

The McGill Fortnightly Review

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EDITORIAL

THE Editors present their compliments to the McGill public, and beg leave to introduce Vol. II of *The McGill Fortnightly Review*.

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IT is interesting to see how the movement towards independent journalism at universities grows apace. We see in *The New Student* for October 27th that a new "independent publication of criticism and opinion," called *The Faun*, has been started at the University of North Carolina. We do not know whether the editors of *The Faun* have ever heard of *The McGill Fortnightly Review*, but their sub-title is significant in that it denotes a general tendency in undergraduate journalism.

It is quite natural that a paper financed by and managed under the auspices of a student body should represent the views of the bureaucracy of the student society. It is also natural that there should occasionally be a dissident opinion. Such opinion could never find full expression in the official daily paper or magazine. It is therefore just that besides the regular publication there should be a vehicle for independent criticism. We do not wish to imply that there ought to arise something in the nature of a Parliamentary Opposition, which would disagree on principle with every act of the students' council. Rather ought there to exist a magazine containing all shades of opinion, some of which would condone and others fearlessly condemn where necessary. At the same time an independent journal must strive for superior literary quality and a greater diversity of interests, for by its very nature the ordinary campus paper must occasionally sacrifice quality to the necessity of reporting all local news of any importance at all. There is certainly a place for both types of journalism in a University.

IT is a relief to have done with talk of the new Arts Building, its glories and its greatness. We share with the general public the satisfaction of feeling that the Arts Faculty has at last got safe, comfortable and adequately roomy quarters. The new building has preserved in its external appearance the traditional dignity and simplicity of the old, and the interior, though somewhat *rococo* in patches, and scarcely suggestive of meditation or study, has at least an air of stateliness that atones for the minor defects. But we are unable to understand an attitude of mind, much in evidence during the graduates' reunion, which sees in the fact of a new pile of masonry a proof that McGill has advanced yet further along the path of education. It would be platitudinous to remark that no buildings can make a University any more than a salary can make a professor; yet the platitude would seem to be in need of emphasis when one reads in the columns of our respected contemporary, the *Daily*, such remarks as this: "With so fine a building to work in there is no reason why McGill College should not now prosper even more greatly than she has in the past, and why her graduates should not rise to even greater fame than they have in the past." Nor will we be accused of trying to curry favour with the staff if we gently disagree with the statement that "MCGILL NEEDS A GYMNASIUM (sic) almost as much as she needs professors."

There is no doubt that a gymnasium would be a good thing; it is arguable that new playing fields would be a better thing. This is beside the point. What must be combated at McGill is this faith in mere acres of "plant." To certain people, if the number of students is not increasing annually, if contractors are not excavating on the campus, if courses on this, that and the other newfangled subject are not being inaugurated, McGill is not progressing. Judged by the standards of big business, this view is doubtless correct. Unfortunately those standards are inapplicable to a University; if they were, the wealthiest city could secure the finest University without difficulty.

CANADIAN "Book Week" was interesting in that it showed clearly the attitude of our general public towards literature. Once a year books are to be brought as a trade commodity which should receive its due modicum of support along with our other manufactures. A Canadian book is to be valued *per se* apart from its contents or contribution to life. Where literature is known and understood as an integral part of civilized life these Chautauqua appeals are unnecessary. It is useless, however, to insist on the crudity of the point of view displayed when motherhood is recognized as worthy of similar support.

All this however is not to say that Canadian "Book Week" is devoid of utility. There are men in Canada who feel their lives not misspent in the cultivation of the art of writing and they are dependent for their livelihood on the sale of their books, no matter how they may be brought. Recognition and understanding will come later.

A criticism sometimes levelled at this "week" associates it with the cunning of publishers intent on a greater turnover. Why not? These invidious distinctions are beyond us.

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WE would again invite from our readers literary contributions on any topic and in any form that they may care to choose. Manuscripts should be sent to The Managing Editor, McGill Fortnightly Review, 282 St. Antoine Street, Montreal. Unused articles will be returned.

Theolog at the Symphony

WITHOUT a word of warning he was swept away
A million leagues beyond the concert room,
Whirling in some young god's absurd child-play—
A dislocated shuttle on an automatic loom.

High to an audible crescendo
Of jade and agate stars he swung;
And in a sudden dark diminuendo
With flying coat-tails he was flung
Down such deep ebony abysses
Of cello and bass violin
That the inverted sound of sucking kisses
Became, with time, the symbol of a sin.

