unperformed works in dusty attics or on the shelves of the music shops and libraries, and to give early hearings to new music by modern composers.

Up to date, to be sure, they have ignored a good deal that we might conceivably listen to with pleasure, but they have provided us with specimens previously unheard, at least in these benighted parts, of the art of Haydn and Mozart; Richard Strauss's *Macbeth*, long buried, has been dug up, and the new *Alpine Symphony*, still-born, has been played; a suite from Strawinsky's earliest ballet, *The Firebird*, and

Music and the Electrical Theater

several movements of a symphony by Zandonai have been added to the repertory of the concert room; and d'Indy's *Istar*, which we have long prayed for, has been revived, together with a more ancient treasure, Raff's *Lenore Symphony*, once as popular as Tschaikowsky's *Sixth Symphony*. These are steps, tentative to be sure, in the right direction, and although a good deal of this music, some of us, at the cost of burning in hell, would refuse to hear twice, it is certainly pleasanter to hear it once than to listen to the standbys and battle horses of the ordinary concert season, year after year, a procedure which always makes me cry out with Shakespeare's duke, "Enough; no more—'Tis not so sweet now as it was before."

Dr. Muck in Boston does not agree with me. He even brings his men to New York to play Schumann's *Rhenish Symphony* and Rimsky-Korsakow's *Scheherazade*, calling the result a programme! This strikes me as insolence; but it is the efficient kind of insolence, like the rape of Belgium, which there is no gainsaying. The concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall are always sold out and Dr. Muck could, if he so desired (and I am expecting something of the sort), make up a programme consisting of the *Beautiful Blue Danube* waltz and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* without any appreciable effect on the box office.

There is, of course, the necessity, as it is considered, of educating the children. They must, according to the accepted theory of education, hear what has been done before they hear what is being done, but it does not seem necessary to turn the best orchestra in this country (one of the best anywhere) into an educational institution. It is too disheartening to realize, as some of us must, that the orchestra of orchestras, which one might hope to find exploiting new tonal combinations for our delectation, is becoming a museum where rare old bits of tune may be inspected and reheard.

Hope has appeared, however, in an unlooked for quarter.

Carl Van Vechten

The extreme popularity of the cinema theaters could not have been foreseen a few seasons ago, nor could any of us have foretold that symphony orchestras of a size and quality which compare more than favorably with some of our established organizations would play sweet music in these temples of amusement from late morning till midnight. The accompaniment to the pictures is scarcely as yet a matter for congratulation, but the accompaniment is only a small part of the duty of an orchestra in a theater devoted to electrical dramas. Now a concert at a moving picture show is often a much more serious matter than an old Theodore Thomas popular programme. Symphonies, concertos, rhapsodies, arias, overtures (from those of *Dichter und Bauer* and *Guillaume Tell* to those of *Lohengrin* and Tschaikowsky's *1812*) all figure in the scheme. At one of these theaters more music is performed in one day than an assiduous concert-goer could hope to hear in three in the concert halls. The duration of a symphony concert is about two hours with a short intermission, that of a song recital about an hour and a half, but an orchestra, or an organ, or a piano, furnishes a pretty continuous flow of melody in a moving picture theater from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. In the large houses soloists are sandwiched in between pictures; and sometimes these soloists are better performers than those one hears under more holy auspices—frequently they are the same. The violinists play Kreisler, and the Beethoven *Romances*, and pieces by Drdla and Vieuxtemps and de Bériot and Paganini and Mendelssohn. . . . Yes, the first movement of the *E minor concerto* sometimes figures in moving picture theater concert programmes where, at the present day, I am inclined to believe it belongs.

This might be regarded as poetic justice. It is true, however, and a fact that cannot be ignored. It strikes me that from this time on we should hear precious little about "concerts for young people," "educational concerts," "popular

Music and the Electrical Theater

concerts," and the like. In the circumstances the directors of our best orchestras can find no flimsy excuse for playing too much Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, or Wagner, or any of the works of Grieg, Liszt, Mendelssohn, and Tschaikowsky. Brahms, by the peculiar veils of his art, is protected for the moment from the moving picture theater (Bruckner seems to be protected from any theater at all), although the violinists occasionally perform his gypsy dances, and almost any day I expect to hear between Douglas Fairbanks and Charley Chaplin some deep-voiced contralto sing the *Sapphische Ode* or the *Vergebliches Ständchen*. The importance of the musical accompaniment to the film and of the intermediate concert numbers is obviously recognized by the managers of such theaters as the Strand and the Rialto and the electric picture theaters on Second Avenue. The close attention with which the music is followed and the very violent applause which congratulates each performer, often exacting recall numbers, are ready proofs of the pleasure it gives. What is known as "cheap" music is seldom played. In fact, there is so much of an air of the concert room about these performances that I am afraid they would bore me even if the music were less familiar to my ears. I should prefer, on these occasions, more informality, more excursions into the rhythmic realms conjured up for us by Lou Hirsch and Irving Berlin. Nothing of the sort need be hoped for. The music performed is what is known to the less tone-educated multitudes as "classic."

Any intelligent child, with a little direction from a musical elder, can pick up the routine of the concert and opera world in a ten weeks' course at the Rialto or the Strand. Such unavoidable songs as the prologue to *Pagliacci* and the subsequent tenor air from the same opera; all three of Dalila's airs; the waltz from *La Bohème*; the prayer from *Tosca*, *Celeste Aida*, *Cielo e Mar*, *O Paradiso*, *Danny Deever*, *Les Filles de Cadix*; the habanera from *Carmen*, *Dich Theure*

Carl Van Vechten

Halle, The Two Grenadiers, Dost Thou Know That Fair Land? from *Mignon*; the jewel waltz from *Faust*, the page's song from *Les Huguenots*, the *Miserere*, the prayer from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria*, *Depuis le Jour* from *Louise*, the gavotte from *Manon*, *Pleurez mes Yeux* from *Le Cid*, the drinking song from *La Traviata*, the *Ave Maria* from *Otello*, *Plus Grand dans son Obscurité* from Gounod's *La Reine de Saba*, and *Che Faro Senza Euridice?* will be as familiar to his little ears as *Dixey* or the stolen strains of *America*.

In like manner he will accustom himself to the delights of Kreisler's *Caprice Viennois* and *Tambourin Chinois*, Beethoven's two violin *Romances*, the Bach air arranged for the G string, the *Preislied* from *Die Meistersänger*, arranged by Wilhelmj, Pierné's *Serenade*, Dvorak's *Humoresque*. As for the concert repertory he will hear the overtures to *Euryanthe* and *Oberon*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Tannhäuser*, *Sakuntala*, *Semiramide* and such concert pieces and tone-poems as the *Danse Macabre*, *Phaëton*, *Mephisto Waltz*, *Les Préludes*, some of the orchestrated rhapsodies of Liszt, Rimsky-Korsakow's *Caprice Espagnol*, the *Arlésienne* suite, the *Peer Gynt* suite, a number of Strauss waltzes, Massenet's *Elégie*, the entr'actes from *The Jewels of the Madonna*, certain ballet airs of Glück, etc.

Having gone thus far, why not go a little farther? If one must become acquainted with Wagner in the concert hall at all, why not in the electric picture theater? There are no excerpts in the present concert repertory that could not as well be played there; the *Funeral March* from *Götterdämmerung*, the *Lohengrin* prelude, the *Good Friday Spell* from *Parsifal*, the *Ride of the Valkyries*, and all the rest of them should be doled out to the youngsters seeking tone-knowledge and to those oldsters who insist upon hearing them divorced from the text and the stage action, between the actualities and the feature film. And while you can scarcely ask Dr. Muck or Mr.

Music and the Electrical Theater

Damrosch to pay Beethoven the compliment of giving him up altogether for the time being, his music might be played less by the organized orchestras in view of the hearings it would receive at the hands of the moving picture societies. The first two symphonies, at any rate, could be left to their mercies. Mendelssohn, as a symphonist, might also be given into their keeping, as also Grieg and Liszt, for the most part, Rubinstein, Tschaikowsky and Massenet, a good deal of Saint-Saëns, Glazunow and Elgar, certainly Elgar—if the moving picture audiences would permit it. There is another field for the Strand Philharmonic Society, for the band of the Academy of Music: the exploitation of the American composer who, one complains, never gets his chance at a hearing. The conductors of these concerts might introduce new music by George W. Chadwick, Henry Hadley, Arthur Farwell, Edgar Stillman Kelley, and Ernest Schelling.

If anything so nearly pleasant as this happens in the musical world,—think of the space there would be on the programmes of our august societies for the new music our curious ears are aching to hear! Think of the resurrections of works by Mozart, Haydn, César Franck, that one never does hear. Perhaps Debussy's *La Mer*, *Nocturnes*, and *Images* (*Iberia*, *Gigue*, and *Rondes de Printemps*), all too infrequently played, would become more familiar. I should like to listen at least once to Albeniz's *Catalonia* and Turina's *La Procession du Rocio*, which Debussy has compared to a luminous fresco. . . . Spanish music altogether is unknown in our concert halls. . . . We could hear more Sibelius and Moussorgsky . . . a little Borodine . . . John Carpenter . . . Schoenberg's *Five Pieces* . . . Stravinsky's *Scherzo Fantastique* and the *Sacrifice to the Spring*. Why not even *Petrouchka*? Ornstein's *The Fog*, Ravel, Dukas (has *La Péri* been played here?), d'Indy, Chabrier, Korngold, Reger, Loeffler. . . .

Our Critics

By Van Wyck Brooks

IT is a curious fact that of the various minds now at work in the field of criticism in this country those who have been permitted to speak for the American people *ex cathedra* have never in any serious way occupied themselves with our own contemporary literature. This is only natural in the pundits of our criticism, like Mr. Paul Elmer More and Mr. Irving Babbitt, who see in the whole of modern literature from Rousseau down scarcely anything but a progressive record of spiritual disintegration and collapse. And perhaps it is not surprising in such sensitive minds of the older generation as Mr. W. C. Brownell, author of so many fine essays about France and England and our own past, or Mr. G. E. Woodberry, who has responded to so much that is living in a still more or less contemporaneous world. The remarkable thing is that it is just as true of those more complacent and sometimes all too complacent critics of the middle generation who feel themselves in life apparently by no means alien to the virile American scene. There is Professor William Lyon Phelps, for example. Professor Phelps continually pats our American novelists on the back, treating them as good fellows in print just as he treats them in the flesh, no doubt; but why does he never dream of applying values to them as he applies values to Russian fiction? And then, strangest of all, there is Mr. J. E. Spingarn, the freest of amateurs, the patron of aesthetic radicalism. Wrapped up as he is in his web of critical theory, Mr. Spingarn appears to be less inclined even than

Our Critics

the critics with whom he is theoretically at war to play an active, public part in the secular conflict of darkness and light.

It is certainly remarkable, this apparently general determination not to be practical on the part of so many dissimilar minds; and it is all the more remarkable because criticism has ever been, in other countries, precisely the most practical of the literary arts. Since the days when Socrates, its august founder, sat in the market-place and played the midwife to so many inarticulate minds, it has been the joyous prerogative of criticism to be on the spot when thoughts are being born. Not to mention any names that the most academic of our critics can possibly gainsay, is it not the glory of Lessing that he established a sort of norm of the German character, descending into the thick of reality and building, by creation and controversy alike, amid the shifting sands of pedantry and exoticism, an impregnable base for the superstructure of a civilization to come? As for Sainte-Beuve, he lived in an age and a society that required no such drastic re-statements of fundamental truth; he inherited and perpetuated that marvellous equilibrium of the French temper which is the result of an organic culture founded on the suffrages of the whole race; but Sainte-Beuve lived and wrote in substantial harmony with the creative life of his contemporaries, and more than this, he too was ever ready to spring to the defence of new-born thoughts and fight for their just rights of passage into the French mind. No doubt in the France of Sainte-Beuve there were more new-born thoughts worth fighting for, strictly as thoughts, than there are in the America of today. But no one denies that at present in this country an immense amount of creative energy has at least conclusively turned itself toward the field of the arts. If it does not in many instances come rightly and fully to a head, if it fails very often to eventuate in thoughts in themselves vitally important, does it not all the more behoove criticism to condense the vapors that confuse this creative energy

Van Wyck Brooks

and to spring loyally to the defence of groping minds that bear the mark of sincerity and promise? As for our critics, what birth out of life have any of them ever defended with that heavy artillery they so enjoy training upon those popular American fallacies many of which, quite plainly, are the result of their own immemorial absentee-mindedness? Have they ever been at pains to grasp the contemporary American mind and its problems, to discover what the contemporary American mind is, and what it is capable of, and how it can best be approached, and whether it is able to assimilate the whole culture of the world before it has formed any personal conception of what culture is?

Our critics, if they are in touch with European life, must be aware that the relation in which they stand to the life of their own country is quite unique. But far even from considering the idea that the living forces about them deserve a little sympathetic and discreet attention they seem to be persuaded that the younger generation presents a united front against everything that mankind has tried and found worthy, and that it has formed a sort of conspiracy to propagate falsehood at whatever cost. "What Matthew Arnold would call 'the elephantine main body,'" says Mr. Babbitt, "seems more convinced than ever that man, to become perfect, has only to continue indefinitely the programme of the nineteenth century,—that is, to engage in miscellaneous expansion and back it up if need be with noisy revolt against all the forms of the past." To which Mr. Brownell subjoins the following: "Every one who sympathetically 'belongs' to [the age] feels himself staunchly supported by the concensus of all it esteems. . . . The militancy of the age therefore finds itself not only in possession of a perfectly definite—if mainly destructive—credo, but of a practically united and enthusiastic army."

To us who are so much in the thick of things that we cannot see the wood for the trees, statements of this kind are all but unintelligible. They seem to us like anathemas delivered in

Our Critics

some half-forgotten sacred language to a people that has begun to stammer in a vernacular of its own. We are so conscious of our own differences, of the hundred and one programmes that we are pursuing precisely *not* in common, that while we are prepared for body-blows from Mr. Babbitt (to whose vigorous intellect, by the way, many of us are greatly indebted), we scarcely know what to make of Mr. Brownell's rather more graciously delivered thrusts. But we may be very sure that if, to the older generation, we appear to be a "practically united and enthusiastic army" we must be so in some sense in which the older generation is not. To what that sense is our critics themselves in a general way have given us the clue. They say that we are emotional, and they give to their accusation an air of plausibility by adding that we are over-emotional, as indeed we are; but what they really object to is that we are emotional at all, the strength of their own case resting wholly on the assumption that literature ought to spring not from the emotions but from the intellect. This we deny, and I suppose that our denial is so unanimous that it does, in a way, neutralize our intellectual differences. But why do we deny it? Partly because our reaction upon life, on the one hand, and our reading of the history of literature, on the other, leads us to believe that it is false; and partly because we have witnessed the failure and breakdown of intellectualism itself.

Consider, for example, Mr. More, our chief exponent of the intellectualist position. Mr. More, referring to the yellow press, delivers himself of the following remarks: "On days when no sensational event has occurred, it will indulge in the prettiest sentimental sermons on the home and on family felicities. . . . But let the popular mind be excited by some crime of lust, and the same journal will forget the sweet obligations of home and wife . . . and will deck out the loathsome debauchery of a murderer and his trull as the spiritual history of two young souls finding themselves in the pure air of pas-

Van Wyck Brooks

sion." . . . Now, really, whatever the provocations of the yellow press, can one imagine a piece of worse literary breeding than this? Yet it can almost be said to be Mr. More's habitual tone whenever, leaving the charmed circle of literary ideas, he deals with modern society. Far from being reasonable, disinterested, and humane, his note is one of nagging, pettish, and one would almost say vulgar exasperation; he betrays a tendency to break out on every occasion into promiscuous abuse. How then can our intellectualists expect to convert us to the music of the classical discipline when some of their own most representative minds—for Mr. More is by no means unique as an advocate of "the classic point of view"—are so singularly ill-nurtured? If this is what the classical discipline does—how can we avoid being led, quite unjustly, to conclude?—let us by all means turn to the discipline of science which produced the ever just and ever genial William James.

That is what we mean when we speak of the breakdown of intellectualism; for of course the reason why Mr. More's humane attitude cracks and crumbles so at the touch of life is because it is based on a culture of the intellect that is not borne out by a corresponding culture of the feelings. Mr. More's emotional life, as his writings exhibit is, is just as crude and untempered as the intellectual life of the younger generation which he attacks. Why is this so? Because Mr. More's intellectualism is the converse and counterpart of the materialism that has led to the younger generation's incapacity to accept the discipline that he offers it. He has not been able to feel human values finely because to have done so would have been to upset his whole faith in a society based not upon the creative but upon the possessive instincts of men, a society ruled over by the "natural aristocracy" of economic power. Mr. More is simply a belated pioneer, with all the repressed impulses, the fundamental limitations, the exaggerated antipathies that belong to the pioneer type, extended and subtilized

Our Critics

in the sphere of the intellect alone. Turn from his philosophical and literary essays, in which he is able to be humane at large, to his essays on social and economic themes, and see how quickly he lets the cat out of the bag. "Looking at the larger good of society," he observes, "we may say that the dollar is more than the man and that *the rights of property are more important than the right to life.*" (The italics are not mine.)