But after Purgatorial damnation
A golden hoop began to roll
An aureole of final consummation—
Predestined Paradise for Presbyterian soul.

Up silver spirals and a golden wire
The resurrected curve moved on.
But when he thought one centimetre higher
Must cut the corns of God, the moving curve was gone.

The well-bred audience clapped its well-kept claws.
The baton-wielder bowed, acknowledging applause.

S.

Hamlet in Modern Dress

A. J. M. Smith

I

HAMLET, lean and lank and mournful, pacing
in sombre black through the ruins of his world,
and pausing awhile to make a brief in his note-
book of the endless cogitations that trouble his brain.

Hamlet looking at the corpse-strewn stage and finding it a waste land, then wearily analysing his reactions. Hamlet almost committing suicide in the stream of consciousness, and yet calling to the impressed listeners on the bank in a voice that has the accents of greatness.

Hamlet seeking emotional relief in coarse and bitter ribaldries. Hamlet becoming almost unintelligible. Hamlet in modern dress. T. S. Eliot.

You are riding a roundabout, we shall return to this.

II

What at first sight is most striking about the poems of T. S. Eliot is not their intellectual subtlety—though they possess this in full measure—nor their mordant wit, but their rejection of a conscious intellectual sequence of ideas in favour of a subconscious emotional one. The result is an obscurity due to the conjunction of seemingly unrelated ideas which are associated in the mind of the poet because they evoke similar or related emotions in him, emotions, however, whose mutual relationship is not made clear to the reader.

As Mr. Leonard Woolf has put it: "The distinguishing feature of modern obscurity is . . . that every sentence is quite easy to understand in itself, and yet its meaning and its connection with the sentence before and after it escapes one. . . The reader's difficulty comes from his inability to follow the writer's transitions."

On the face of it, this looks as if such a writer were deliberately flouting the accepted standards of good writing which enjoin clarity and coherence as classic virtues. Accustomed to expect a purely logical sequence, even in a poem, we are prone to approach such work as this from the wrong angle—to view it from the intellectual rather than from the emotional standpoint. This is the mistake of Mr. Middleton Murry, and it has led him into such manifest absurdities as to declare that *The Waste Land* is a failure because it is *over-intellectualized*. Just the opposite is true. The poem is strung together not upon a logical or intellectual thread at all: it is merely a stream of associations, many of them flowing from the subconscious. Mr. I. A. Williams expressed it accurately when he wrote: "The items are united by the accord, contrast and interaction of their emotional effects, not by an intellectual scheme that analysis must work out." Regarded thus, as having an emotional logic of its own, a sort of non-Euclidian geometry of structure, this method is seen to be the only one completely suitable as an expression of the effect of disintegration upon a sensitive mind. How better portray disintegration—and this is what Mr. Eliot has set himself to do—than by splintered images and broken sequences?

III

The Waste Land is the application on an extended scale of Mr. Eliot's method to the two great problems of today: The decay of Western civilization, and the rationalization of sex. His approach is characteristically indirect, through literature and through symbolism. By means of the fertility rites interpreted in *The Golden Bough*, and the reading of the Grail legend furnished by Miss Jessie L. Weston in her book, *From Ritual to Romance*, the poet has symbolized the modern quest for spirituality as the journey of the knight through the Waste Land seeking the Grail. The lance and chalice, according to Miss Weston, are sexual symbols, while the discovery of the cup is to be the signal for the revival of the Waste Land. Until that time comes it must remain a country of perpetual drouth: no rain ever falls, the wells are dry, green things are all withered, even the animals and people have become sterile.

For Mr. Eliot, the Waste Land is a symbol of spiritual drouth. Half the poem is set in the dim magic land of the Grail legend and half in the desert of modern London. The transition between the two scenes is frequent and sudden. Memory and subconscious association play their part in the introduction of intellectually unrelated motifs. Often the tone or the scene is changed suddenly and violently for the purpose of contrast, or often to provide emotional relief. Whenever anything in the piece reminds the poet of a line from any other poem, he inserts it at once, a note at the back acknowledging the fact.