Here, then, we have a clue not merely to the breakdown of the intellectualist point of view but to its origin as well. Mr. Brownell says that we used to have in this country a public comparable with those *honnêtes gens*, equally removed from a court that was too rigid and a pit that was too free, through which the French tradition was so long maintained. "A public like this," he says, "we once had, and we have it no longer. Its limitations were marked, but they emphasized its existence. Its standards were narrow, but it had standards. We had a class, not numerous but fairly defined, corresponding to the class Charles Sumner found in England, distinct from the nobility but possessed in abundance of serious knowledge, high accomplishment, and refined taste, the class, precisely, called by Molière *les honnêtes gens.*" Now that such a class did exist at one time in this country no one who has any associations with our past could possibly deny. But that this class ever at bottom corresponded with the *honnêtes gens* of France one might perhaps be permitted to question, even if M. André Gide, whom Mr. Brownell quotes from, had not remarked that in France itself the tradition they maintained would hardly have been possible without the Court. But why did the existence of the Court make so much difference? Because the Court, removed at it was from the influences of the marketplace, kept alive in France the free, the non-acquisitive, in short the creative conception of life; and this conception, permeating thence downward the whole fabric of society, linked the artistic expressions at the top with the common conscious-

Van Wyck Brooks

ness of the race beneath, a common consciousness that has never denied its Rabelaisian elements. Between these two extremes, then, of racial experience and racial expression and partaking abundantly of both, the *honnêtes gens*, with their "serious knowledge, their high accomplishment, their refined taste" formed a sort of mean, logically poised. French wit, French elegance, French taste—are they not, as Mr. Brownell himself would be the first to point out, simply the polished outside, the polished extremity, as it were, of a social mass that is modelled and civilized all the way through, according to its own genius, a social mass all the strata of which are fused and unified and which is grounded imperturbably on the basis of a common experience of life? It is quite true, as Mr. Brownell says, that Molière would never have written his best work had he practised only on his cook. But is there not a certain difference between French society and our own in the fact that Molière was able to practise on his cook at all?

For our cultivated class of old never demanded, never assumed the existence of, and never attempted to create, a common ground of experience in the American people. It accepted men as "infinitely repellant particles" and drew them together by projecting a spirit that appealed to their intellectual and their volitional faculties alone and that never conflicted with the full exercise of their instincts of possession. Having neither on the one hand "a Court that was too rigid" but that would, nevertheless, have preserved the creative conception of life, nor on the other "a pit that was too free" but that would, equally, have kept them in touch with a level of primitive emotional life, our cultivated class with their serious knowledge, their high accomplishment, their refined taste were suspended in the air, so to speak, deprived alike of the creative spark that lifts men above themselves and the animal underproppings that maintain their contact with rude reality. Our old writers established as a common ground between them-

Our Critics

selves and their readers either the non-human world of external nature (Thoreau), the world of the will (Emerson), the world of memory and association (Longfellow), the emotion of special causes like abolition or the Civil War (Whittier, Lowell) or of special occasions (Holmes), but never the congruous world of human life in general. They knew that their neighbors and that extended neighborship that constituted their public had no emotional life in common because their existence on the active plane was a competitive one; bent as their public was on getting on individually, how could they admit or cultivate an inner community as social beings? Admit it of course they could not, neither could they cultivate it; and the result was that our old culture never was and never became organic;—a by-product of the conditions of its time, it was unable to project itself beyond those conditions. That is why it strikes one as so futile when Mr. Brownell pleads for the extension of taste without taking into consideration the primitive forces that will have to undergo a profound transmutation before taste in the organic sense will really be possible to the American public. *Inorganic* taste we already have in abundance, and every year, following the spread of wealth, it increases more and more. Nowadays a little money and a little training and a little expert advice enable almost anyone to possess a flawless drawing-room, for example (especially if he keeps within the safe circle of the neutral colors). But is it not abundantly evident that this almost universal attainment of aesthetic taste is quite compatible with an extreme want of taste in other relations of life?

Upon almost all our social relations, in fact, the effect is so obvious of our competitive, non-creative past that, were it not that our critics belong to that competitive, non-creative past and cannot escape from its circle of ideas, it would seem almost wanton of them to accuse the younger generation of having created a chaos which, in truth, they have only become conscious of. Our critics themselves have always said that our

Van Wyck Brooks

society is too incongruous to produce a high social comedy; but why do they draw the line there? Do they not see that "high" literature in any genre, literature, I mean, that is based on a complicated social understanding, is all but impossible for us at present, except on a forced and artificial plane? Take Dr. Crothers, for example. Why are the essays of Dr. Crothers so self-conscious if it is not because Dr. Crothers knows perfectly well that his eighty thousand readers have no emotional life in common either with him or with each other, because he does not feel *at home* with his readers as Charles Lamb felt, or even as Dr. Holmes felt in his little Harvard world of the past? They admit, I suppose, that Dr. Crothers is self-conscious; but why do they accept with only a gesture of deprecation the self-consciousness of Dr. Crothers while they attack in so savage a way the self-consciousness of the younger generation? Because while the self-consciousness of the younger generation stands for an instinctive drive toward a common understanding on the creative plane, the self-consciousness of Dr. Crothers, making no levy upon our creative life, accepts the pioneer law of self-preservation, in the scheme of which literature is only a kind of associational and secondary play of the mind in a society whose real business is the art of getting on.

Our critics are thus unable to connect at any point with the creative life of the present time because they are precluded from so doing by the entire programme of the epoch in which they were bred. Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Brownell differ from Mr. More in being instinctively humane minds; but they are in implicit agreement with Mr. More in accepting literature only just in so far as it tallies with the pioneer vision of life; they have simply not filled out their points of view on the economic and psychological sides, and thus, without deliberately repudiating, they ignore the economic and psychological interpretations of life according to which literature is one of the manifestations of a society organic in all its parts. Mr.

Our Critics

Brownell, tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, effects a frank separation between the artistic and the social spheres. "Of the undemocratic doctrine of the 'remnant' in the social and political field," he says, "I have never, myself, felt either the aptness or the attraction. The interests of people in general are not those of the remnant, and history shows how, unchecked, the remnant administers them . . . But the remnant in art and letters is another affair altogether." Mr. Babbitt's point of view is not so clear cut; his "New Laokoön" is based, nevertheless, on the same assumption that literature and society are distinct entities following separate laws. Here is a statement in point: "Lessing repudiated what was artificial and superficial in the French tradition,—its conventions, and etiquette, and gallantries,—but at the risk of losing a real virtue, viz., the exquisite urbanity that the French at their best had really succeeded in attaining." Now only on the assumption that literature is independent of society and not, as Madame de Staël said a hundred years ago, an expression of it, only on the assumption, that is to say, that literature forms a self-sufficient world of its own, is it possible to dream that you can pick out all the plums from the literary pudding and make a nice little particular pie for yourself. For how could this "exquisite urbanity" of the French tradition have been anything but exotic in the Berlin of 1760? And how could it possibly have been preserved when those other characteristics of the French tradition, with which it was organically bound up, had been repudiated? Was it not, in fact, the great work of Lessing, that work not so much of intelligence as of character for which, according to Goethe, the Germans have so revered his memory, that he purged the German mind of *all* its exotic elements and grounded its literature in the firm subsoil of its own nature? Our critics, to repeat, maintain this peculiar cosmopolitan eclecticism partly because, not being creative minds, they do not appreciate, as the creative mind does, the necessary correspondence between expression and experience,

Van Wyck Brooks

even, if need be, the most limited, the most merely local, experience; and partly because by means of it they are able to prevent literature from coming into direct contact with a society whose acquisitive, non-creative programme it would immediately upset and destroy.