From the poem it is clear that for Mr. Eliot, civilization is frustration and modern life doomed to a hopeless sterility. But it is in his own mind that the waste land really exists. He is always the explorer of his inner self, and is overcome by an immense and bitter disillusionment, a conviction of the helplessness and futility of all effort, because he can find there nothing that will provide an antidote for the poison of civilization. It is the story of Hamlet over again: the theme, with variations. For Mr. Eliot, too, the time is out of joint. He, likewise, has hearkened to spiritual voices, and is impotent to obey. In all his most characteristic poems we shall find, as Goethe found in *Hamlet*: "A beautiful, pure, and most moral nature without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, (sinking) beneath a burden which it can neither bear nor throw off." Thus Mr. Prufrock is tortured by the aimlessness of life and the creaking approach of old age. So, in the *Rhapsody on a Windy Night* the poet prepares for life, "the last twist of the knife."

IV

That first key-note, "'Tis bitter cold, and I am sick at heart" is as appropriate in Mr. Eliot's London as on the battlements at Elsinore. There is in *Hamlet* the same emphasis upon certain aspects of futility, sterility, death, corruption and mental torture that are striking in *Gerontion* and *The Waste Land*.

Indeed there is in these poems, as in the play, an air of madness just around the corner. Hamlet's "madness," like that which lurks in Mr. Eliot, is a little less than madness and something more than feigned. Hamlet's repetitions of phrase, his puns, irrelevancies, his sudden coarsenesses are, like the violent contrasts, the rank imagery and the deep obscurity of *The Waste Land*, "not part of a deliberate plan of dissimulation, but a form of emotional relief." Here, I think, in a

phrase from Mr. Eliot's essay, *Hamlet and his Problems*, is the correct explanation of what many have found so puzzling and so annoying in these poems: the dragging in of obscure quotation; the sudden reduction of all things ad absurdum, as when, for example, after a beautiful and terrible passage, the poet suddenly bursts into ribald song:

Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu,
Mein Irisch Kind
Wo weilest du?—

and, finally, that use of contrast where a formal beauty is placed in juxtaposition with a psychological obscenity and welded into something at once horrible and beautiful.

To dig this last channel of relief is an accomplishment essentially Hamletesque, and the possession of the power to unite beauty and ugliness to form a new and more strangely beautiful quality is one of the surest marks of the great poet. A great poet does not have to possess this ability, but all who have possessed it have been great poets—Shakespeare, Webster, Donne, Mr. Eliot. Poe falls short of greatness just by how much he failed to achieve this synthesis. Mr. Eliot achieves it time and again. Consider these lines from *The Waste Land*:

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before him.
White bodies, naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.

This, surely, is Hamlet: that young prince whose images were of the sun breeding maggots in a dead dog, "a god kissing carrion—Have you a daughter?—let her not walk i' the sun:" that distracted railer who, when asked where the body of Polonius lay, answered, "If you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go into the lobby:" who spoke of a "certain convocation of politic worms," and who made it abundantly clear how a king might go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

Mr. Eliot dwells repeatedly on such churchyard images. Like Shelley with his stars and towers and fountains and winding rivers, he has his few ruling symbols. But they are all symbols of decay and sterility, of the coming of old age and the disintegration that comes after death: bones picked dry, "ra's' feet over broken glass in our dry cellar," a "broken spring in a factory yard," rust, yellow fog, yellow smoke. Water is the symbol of spiritual life. Mr. Prufrock and Gerontion both dream of white foam blowing over the water as a symbol of their need. *Gerontion* is the tragedy of "an old man in a dry month... waiting for rain." In *The Waste Land* no rain ever falls, no water is met with.

The accent of helplessness, of futility, of despair bordering on hysteria has never been so perfectly expressed as in certain passages of Mr. Eliot's poetry, passages that are the complete expression of a decadence that is fascinated by the analysis of its own falling off. These poems run sniffing from post to post like a dog, and exert a spell to which we succumb for reasons that we hesitate to make clear.

What has occurred is that, being unable to find within himself a remedy for our present discontent

Mr. Eliot has given way to despair. Civilization is frustration, spiritual life is drying up: that is his reiterated cry. Icarus has crashed: Bertrand Russel has drawn a picture of the resulting chaos, Mr. Eliot has analysed the emotional reactions of a *jeune homme spirituel*. Life, to Mr. Eliot, is too weary, too hopeless to be taken quite seriously. An analytical irony is the only refuge. "Let us," he may not unfairly be imagined as addressing his muse, "let us differentiate the universe, and observe carefully the process of disintegration; let us assemble impressions and associated emotions, not bothering too much to preserve the consequential thread by which they are related; let us trace their effect among the nerves; we will employ the scalpel and pry within the skull, and shall discover whether the brain is really as dessicated as one might suppose; we will epitomise ash heaps and shall find beauty more beautiful by contrast."