As for our critics of the middle generation, Professor Phelps on the one hand, and Mr. Spingarn on the other, they are transitional minds, and they have all the weakness of transitional minds; for certainly their writings manifest none of the virility or the character of our older critics, all of whom, whatever their shortcomings, have at once the sanction of their epoch and the strength that comes from standing with their backs to the wall. Virility? Is it possible that Professor Phelps, the academic apostle of "punch", is less virile than the apostles of taste and law? He is; because "punch" itself not only has no existence in the scale of creative values but is actually, as a theatrical exaggeration of a certain phase of the will that has proved effective in a society given over to acquisition, further removed from the sphere of literature than the whimpers of the most whimpering dilettante. The apostles of taste and law are frankly "high-brow" and proudly conscious of their position—which is no mean virtue; Professor Phelps accommodates himself to a "low-brow" world by becoming "low-brow" himself, with all the zeal of a convert. But like the editors of our popular magazines, he misjudges the "low-brow" public; he takes it at its own humbly conscious valuation of itself and merely enlarges its consciousness externally, not seeing that the public's conscious valuation of itself is in this country peculiarly erroneous and that the "low-brow" mind the country over is sending forth the greenest and the fairest shoots of aspiration and desire, shoots that are athirst for the sunlight and water of a leadership that our leaders are themselves too humble to assume. For Professor Phelps is himself very humble; not only is his bark much worse than his bite, but all his writings reveal, in effect, a sensitive devotion

Our Critics

to literature and a liberal affection for our benighted human race. Like the older critics against whom he has reacted he has simply committed himself to a programme, from which he is unable gracefully to withdraw.

And so has Mr. Spingarn, who completes the circle of our past. For while Mr. Spingarn is up to the minute in his critical theory he is the victim of a society which has so abridged and emasculated the *function* of criticism that he is himself unable to generate enough interest in contemporary phenomena to feel it worth his while beyond a certain point to bring his critical apparatus into play. It happens of course that many of Mr. Spingarn's ideas are intelligent and true. Why then does so much of his writing reduce itself to a thin dialectic, the wheels of which turn round with extraordinary facility but without gathering heat or throwing out light? Because while his critical point of view is intellectually admirable, it does not represent the *kind* of criticism for which a society in our stage of development offers a responsible opportunity. Mr. Spingarn's aesthetic, as we know, is derived from that of Benedetto Croce and Benedetto Croce, as we also know, conducts in Italy a critical magazine from which a large part of the literary life of his country takes its direction. This is an aspect of reality just as real as the reality of Benedetto Croce's ideas. How does it happen, then, that Mr. Spingarn emulates the one without emulating the other? Obviously because America is not Italy and because, while a theory may be equally true in all countries, what makes a theory effective is the peculiar condition of the given time and place with which it is brought into relation. That works of art ought to be judged purely on their own merits and without regard to time and place is, no doubt, a perfectly valid idea. But a criticism that is based on this idea will never be able to play the effective part in this country that it plays in Italy until our literature has been brought into such an organic relationship with our life that in discussing literary phenomena on their own merits

Van Wyck Brooks

it will also be discussing, by implication, the society of which our literary phenomena are the expression.

Thus Mr. Spingarn, radical as he is and deriving his point of view from a field of learning largely untapped by the critics of the older generation, is essentially, so far as America is concerned, in the same boat with Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Brownell. For just as Mr. Spingarn does not see why he should not take over the Italian criticism of Benedetto Croce, so Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Brownell see no reason why they should not take over the principles and methods of French criticism, in spite of the fact that France is the most perfect example of a social organism the modern world knows, the most perfect example, that is to say, of a spontaneous unity in all departments of life. But obviously in a civilization that is based on a traditional common understanding, where literature proceeds through a constant, illuminating reference to known antecedents, where literary values are fixed by an experience in which all have shared, the merest of "merely" literary criticism is implicitly a form of social criticism as well; and by virtue of this it is true of French critics of whatever school that in touching on a given book they write about France, setting in vibration, throwing into relief, a fragment of the racial consciousness itself. How, then, can the principles and methods of French criticism be divorced from the texture of French society? How can they be taken over and applied in societies that possess no comparable organic development? The answer is that they can be taken over but that they can not be applied, as the whole work of our orthodox critics goes to prove; for the classical method loses its force at once when it is brought to bear on a literature that has no scale of values and expresses no achieved social organism but only the necessarily irresponsible whims of necessarily isolated individuals. Our critics, by assuming this attitude, not in regard to specific works, for these they ignore, but in regard to the tendencies that lie behind them, are led quite naturally to

Our Critics

find in them nothing but sound and fury, signifying nothing. Revolving in an intellectual sphere that possesses a vital correspondence only in countries that inherit an age-old common discipline, they are unable to suggest any principles of order adapted to a spiritually unorganized society.

The Seven Arts Chronicle

for May

The Fifth-Month Poet

MAY is Walt Whitman month. Whitman was born on Long Island, New York, May 31, 1819. He was school-teacher, editor, carpenter, wound-dresser: he went the rounds in the American manner of his time. And in the American way he found himself fairly late. He was thirty-six when "Leaves of Grass" was published, and he went on writing this one book until he died in Camden in 1892. He made good use of his lack of travel and of an academic culture: he set out in a free art territory, learnt most things for himself, and created his own forms, gathered his own materials. His form was built roughly by listening, as it were, to his own inner music, and setting it to words, instead of listening to the music of English poetry. His material was the life around him, in its multitudinousness, actuality, and chaos. However, he had given him two bodies of thought to make his work unified. The first was the principle of democracy, as Jefferson outlined it: the second the transcendentalism of Emerson. Both of these thin gospels he remade by rooting them in Earth and his own personality. He was a democrat who believed in evolution and God, and in a perfection enclosing all things. Naturally he was an optimist, a preacher of joy, health, simplicity, and the victory of man. Naturally he was a preacher.

It is part of the American tradition.

His art-form is idealistically democratic. If a democracy is a state in which each person has his place, according to his own socially allowable desires and capacities, then Whitman's verse is thoroughly democratic—there is no subordination of a multitude of thoughts, feelings, and facts to one dominant theme. He loosely allows each thought, each feeling, each fact its own place, floating serenely in a sea of chaos. More than this he goes on for pages in the much-criticized 'catalogues', which are actually a series of pictures, each picture given a line by itself. These are hard on the reader, and possibly no one can read them through—but their effect is none the less significant. You taste them, here, there, at random, as you taste the faces in a crowded street, and the effect is of life itself: each fact there if you want to find it. In other words, where a traditional poet would gather America in a symbol which simplifies the national life into something vertical, Whitman shows that life in extension, horizontally, much more as it actually is.

There is, nevertheless, a remarkable unity in his work. This unity is secured by the simple device of speaking in the first person. It is Walt Whitman that we read about. As he said so accurately, "Who touches this book, touches a man."

The Seven Arts Chronicle

We simply identify ourselves with the speaker, and find ourselves alive in nineteenth century America, moving about, a curious citizen, and seeing much, feeling much, thinking much; life throbbing about us with all its sting and vividness, with all its confusion and unrelated play, its incoherent flux. We move equally through crowded cities and along the open road, and in it all is the best of America—her out-of-doors, her unusual health, her "large unconscious scenery." We gain the sense that the Republic is seething with possibilities, boiling with usable energies; and that if we could only get away from our old cultures we would find in democracy new values far greater than the old—a richness of contact with many levels, a ranging over reality with feet striking the Earth, a new companionship with men and women and Nature. By speaking in the first person, he makes himself *any man*, rather than some specialized hero, and we can slip into his shoes and live his life with him.

His work has been compared with ancient religious writing, and he has been called one of the prophets. The analogy holds, if we add that his outlook was also that of the scientist. He wanted to envisage life, not as the old intuitive prophets did, through symbols, phantasies, and wonder-tales; but directly, as science found it, and as he found it. He gave attention to "the hair on the back of his hand," and also to the theory of evolution, the chemistry of decomposition, the facts of astronomy. He loved the idea that man is above all an animal, but he also pointed him toward great transcendent ends. He only left this attitude later in life, with rather weak East Indian philosophy; but funda-

mentally, as we find him, there is a direct taste of things, the sensations of daily activity, the solidity of buildings, plowed fields, and men and women—an immense panorama of life.

This is what he set down for himself as rules in writing:

"Make no quotations and no reference to any other writers. Lumber the writing with nothing—let it go as lightly as the bird flies in the air or a fish swims in the sea. Avoid all poetical similes; be faithful to the perfect likelihoods of nature—healthy, exact, simple, disdaining ornaments. Do not go into criticisms or arguments at all; make full-blooded, rich, flush, natural works. Insert natural things, indestructibles, idioms, characteristics, rivers, states, persons, etc. Be full of *strong, sensual germs* . . . Poet! beware lest your poems are made in the spirit that comes from the study of pictures of things—and not from the spirit that comes from the contact with real things themselves."

Of course he was a great enough artist to throw half of this overboard at times, and, in fact, the massive and beautiful "Memories of President Lincoln" gains much of its power through the symbols of lilacs, the powerful Western Star, and the solitary hermit-thrush who sings of death. His superb Manhattan strikes "with clinch'd hand the pavement"; his America is "Mother of her equal brood." But in the main he was an exact and direct writer.

It is not surprising today that Walt Whitman has achieved, all over the earth, wherever there are liberals, a position as the great poet of America, and better still, the first great poet of

New Books

democracy. Here, in art at last, is a testament of what democrats try to live, a picture of democratic society, a living faith in all men, low and high, and the very atmosphere of a new life, a life never lived before by man. What is surprising is that only America neglects him. Some of the younger generation have found in him the only American literary tradition on which they can build; but it is common enough, even today, to find cultivated people, and of course, "powerful (and powerless) uneducated persons" who know nothing of him. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that our life is still unself-con-

scious. Whitman makes it conscious, and we do not recognize it. Or perhaps, and more probably, it is that he pictures an ideal America, an America still far off. For although his ingredients are our daily actualities, he mixes them into a sauce of vision which is more a wish than an accomplishment, and so, like most great realists, he is the most radical of idealists. For he was not chiefly concerned with political democracy, but democracy, as he put it, "carried far beyond politics into the region of taste, the standards of manners and beauty, and even into philosophy and theology."

New Books

THE NEW POETRY

WE (I use the pronoun in its most plural sense) have been waiting for "The New Poetry: An Anthology" (Macmillan). We have been in actual need of it. The "new" poetry has been violently lectured about and against, discussed at length and *ad nauseam*, given renewed life by its antagonists and almost talked to death by its protagonists. There have been guides to it; group exhibits by its most inhibited groups; definitions (mostly contradictory) of it—everything, in fact, except a collection of it. This anthology purposes to give the average reader (who, in spite of F. P. A.'s optimism, remains the average reader) and the more intensive student a broad survey of the trend of contemporary verse. And, with a few major reservations, the editors have succeeded in their purpose. Miss Monroe and Mrs. Henderson know how vague the borders of the "new" poetry are, so their introduction is less dogmatic than most

such prefaces are, and their contents more catholic. Every tendency, every "school," the most tentative or audacious experiments are represented. This almost prodigal inclusiveness makes the startling omissions the more amazing. For instance, the editors give space to such imitative English poets as Douglas Goldring, Frederic Manning and John Drinkwater, and do not quote or even mention such eloquent and original Englishmen as W. H. Davies, James Elroy Flecker, Lascelles Abercrombie, Edward Thomas, Maurice Hewlett. And, though he is not popularly recognized as a poet, how could a lover of poetry omit G. K. Chesterton and his clanging, Vachelindsayesque ballads, particularly "Lepanto"? And how, when they are quoting so much of the most innocuous of recent lady-like verses, could the editors leave out such striking and "new" women-poets as Anna Wickham, Irene Ruth-erford McLeod, Frances Cornford? Or when so many of these four hun-

The Seven Arts Chronicle

dred pages are given to the occasional, the merely adventurous and frankly experimental, how could so progressive and radical a poet as Arturo Giovannitti be passed by?

One is forced to the unpleasant suspicion that the "hospitable" quality of the editors is not as generous as it seems. The presence of a host of home-grown *ephemerae* that have not even a passing strangeness or a spurious innovation to distinguish them; the frequency of the Rollo Brittens, the Scharmél Irises; and the preponderance of poems that originally appeared in "Poetry; a Magazine of Verse" gives the volume a parochial air that belittles it. Miss Monroe and her collaborator seem often to be exhibiting their poets rather than poetry; and their pride in the art they are upholding becomes a bit too personal to be persuasive. It would have been more representative and fairer to the experimenters themselves, if there were a little less of the local Maxwell Bodenheims, and at least something of such neglected "new" poets as Clement Wood, Alter Brody, Elizabeth Waddell, Max Endicoff and Harry Kemp.

These strictures aside, the volume is, at the present, indispensable. A year or two from now, with most of the writers at the height of their power, it may seem inadequate and hopelessly out of date. But while the renaissance is still in its literary labor-pains we are indebted to the volume. The question as to what the new poetry is, is no longer so difficult. This, in a great part, is its answer.

INCLUDING CLEMENT WOOD

"Glad of Earth" (Gomme), the first volume of Mr. Clement Wood's poetry, is a splendid prologue to the

splendid book which, I hope, Mr. Wood is going to write. It contains buoyancy, vigor, variety, anger and charm. Unfortunately, it also contains soggy philosophy, prosy platitudes, thin echoes, soft sentimentalizing and a borrowed beauty. All this makes a confusing but somehow arresting mixture. It is the sort of work that might have been written by a talented son of Walt Whitman who had lived under the roof and the influence of several of the best present-day poets. Mr. Wood seems to be in that awkward and uncertain stage—the period when one's voice is changing—and, being none too sure of his own utterance, he tries the idiom and intonation of his contemporaries. Thus we find him speaking through "The Social Doctor" and "Myself the Mother", in the accents of James Oppenheim; through "Heart of the Village" and "Silence", in echoes of Robert Frost and Amy Lowell; through "One A. M." and "On the Ferry", in the speech of the imagists; and once in a while (as in "Spring" and "Uncaged") in the voice of Clement Wood. This dilution not only weakens his native power but weakens the effect of his more personal and protesting poems. These are his strongest contributions; they have a ring and robustness that are particularly emphasized in the concluding section "New Roads". Such poems as "A Psalm Not of David", "The Golden Miracle", and "Judas" deserve a place in a revolutionist's library no less than in a conservative's anthology. They have the elements of noble verse. And their outstanding virtue is this: it is hard to say in what way they excel—whether as a performance or as a promise.

L. U.

New Books

SINCLAIR LEWIS AND OTHERS

It is too bad that Sinclair Lewis is so ashamed of the "frank, sad, simple child" that lurks in the dim corners of his soul. He doesn't want us to know anything about that sad, simple child, and so he turns on the electricity of his wit, a blazing wit that half blinds us and keeps our nerves on edge to such a degree that we are unable to compose ourselves enough to seek a rapprochement with Mr. Lewis himself. His apparent sophistication, so typically American, is almost terrifying, but it springs from a lack of self-confidence. He fights us off with that darting eye of his. He is so busy "making good" as an author because he is so desperately anxious to be good and is not quite sure how else to go about it. That is why "The Job" (Harpers) strikes one as a half-way novel, brilliant achievement that it is from the dominant conventional standpoint. "Making good" is the theme of the story itself, the story of a little country girl who becomes a New York stenographer and fights her way through to work that is work and love that is love; had Mr. Lewis been free of the same incentive himself he could have shown ten times as effectively the pathos and the exhilarating reality of that incentive in the career of his heroine. Even as it is, he has done a fine piece of work. He has a miraculous gift of observation; his minor characters, consequently, in drawing which he has been able to depend on this gift alone, are as real as fluttering butterflies caught on a pin. His *mise-en-scene* is equally vivid. And as to the spirit of his work, he does catch, he does convey, the fine, cheery, hardy note of "some millions of women in business", the real stuff of democracy. Mr.

Lewis has one foot in the camp of the angels; all he has to do now is to extract his other foot from the quicksand of "success".

There are evidently secrets of the heart that Mr. Henry L. Mencken does not know—his catalogues of Men, Women, and Babies are somewhat cynically abbreviated at the virtuous end, but no one can doubt that he is as completely "aware" of the American scene as any of Mr. Dreiser's heroes in their awarest moments. "A Book of Burlesques" (John Lane) exhibits Mr. Mencken as a man of intellect, rather tightly intellectual perhaps, but exceedingly direct and very seldom uncertain of his values. In one or two of his pieces he loses his sense of proportion, with disastrous results ("Asepsis"), or in other respects becomes slightly puerile ("The New Soule"); elsewhere his wit, which is unflinching, always leaves a streak behind it in the reader's mind after the flash has passed. "Seeing the World", the conversation of two American tourists leaning against a rail overlooking the most beautiful panorama in Europe, is a satire in three dimensions; so is "The Visionary", in which Cheops taking a guest over his pyramid displays all the *nuances* of soul of the complacent captain of industry. These, to my mind, are the best pieces in the collection, though the "Portraits of Americans" and one or two of the "Tales of the Moral and Pathological" are almost as good. Certainly there is no excuse for the public if Mr. Mencken's book does not become popular; it strikes the solid level where, in any normal scheme of things, the popular and the instructed taste ought to meet one another cordially.