Mr. Eliot's last poem, *The Hollow Men* (1925), has not even this much of faith. It tapers off to nothing, with lines unfinished, and a dismal chorus at the end:

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

Unfortunately, it is true.

It is the voice of the Hamlet *de nos jours*—Hamlet in modern dress.

Sweeney Comes to McGill

(With apologies to Mr. Eliot)

THE night's unconsciousness abates
As Sweeney's college day begins.
The fifty thousand dollar gates
Give promise of more startling sins.

He treads the shiny marble halls,
Nods at a pink and powdered doll.
A furtive memory recalls
The Mount Royal, Childs, the Capitol.

A waning vertebrate extols
The virtues of forgotten bards,
But Sweeney deals in rigmaroles,
Thumbing an oily pack of cards.

"... *The Greeks achieved the only fame...*"
His *Daily* rustles, out of sight.
"... *and Shakespeare had a moral aim...*"
Winks at the flapper on his right.

Obediently he writes, and notes
That someone died at 33,
Then draws a fleet of crazy boats
Over a wide and inky sea.

The urgent academic ooze
Glazes the round, cherubic eyes,
Till Jew and Gentile interfuse
In one astounding compromise,

The furious games are fought and won,
The Thundering Thousands come and go,
Upon St. James Street shines the sun,
And Ottawa reflects the glow.

F. R. S.

Black Bottom

Leo Kennedy

PETER van Waffle paused in his obscure and sinful denunciation of his contemporary, one Henken Hooper, long enough for the reporter carefully concealed beyond the carved jade and cairngorm screen with citrine embossings, to write in a dazzling blaze of journalese the end of what had gone before. Peter van Waffle sighed, inhaled gustily at the stem of his cigarette holder fashioned from old jagdaddah and grained peridot, then sipped absently at a stein, burnished and pewter-lidded, suggesting the vaguery these things do... the sweet, almond-eyes, pale-bosomed sylphs of the older Rhine.

It was a way he had... naive, and reminiscent of that prince of tavern sots, Henken Hooper. He said this himself. He screamed it in a thunder of rhetorical excellence, keeping time the while with his beer mug on the table. He was no end of a musical critic. The reporter behind the screen with the citrine trimmings muttered unintelligibly. It was a way he had too. Five nights a week Van Waffle held forth in this tavern, and a larger public hungered for his words than might be accommodated. Hence the journalist. Hence all this business beyond a scene. Waffle said:

"Hooper is a black hound and the father of mauve kittens. He has one blue eye and one green, but that does not help him. He writes like a half-asphyxiated wetnurse, or Aldous Huxley. I myself have reminded him of this, but you must not tell anyone. He has no complex worth mentioning, he does not know the higher steps of Dr. Freud, he has only one copy of *Jurgen*." One copy of *Jurgen*! Free Verse and the God of the Christians! One copy of *Jurgen*! They considered each, each grim-mouthed. It was a way they had.

Waffle, or rather the soul of Waffle was a weird business. It was pothered by Greenwich Village music and given to locomonical and pertebroning quaverings. A form of delirium tremens. He would scream suddenly in the night, and rush out in a tall hat and shift; at one time he did without the hat. That was Waffle all over. He was, or he wasn't... things didn't matter. He loved life and appetite, yet lived without property, other than his brasses, his complex, and of course, nineteen thumbled copies of *Jurgen*, bound most lasciviously.

Nature, that discerning lady, had it to her thought that he should lay bricks, or lend money at a small interest, or marry, or do some wise thing; rather did he read Dreiser, and be a near-intellectual. Anyhow, since the philandering of Lao Tee Lao has there been one that has at some time fulfilled his destiny, and wrought the work suited to his hands?

A devious, diagnostic understanding of this Wevvle is desired, if you would follow his adventures intelligently. The soul of the man is bare as brass, and those small scratches tantamount to the wrinkles on the male rhinoceros are very divulging. I mean, you can read quite a lot in them. You see:

Waffles had finished with Hooper, and his gallery sat, gaping politely. Waffles liked people to gape. It calmed his subconscious. It made him feel good. He nodded his great head in that benign way, and fingered the double goatee that was beloved of all

the lady messiahs. Waffle said: "Well . . ." and sat down again. The company rubbed a great many salamanders. They said: "Prosit" and beamed. . . . Waffles rose. He swayed uneasily, and said:

"It is no small thing I do. Gentlemen, I leave you, I leave you, and you must settle with the management. Tonight it is all over, or should be anyhow. You will see. . . ."