The Seven Arts Chronicle

The seven veils are dropping from the face of Ireland and it is a strange reality that face presents, strange at least to those who know nothing of the harsh old Irish world of a past that has been perpetuated as hardly any other European past has been, strange to those who know nothing of the black chieftains and the subterranean sympathies of Catholic Ireland and Catholic Spain. You have to go back generations in any other Western country to find a spiritual equivalent of James Joyce, whose "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" (Huebsch) is altogether atavistic from the standpoint of English literature, full as it is of Shandyisms but Rabelaisian in a pure style that Sterne was born too late to compass. Yet it is a living society that Mr. Joyce pictures, one that conforms to the twentieth century in its worldly apparel but reveals in its table-talk and its more intimate educational and religious recesses a mediaevalism utterly untouched by that industrial experience which has made the rest of the world kin, for good or ill. Mr. Joyce's literary culture is of a piece with his theme; he stems from Cardinal Newman as other men stem from Goethe, and his pages bristle with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. . . . Do young men in other countries than Ireland still lift vermin from their collars and soliloquize over them, as Uncle Toby soliloquized over the fly, and as the goliards used to do at the Sorbonne eight hundred years ago? . . . Emotionally the book is

direct, spare, and true in its flight as hardly any Anglo-Saxon books are, and its style goes to bear out Thomas MacDonagh's assertion that the English tongue possesses in Ireland an uncoded suggestiveness, a rich concreteness, that it has largely lost in its own country.

We Americans are great lovers of local color, partly because by means of it we are able to achieve artistic effects without very much personal effort. So far this has been almost our only recognized method of approaching the more primitive types of mind; and to those who have not trained themselves to demand a treatment that proceeds from within outward it is a satisfying method. But it always breaks down when any strain is put upon it. Miss Jeannette Marks's "Three Welsh Plays" (Little, Brown) is a case in point. Miss Marks has a charming mind and two of her one-act plays have been awarded first prize by the Welsh National Theater. "The Merry Merry Cuckoo" deserves the distinction; it is a work of great talent. Nevertheless one feels that had Miss Marks struck a deeper level the artificiality of her method would have become all too apparent. Choosing as she has done a series of whimsical Barresque motives, she has made them "Welsh" by a liberal use of linguistic and sartorial accessories. The psychological result in at least one play, "The Deacon's Hat," is disastrous.

V. W. B.

The Passing of the Kneisel Quartet

COMPARISON of the merits of the Kneisel Quartet with those of like bodies would be unmeaning. One might weigh the Quartet with

the Flonzaley, or, recollecting certain eulogies of the Joachim and the Rosé Quartets, speculate upon their various excellences, without ascertaining the

The Passing of the Kneisel Quartet

precise significance of the organization's labor. For that estimate is not to be formed on questions of finesse, of euphony, of general artistic flawlessness. The actual achievement of the Kneisel Quartet is in another region. The work that it has performed sets it apart from other chamber-music associations, perhaps from the chamber-music associations of all times. It sets it in the company of those individuals, those societies, that have contributed generously to the national capital.

For such a contribution has been made by Franz Kneisel, by Louis Svecenski, his perennial collaborator, and their associates. If we here in America have come to love string-quartet music, if we have all of us been enriched by this most intimate, most uncontaminated, most spiritual of arts, it is because of the thirty-two years during which they cultivated it. If that art flourishes here; if, presently, it bears fruit out of our own soil, it will be because of the courage, the integrity, the vision, of Franz Kneisel and his partners, and their magnificent sowing.

Indeed, so conversant has the Quartet made us in this esoteric art, that it may appear well nigh incredible to-day that only its long and brave and assiduous toil finally initiated us. To us, to whom string-quartet music has become a veritable necessity, it may easily seem preposterous that in the years first following its inception in Boston in 1885, the organization found but tiny audiences in New York itself. And yet, it was long before its concerts could fill even Mendelssohn Hall. So small was the demand for performances that until 1905 Mr. Kneisel found it possible to remain concert-master of

the Boston Symphony Orchestra. We have but to consider the subtlety and severity of the medium against the background of the gross, shallow American eighties, and of the decades subsequent to them, to gauge something of the bulk of the task confronting the little organization. The string-quartet had been the noble plaything of courts and princes. Its music was the flowering of aristocratic societies. The romanticists, though better attuned to the large public, had preserved much of the original delicacy and proud reserve in the music they composed for the medium. Perhaps the thin tonal skeleton of four stringed instruments necessitated it. At any rate, so little facile appeal had there ever been in quartet music, that many skilled musicians have found it forbidding. Wagner, for instance, detested it. Liszt, generally catholic in his tastes, termed it not "Kammermusik" but "Jammermusik." The critic who not long ago suggested that performances of it be relegated to musical museums could doubtless have found additional authority for his contempt. And yet, this very music, despite its difficulties, the Kneisel Quartet succeeded in incorporating in the culture of America.

The Kneisels' success was all the more glorious because it was made without compromise. The Quartet maintained a standard of performances that fluctuated very little. It maintained an eclectic and catholic repertoire that ranged from Bach to Ravel and Kodály and Enesco. And, after all, its success was the success of a faith stalwartly and unswervingly perseverant. Such a faith alone could have carried it over the multitudinous obstacles that beset it, that as late as 1907 made Mr. Kneisel seriously

The Seven Arts Chronicle

consider abandoning his work and accepting the financially remunerative post of conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. And it was such a faith that transfused its performances. It glowed in the choice of music, in the dignity of execution, in the scholarship and discipline of the four players gravely bowing beneath their lighted desks. And, in the end, it was that reverent and ardent spirit that persuaded audiences while the music was still dumb and confusing, persuaded until the music grew articulate and satisfying, and became speech. It must have worked that miraculous discovery a thousand times.

It must have worked it wherever the Quartet went, all over the East and center of the country. For it was not alone Boston and New York that heard the Kneisels. From the beginning they traveled, first to neighboring cities, then, gradually, as the years passed, further west, as far as Chicago, ever covering an increasing territory. They went to little cities, which, ten or fifteen years ago, never heard the best of music fittingly performed, cities where the musical season was indeed "una perpetua dormienda" broken only by concerts of college glee clubs and local ensembles, and, very occasionally, by song recitals. Perhaps only those who came to know the Kneisel Quartet in circumstances of that sort can fully realize, in a fashion incomprehensible to those who heard it play only in the great centers, the gratitude due it. To the cosmopolitan, its concerts, however beautiful, must have been ever but a single component of a complex musical season. But in the smaller towns, its coming was one of the winter's focal points, a thing to anticipate long. With what gusto you re-

paired on the appointed evening to the Knights of Columbus Hall, or wherever the Quartet chose to play! The house always looked empty. You counted it anxiously, fear lest the concert prove financially disastrous and frighten the Quartet from revisiting the town in future years. You applauded loudly as the four earnest men stepped unassumingly on to a stage that was always set with the scenery of the last amateur theatricals that had taken place there, hoping that a hearty welcome might make amends for a scanty attendance. And then, when the Quartet was seated, the moment when Kneisel placed his bow in position, and looking with that quiet intent gaze at his associates—!

Today the Kneisel Quartet is disbanded. The New York performance of April 3rd was its last. In its very passing, it evinces the same artistic integrity and self-forgetfulness that made it for over a quarter century the living symbol of chamber-music in America. For some time, there is no doubt, Mr. Kneisel has found it arduous to keep the performances up to standard. And so, rather than permit his organization to degenerate, he has ended its career. Never before has he seemed so much the artist. And never before has his Quartet loomed so large. Today, when its work is done and its career rounded, we see it, and its history, and its contribution clearly. And we see that the Kneisel Quartet was one of those great influences that came to us out of the older European tradition, and fertilized our soil. What Leopold Damrosch, Anton Seidl, Gericke, and the rest did for operatic and orchestral music, Franz Kneisel and Louis Svecenski did for their branch of the

Playing a Joke on Broadway

art. They, and the culture they embodied, may be passing today. Its work is done. Other influences are at hand. Perhaps the day of an autochthonous culture is nearer. We do not know. But we do know that whatever comes will have been prepared for by our European masters. We know that if ever there is an American music, it will be because men of the type of Franz Kneisel have given themselves to us so wholeheartedly. They have educated us. They have taught us to love music. They have taught us to know the

artist from the charlatan. They have taught us the place of art in life. They have left us able to develop. It is for us to make use of the education our European influencers have given us. It is for us to transform their contribution into power. It is for us to become free. And then, and only then, will they, the good masters, have their fruition. They will have led a nation out of material bonds. They will have served their art well indeed. For they will have created life anew.

PAUL ROSENFELD.

Playing a Joke on Broadway

TO uplift the theater is like pulling a tree from its roots. It is one thing that cannot do it any good. But so long as the drama resists the lofty effort—an effort that is virtually the will to cleanse it of the earth—there is still hope. Perhaps at last the searching talents that these endeavors still absorb will return to the theatrical reality that needs them. And perhaps then a true theater will grow up. For roots must go down into soil before flowers can push into the sun. This is a rule drama-culturists will evidently learn only through a series of disgusts. But meantime a cheering sign of our theater is the failure of the reformers to uplift it.

All these conclusions are brought home, once more, by Mrs. Hapgood's production of John Galsworthy's "The Little Man" and G. K. Chesterton's "Magic." Once again, it becomes evident how the upward-looking of these friends of our drama means largely a dim but obsequious eye on London. There were good things in these productions. Rollo Peters' im-

pression of a railway carriage in the former play was a chaste bit of scenic economy. The ragged, naturalistic acting, it is true, was all out of measure with the note the scenery struck—that of a strictly formal interpretation. But the chief point was the comparative unnecessary of bringing out "The Little Man" at all. And then, "Magic." Of course, the English did not take Chesterton seriously as a playwright. Chesterton is an amiable as well as ample member of their family. If he wants to have fun, London is delighted to have fun with him. His play was a cozy theatrical bit of gossip, done by a clever son for a mother's birthday party. The party naturally took place before the War: everyone was in good humor, and everyone caught the jocose spirit of the game. But who would transplant this peaceful, this familial, this colloquial affair, made for an hour by the hearthside—transplant it to Broadway, in wartime, with fan-fare and heralding—who else but an American theater-preacher!

The Seven Arts Chronicle

There is a certain modesty discernable in the choice by Mrs. Hapgood of these weak and insignificant plays. It is as if our new producer wished to stress her small beginnings. But, of course, the corollary of such diffidence must be a proportionate achievement. Unluckily the productions were not of a sort to send Mr. Belasco to despair or the Shuberts into retirement. The plays went rather badly. They proved uninteresting, at least to that fraction of our public who do not take their drama as a child takes candy. There were excellent artists in the cast but they were never at their best. Actors need a common spirit to inspire them, to exalt their declamation to creation. Their work depends on the power of their theater; must rise from the impulse of their coming together. If Frank Conroy and O. P. Heggie and Cathleen Nesbitt went about on that evening diminished, it was probably because this impulse and this power were wanting. If the plays touched no springs that could possibly have transfigured them from the stylish confectionary that they were, so did the productions miss all that contact with the audience, that real sense of group expression which underlie the dramatic and histrionic arts.

What mouse, then, did this aspiring hillock of ideals labor with, and bring forth? In what way was New York conjured and hammered into a sense of sanctity by this mediocre rendition of two mediocre plays? It may be objected that I attach an importance to these productions which their protagonists would be the first to disclaim. If they do disclaim it, I gain-say them. The importance is there.

It is important that Mrs. Hapgood's presentations were no better—were

in some ways worse—than many by her much-attacked, much-patronized neighbors on Broadway. And it is important that as entertainment or as a sheer piece of competent craft exploiting with economy a given amount of talent, this contribution of Mrs. Hapgood to the American stage could not compare with half-a-dozen unregenerate Broadway comedies.

And all this is important because it gives us at least a comparative respect for the commercial drama. Productions aimed nakedly to make money strike nearer a racial and fundamental source, catch up a more real fire of community life, than the fine spinning of the intellectual reformers. But unquestionably these latter persons are competent to help. Their clean spirit and their aspiring taste are sorely needed. If only they would learn the need of roots—the need of starting from some level common to the theater before they can hope to build up a structure that the least braw breath of wind will not cause to topple over!

With all this in mind, it is a real pleasure to observe the production of "Plots and Playwrights," a two-act comedy by Edward Massey, in the latest bill of the Washington Square Players. The play is a satire on the carpentries of Broadway: it swings its laughter by a series of very honest thumb-nail sketches of unsophisticated New York life. These never cut below the easy sentimental surface of *genre* observation. The play in fact is eminent chiefly because of the surrounding flatness. But in its satiric contrast with what the machine dramatist would make of even its own not-too-significant material, it points to our theatric poverty with

Max Weber's Book

an unerring finger. And its technique is an indigenous achievement. Mr. Massey and the company of Edward Goodman are to be congratulated upon a sincere contribution to our native dramatic point of view.

As we go to press we learn that M. Jacques Copeau has consented to bring his company next fall to the founding of a real French theater in New York. The superiority of our German theater and the corrupt travesty of the French dramatic art to which New York has been so long subjected, was always a cause of deep regret. With the accession of Jacques Copeau, America will perhaps for the first time come to understand

the true creative power of the French theater. M. Copeau is the director of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and of the *Théâtre du Vieux Colombier*; he is in other words in the vanguard of Paris. But through this very fact his genius belongs to the best and deepest of his national traditions. If his work does nothing else it should make clear the fallacy of so many of our efforts, for it is specifically a growth from, and a return to, racial consciousness. In its light, perhaps, our imitators of the European drama may at last understand the artistic evasion that underlies their effort and that so radically opposes it to the spirit of the arts they emulate.

W. F.

Max Weber's Book

IT cannot be stated too often that the term "art" has a three-fold meaning, corresponding to the three types of people by which it is used. To the great majority, whose feelings are personal and whose thoughts have been directed into no channels of technical instruction, the term implies that kind of picture or poem or music touching the personal chord through the immediate associations of memory and desire. They look no further than the subject, and their contact with a work of art is warm or otherwise to the degree that the subject images their own familiar experience. A smaller group, composed of those easily fascinated by abstract formulas, turn to art as the laboratory in which certain "laws" are demonstrated by careful experiment. They despise "Home, Sweet Home," but replace its sentimental appeal by no larger humanity, rather by a more exclusive, acquired taste. That poem or painting demonstrating the form-

ula of their favorite teacher they worship as the clergyman his liturgy. Smaller yet, unfortunately, is the group for whom art is a matter of conscious creation, a fertilization of new areas of being by an unexpected, spiritual sun. These are sensitive to energies, as are the majority to associations and the intellectuals to formulas. Now the perpetual misunderstanding about art consists in the fact that sentiment only becomes valid when it acquires form, and that form, in turn, has significance only as it is traced by the moving lines and planes of a dynamic mind. The artist values sentiment even more than does the sentimental, but as means to an end beyond itself. He values form even more than does the academician, but he knows that its utmost of purpose and result can be merely to suggest the formlessness of the infinite vision. He reconciles all these elements by the fusion made possible only in the flame of obedience to a power greater

The Seven Arts Chronicle

than himself. But the realization that such a power exists is shared by so few in any one generation that the artist cannot establish his work as the give and take of equals. Art has always been the charity of the rich nature to the poor. The poor are capable of gratitude, but not of co-operation. And their gratitude goes out most readily for that which seems to serve their own need, seldom for that which justifies the artist's passionate toil. Walt Whitman's desire to make other people poets and not mere readers of poetry is a light carried down to the gloom of the instinctive underworld.

People remain in the outer courts of art largely because their conception of art has been established upon the idea of sentiment for its own sake or form for its own sake. They fall into the cleft made between personal association and technical mastery, between the idea of feeling and the feeling of idea, by those in command of the resources of popular opinion, themselves incapable of the artist's unique psychology. Instead of the artist, then, dealing with his peers in his own environment, his audience only gradually assembles during long intervals of time and over diverse areas of population. The result is that by the time a particular work or tendency has been generally accepted, the creative impulse is manifesting itself through fresh sentiments and a different style. The outer changes made necessary by time, in themselves unessential to anyone who is responsive to universal energies, serve as a screen between the giver and the recipient of the gift. It is as though a young woman had to mate with an old man, or a young man with an old woman. If it were only that the artist is unrecognized until a

later generation, or not truly recognized till then, the matter would be a personal misfortune merely; but the truth is that belated recognition implies recognition of the outer, unessential elements in art, sentiment and form. For to know one artist, as sheer creative force, is to become intimate with all art. Art is not a succession of schools, any more than a woman is a succession of fashions. It is one essential being, though draped in the garments of the time.