He went out alone, and they considered his rounded back with disfavor. They understood him if you don't.

He lived in a distant part of that place. Yellow, and black and dark blue taxicabs rushed past him on his way, hooting in a sad derision. He passed one parked roadster on a quiet street: the seat held two occupants, both very young. The lights were dimmed; in that still twilight he saw two sleek heads held close together. They were discussing theology.

The man squinted thoughtfully down his nose and turned soft eyes inward. Inside was the man that nobody knew. The man nobody knew . . . knew . . . He did not want anyone to know anything. It was his secret. Then he thought he would polish up his latest compromises with paganism. He did not tell anyone why they should compromise paganism or anything else. That was another secret he shared with Waffles. Waffles walked on. Drunken lampposts reeled past, shedding vague shadows and obscene colors; a wooden Indian before a tobacconist's grinned in fellowship and made a long nose. He slashed its headdress with his stick. God, what was the matter with the world? . . . War, pestilence, the exorbitant price of unmentionable commodities, Edith Sitwell, and primitives with one copy of *Jurgen*. That was it. He paused on a curbstone to rail at fate and curse the Hooper. He said. . . . He was on a strange street, a new train of thought. Streets . . . long wriggly things you went along . . . they never went along you . . . queer, what? Streets had two sides and a bottom; no top.

Why? He cried suddenly:

"Canaille! you have no tops to your streets! Your houses have tops, your bottles, your ash cans, coffins, markets, galls, cursory publications, hats, valedictory mouths, and pelminiseri, not to mention the zaffre-hued sorceries you entice to your homes. Can you deny it?" He glared about him. He was on a pier of the riverfront. A quiet breeze blew his long hair; in such moonlight as was there his velvet coat shone sleek as a cat. One of Van Vechten's cats. He stamped his feet. He repeated: "Will you deny it?"

Someone spoke with a honeyed voice:—"Dirty Dutchman, Dirty Dutchman," Waffle heard. "I am not Dutch! My people were on the Wallflower!" Peter roared, and stopped, to simper. It was quite a good pun, he reflected. Something to spring on those sots in the tavern. He dreamed. . . . "That is probably true," the voice went on bitterly, "but you are very dirty at all events. Very." From the squirming shadows, one came that grappled suddenly with Peter. He fought, recovering his sobriety, but that was too late. In a moment he swung from his feet and hurtled down.

As he meditated on the dark water hastening to meet him, Waffle had strange thoughts. He thought: "O, my feet are firmly on soil but that is no salvation.

There has come a loosening of everything; the sea is overhead, it falls on me! I have lived a long life, with beer and sorrows, but now that's of no consequence. For, this one mad moment, all my labour has merited. This hour when the world falls on me is sweet." But when he landed with his head upon the water, he thought otherwise and gasped. Albeit, there was a great mourning in the heart of Waffle when there played on his subconscious the thought that he might die; and when the assailant on the wharf above bawled down a confirmation of this, it did not help much. He said: "(Splutter) Why have you done this thing, and in what manner will it profit you? What is your house, and are you a Klansman? If you are married or even have children, there is a dotted line for these things. It will be a good thing if you will throw me the rope that is there; this water is cold, and boggles clear thought, and besides, my name is Peter van Waffle." What moonlight there had been was fallen into the water, and shimmered below at a considerable depth. It frightened him. He thought fitfully of his collections, his *Jurgens*. Then his cosmos fully grasped, and he whimpered. The man said: "Yes; and mine is Hooper."

"I think," Waffle ventured, "That I have heard of you." "Yes," soothed Hooper, sitting on the pier's edge and swinging his legs, "and I had long desired to dispute your conclusions of me. Now my eyes, they are both blue, you know" "I did not, but, I am pleased. And your children, I suppose, are not extravagantly coloured after all. I yield all this; but you will please to throw me a rope I have mentioned, for the temperature here is lower than at your place." "Now that is odd," mused Hooper, "when I was young they thought otherwise. It was some silly delusion of a low temperature and high altitude, I think." "Yes, yes," Waffle put in peevishly, "I know all about that. But there is no mention of cold water in quantity. Now that rope is just beside you, and would be of great help. I will listen to anything you say on temperatures when I am out of here." His tormentor nodded. "This water," the bather insisted with rattling jaws, "is dam' cold. And I am not so young as I was. Nor," he added with conviction, "is my blood as warm as it was when I was younger than I am now. So for Kelly's sake throw me that, and I will take back all that I have said or intended to". "My eyes and the color of my family may annoy you, but you must admit my poetics. I am poetically just. All my life has been hot water because of your venom and indigestion, now I have pushed you into cold." Peter writhed and his head went under again. His complex was sodden and that soul I have mentioned as being in his care was rapidly blackening from the thoughts in his heart. Henken knelt, and bending as far as he could to the wet poet, mewled sentimentally. Then he picked up a barge pole that was there and thrust his man under till he drowned.

That is all. He left the barge pole where he had found it, and went from that place. He threw the false goatee into the water. He kept the bowler on his head and wore it for many years after. When he passed up a street the two persons were still discussing theology. It may have been the questionable virtues of the Septuagint by that time, but as he did not tell me I cannot say for certain. Anyhow, it does not matter very much.

Song

SINCE of a splendour that you have
They are come sighing, to your door
All the young men.....
Will voices sadly amorous
High deeds, or riches clamorous
Avail them, then?

Or.... would you hear earth's lost music,
And all the tears that are
The rattle of the rain; and those old things,
Fleeting in the mystic twilight of a wood,
Horned, nameless, with the little hoofs of goats....

So in some verses one will bring
Blind pagans sing and dryads dance,
While an elf trips:
Besotted Bacchus pours his wines
In cups of gold from fairy mines,
Wooing your lips....

Leo Kennedy

Trivium

MASSES heard the great Houdini,
Masses shouted for the Queenie.
Did you ever see such asses
As the educated masses?

The Genteel Tradition in Education

Norman Studer

Mr. Studer, who is editor of *The New Student*, has sent *The McGill Fortnightly Review* this article which is the opening chapter of a book which he hopes to publish in the near future dealing with the new student movement. Although the article discusses early education in the United States it is not without interest to the Canadian student. A consideration of some similar aspects of Canadian education, with a view of tracing the origins of present tendencies in Canadian Universities, would be welcomed in these columns.

UNFORTUNATELY a great deal of modern criticism of our schools and colleges is ineffectual because it is too short-sighted. So many of our critics look upon the educational problem as having suddenly sprung into existence the day before yesterday. Lacking the proper historical perspective we write reams and reams on our "educational problems," and get nowhere. We must re-examine our education; find out what stock of educational ideas the colonists originally brought from Europe; measure the impact of pioneer life upon the classroom; trace the gradual evolution down to the present moment.

Let us briefly examine the early American college. In it we find influences that still linger on the campus. Changed as the modern college is, we will recognize in it traces of the older educational scheme.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, college education in America consisted of the narrow, traditional drill in mathematics, classics and theology which Europe inherited from the Renaissance. It was a complete and rigid system, contrasting strangely with the elastic, tentative pioneer spirit. It engaged the learner by its traditional authority and the prestige it gave him in society rather than by any ability to seduce his youthful imagination with living ideas and sharpen his appetite for insight into the "blossoming, buzzing confusion" that actual life presents everywhere.

Here as elsewhere in history men had cherished a formula that had lost its magic. Once the elements of this formula, Puritanism and the classical literatures, had been truly educative, *leading out* men's minds from the cramp of medieval absolutism, releasing powerful jets of intellectual energy. Protestantism had educated Luther and his followers because it broke through the encrustation of ecclesiastical monopoly and gave rein to private spiritual enterprise. So the literature of Greece and Rome had freed Erasmus and Rabelais. With classical weapons they overthrew the quiddities and hair-splittings of schoolmen. But by a mad caprice of fate these disciplines have enslaved American education. Wherever ecclesiastical control is supreme today, free thought is impossible in scientific fields; there professors must battle for the right to teach as they think and students are in revolt against compulsory chapel services. The classics, degenerating into mere exercises in "constructions", have needed to be relegated to the background.

This imported curriculum was of a piece with the borrowed English culture which persisted in America long after the revolution. Higher education was originally monopolised by a learned aristocracy and the "leveling" processes that went on in the young nation were bitterly opposed by the college-bred. "How this class," wrote James Parton, biographer of Andrew Jackson, "hugged their gentilities, genealogies, conservatisms and all of the other antiquated and effeminate nonsense, of which Europe is beginning to be ashamed, and is prepared to cast off as a tawdry and ragged old cloak." The students at Harvard, setting fire to an effigy of Andrew Jackson symbolized the rift between the Old America and the New.