To illuminate the subject of art, therefore, a book must not be written in terms of what to paint or how to paint it—it must be written in terms of the creative impulse itself. To write a book on art with the intention of deciding between two schools is to row a boat on land. The pen must be dipped in flame, that the words glow with impersonal enthusiasm and reverence. The eagle loses its secret of flight with clipped wings. Thus the best books on art are usually books on other matters. They may be poetry, biography, philosophy; whatever stirs the sleeper to wakefulness, though its author never once stretched a canvas or entered a museum, is directly in art's service and should be catalogued under that head. To leave the crowded streets of the conventionalized mind, and climb the hill where is to be seen the all that is nothing, the nothing that is all: this is to possess the true guide to every picture, past, present, and to come.

Max Weber's book surprised me most of all in that it was written by an American artist, that it was produced among a people without mysticism and ruled by pedagogues. And it was written by one who has traversed every turn in the maze of the development of art as history

Max Weber's Book

and has yet emerged with flame from the inner shrine unchoked by the dust of the way. It was written by one who has patiently, and in poverty, developed the technique expressing his own mentality and temperament, yet gazed more anxiously upon the fire than upon the iron his own life was given to heat. It deals with principles and not the application of principles, which it is the individual's business to work out for himself. It was written by a creator to his peers, reverently, as if the whole world were intent only upon building a New Jerusalem of brass and marble and jade, and had bowed for a moment in prayer before setting to its task. The book is a chant of the beauty which lies sleeping in wood and stone, an invocation to the fruitful wedding of spirit and matter, a glimpse of the soul's redeeming power. The author glows from mind to eye, from heart to finger-tips, closing the circuit of "work" and "love."

And the literary medium itself is exactly characteristic of Weber's business in life and his habitual preoccupations. The book is done in a slow, unworldly prose as if carved on the pedestal of a Chinese god. It might have been written by one who himself never read a book, but after working silently for years in a courtyard where was audible the calm recitation of priests, sat down to make his own journal and unconsciously tuned it to the key of devotion. All those who consider "modern art" a toadstool in the field of progress are gently counseled to rest awhile under the shade of this deep-rooted oak.

Of Max Weber the painter there is no occasion here to speak, save perhaps as his work, based as it is upon a pioneer's real hardships and

not a student's casual selection of a medium, has justified his literary interpretation of art in general. The centrifugal force popular to American art up to the War carried Weber to Paris, where he helped in the organization of the Matisse School, returning to New York in January, 1909, with, incidentally, the first copies of Cézanne to reach this country. His earliest exhibition of pictures in the "modern" style was held at the Haas Galleries in April of that year. The following five years, or until the War made modernism overwhelmingly evident to American critics, were for Weber as a lonely session in the Dark Ages. Roger Fry, however, invited him to show with the Grafton Group in London, March, 1913. The pictures exhibited during that time are still "modern," though criticism has now advanced from the stage of blind hilarity to silent second thought. Indeed, Weber has grown up with the "modern" movement; and his work is almost its American history for half a decade. The period of tortuous experiment, when painting became mathematical in its effort to vision a reality beyond romanticism, has given place in Weber to a serene but arduous simplicity. His effort now is to unite the abstract with the concrete, to gain the sensuous simplicity and directness which is the spiritual in art, the child-soul recovered beyond the horizons of thought.

In part, Max Weber's book is a record of his own growth; in part also it has come from his necessity to share that growth with others. It crystallizes the lectures he has been delivering during the last two years. It carries opinion forward to conviction, tested by the inquiry of other minds.

HORACE HOLLEY.

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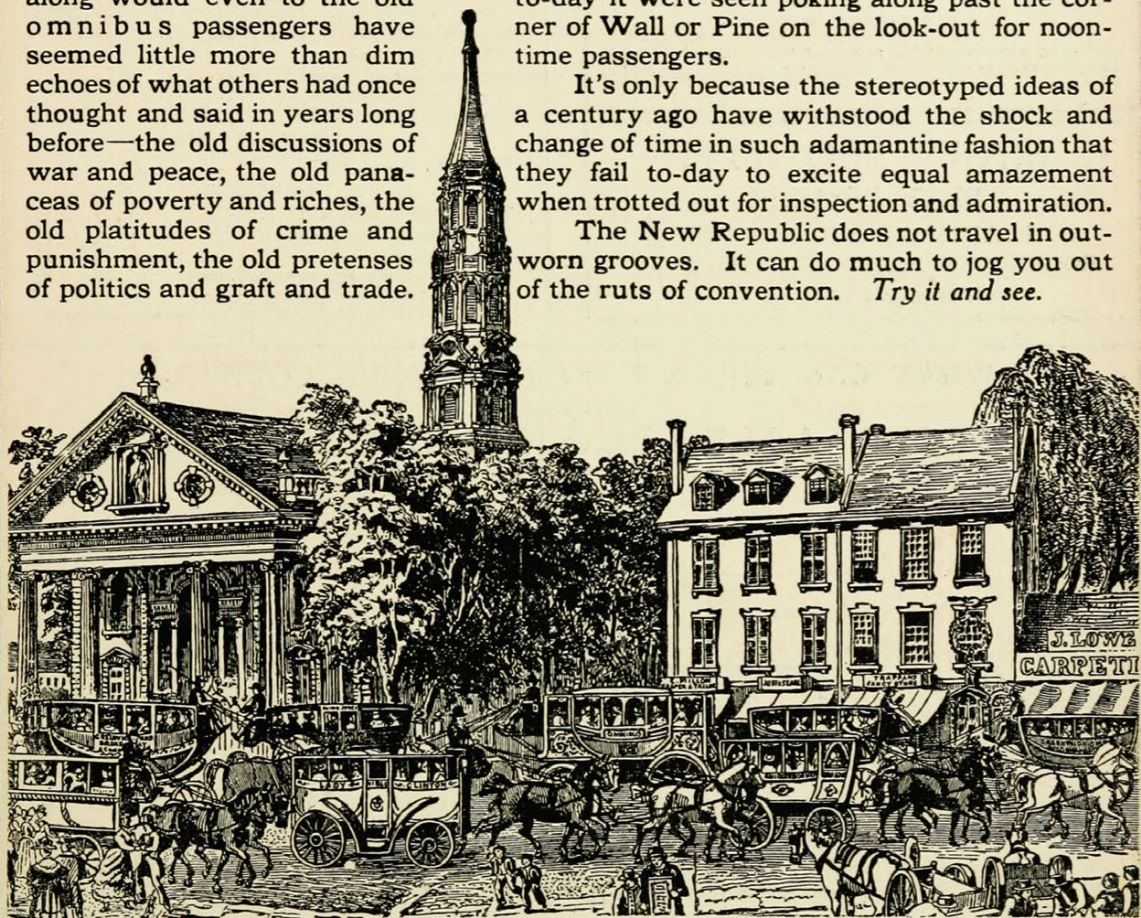
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INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Page

ART GALLERIES

Frederick Keppel & Co. i

INTERIOR DECORATORS

Emily Rockwood ii

Flambeau Weavers x

COSTUMES

Bertha Holley ii

LITERARY AGENCIES

Mary Asquith vi

Author's Service Bureau vi

Bureau of Academic Aid ii

F. M. Holly viii

Anna Parmly Paret vi

Laura D. Wilck viii

PERIODICALS

The Dial iv

The New Republic v

The Print-Collector's Quarterly viii

PUBLISHERS

Henry Holt & Co. iii

Horace Holley x

Alfred A. Knopf i

Lord & Taylor Book Shop ii

Houghton Mifflin Co. x

Frederick Stokes & Co. i

STENOGRAPHERS

Emma E. Goldbergh x

TEA ROOMS

The Dutch Oven viii

The Daffodil Dining Room viii

Rose Garden viii

Scotch Tea Room viii

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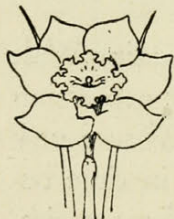
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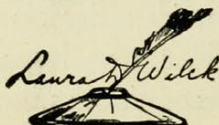
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