Contemporary critics have pointed out how this rift continued to separate cultured America from practical America, even down to the present day. It is the antithesis, described by Van Wyck Brooks, between Highbrow and Lowbrow, between the life of thought and the life of action. On an upper level America has produced the gloomy Calvinistic philosophy of Jonathan Edwards which eventually flowered in the pure, ethereal transcendentalism of Emerson. This is not a growth of the American soil, it is essentially European, and its old world counterpart is easily identified. The same may be said of the writings of Longfellow, Washington Irving and Bryant. The tendency of this culture has been to draw farther and

farther away from the sweat and the grime of living and embalm itself in the bloodless and static philosophical systems woven in monastic college retreats. Santayana has aptly called it the "genteel tradition."

On the lower level burgeoned the aggressive life of the market place, explosively active and abjectly worshipful of the Bitch Goddess Success. Benjamin Franklin was perhaps a father of the line. Its leading practitioners were those ruthless Generals of Industry who built our railways, dug the canals, corrupted legislatures and reared the skyscrapers of our industrial world. By the need of subduing the wilderness our pioneers were moulded to a narrow purpose; the "acquisitive" instinct was supreme. They fixed on our nation a preoccupation for getting and spending which has long outlived its usefulness.

When America began to expand beyond the Alleghenies the pioneer tradition which the unlettered Andrew Jackson personified, became ascendent, and the colleges were becalmed outside the main current of affairs. Power was in the crude hands of backwoods-men and farmers, or the cunning ones of the newly rich who were beginning to take the place of the old aristocracy. In this bustling atmosphere the old aristocratic education was useless. Henry Adams in his autobiography tells how valueless a Harvard education had come to be in the period before the Civil War: "Harvard College as far as it educated at all was a mild and liberal school which sent young men into the world with all they needed to make respectable citizens and somewhat of what they wanted to make useful ones. Leaders of men it never tried to make. Its ideals were altogether different. The Unitarian clergy had given the college a character of moderation, judgment and restraint, excellent traits which the college attained with singular success, so that its graduates could commonly be recognized by the stamp, but such a character rarely lent itself to autobiography. In effect, the school created a type, but not a will. Four years at Harvard College, if successful, resulted in an autobiographical blank, a mind on which only a water mark had been stamped." "...In essentials, like religion, ethics, philosophy; in the concepts of all sciences, except, perhaps, mathematics, the American boy stood nearer the year one than the year 1900."

The effect, when men confronted life with the inadequate tools of the old college in a century when old things were swiftly passing away, was disastrous. Henry Adams, twenty years after his graduation, was still paying for the tragic parochialism of his education, when, visiting the World's Fair at Chicago, he stood before the exhibit of steam engines and dynamos: symbols of the spirit of the New America. There in Chicago men hesitated prayerfully before strange inventions, absorbing a delayed education in the mechanical energies that were transforming the very social fabric of America. Bewildered, they "had no choice but to sit down on the steps and brood as they had never brooded on the benches of Harvard College, either as students or professors, aghast at what they had said and done all these years, and still more ashamed of the childlike ignorance and babbling futility of the society that let them say and do it."

It is perhaps unjust to berate the early colleges for a moldy stock of ideas. The good men who founded them had primarily religious ends in view. They

wanted their institutions to prepare a pathway through the wilderness for the Lord. The moral obligation was to be Godly rather than intelligent. Consequently discipline was severe and religious doubt practically unheard of. Students were forced to attend chapel daily and hear two sermons on the Sabbath. These learners were kept at an appropriately respectful distance from their teachers at all times. The latter were righteous and austere men, compensating in sanctity for what they lacked in scholarship. The president was invariably a minister of the gospel, a rigorous and shrewdly practical man who gave required senior courses in the Evidence of Christianity. On the authority of William James we are told that these classes were edified rather than awakened and that they left college with their "generous, youthful impulse to reflect on the world and our position in it rather dampened than encouraged and stimulated by the lifeless discussions and flabby formulas they had to commit to memory."

The learners performed dutifully enough in this puritanic atmosphere. The few who realized its shortcomings buried their complaints in autobiographies for posterity's ears. Much of the energy of youth was sublimated in horseplay—the interminable and often bloody bouts between town and gown. For the contemplative student there was the literary society with its Websterian fledglings and the literary magazine which printed highly philosophical and ennobling disquisitions on "The Mission of Beauty," "Chivalry," "Utility and Beauty" and kindred topics. If there ever was insurgency it was provoked by rancid commons butter or an over-severe penalty for cribbing. In 1856 John Fiske narrowly averted dismissal from Harvard for his agnostic views — but that event signalized the birth of a new era in higher education.

Leda

AS Leda lay dreaming
By the still, sad stream
In the gold of the gleaming
Last sunbeam,
A whiteness grew
Out of the crisp air;
A white bird flew
To her bosom bare.

The white wings of a swan
Hovered over her dream
That became a dream of dawn:
An inward gleam
Of beauty shone,
Piercing her white body
As the colour of dawn
Pierces the sky.

And suddenly tall Troy
Pushed troubled towers
Into a flaming sky;
And there was blood upon the flowers
Where wandered one
Whose swan-like loveliness
Made old men young
And filled the young with bitterness.

A. J. M. Smith

BOOKS

THE WORLD OF WILLIAM CLISSOLD

(by H. G. Wells. 2 vols; Doran; \$5.00)

MR. Wells, the propagandist, drives another nail into the coffin of Mr. Wells, the artist.

THE BIRTH OF THE GODS

(by Dmitri Merezhkovsky. E. P. Dutton & Co. New York, \$2.00)

HERE is a novel somewhat in the style of Gustave Flaubert, or better, the German Georg Eberts. It is romantic realism. Merezhkovsky has given us a pretty story of town life in ancient Crete. A quite different impression is given from that of Professor Glotz's more sober account of the antique civilization on this Aegean island. Of course, after the archaeological investigations of Sir Arthur Evans and others, Crete was bound to become a fad and Monsieur Merezhkovsky has climbed on the crest of the wave. I think after all that I prefer Glotz as diluted by such handmaidens of science as H.G. Wells and Hendrik Willem van Loon. This preference may be due to an inherent dislike of romantic realism, but I rather suspect that it is caused by my distrust of fiction as a vehicle for religious propaganda. Our Russian author, a staunch Czarist and churchman--a refugee in Paris by the way--has worked out a beautiful theory, which could not possibly be historically supported, that the Cretan cult of the bull, the heifer and the minotaur was generating within itself elements friendly to Christianity. This is an ingenious theory, but only a theory. We must object, however, when he makes his martyrs die with a consciousness of dying for a cult which was to spring up in far-away Judaea several centuries later. Why could he not have them as simply martyrs for a new world order in which there would be no such abominations as were the delight of that early age?

Nevertheless, the book is not in the least tiresome, and we are all bound to be amused by the personal descriptions of kings, priestesses and "Bees," as well as the grotesque manlike bulls and minotaurish men. One cannot avoid genuine laughter over the visit of Tutankhamon to Crete, and especially his strange infatuation for that cosmetically decorated creature Eranna. In fact, there is a really clever dialogue where the Eranna episode is recounted.

A.B.L.

ZULEIKA DOBSON

(by Max Beerbohm. Modern Library, \$1.00)

THE Modern Library (whose books are carried in this country by The MacMillan Co.) have again shown their catholicity of taste by adding this volume to their collection of works by modern authors. Zuleika Dobson lives in the imagination as a magnificent achievement in the realm of the burlesque; to read it is to realize the great artistic possibilities of this particular literary form, which we know too often as mere slap-stick comedy. Who could drown the entire undergraduate body of a University with such chivalry, such solemnity, such splendid generosity as Mr. Beerbohm?

BOLSHEVISM IN AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS

(by John A. Dyche. Boni & Liveright, New York, \$2.00)

THIS is one of the least informing books on economics Boni & Liveright have ever published. It was intended, without doubt, to sell on the strength of its sensational title. The fact is that the author seems to have a most hazy notion of what bolshevism is. He uses the term to cover practically all trade-union activities in the industry in which he is interested. This industry is the clothing manufacturing enterprises of New York City, a concentration of interest not hinted at in the title.

John A. Dyche is an employer of labor in the clothing business, and he aims at showing his workers the absurdity of being bolshevist. This might be very creditable, especially if he distinguished between bolshevism and the indefinite radicalism of the New York clothing workers, who seek agreements limiting the number of apprentices in the trade--surely a policy far from the bolshevist tenets.

Dyche is himself a Jew, but he claims to be Americanized. He knows that the majority of his workers are Jews and that they are immigrants. So, he borrows the word, "Yiddish," which means the Judeo-German language, and uses it as a generic term for Jewish immigrants. Then he sets to and belabours the bolshevik Yiddish workers. Why, being an industrialist, he thus attacks his own people is not so clear. At least it is very uncharitable and is always a dangerous thing to do in an intolerant country, as is his adopted land.

A.B.L.

THE OLD OLIGARCH

(Basil Blackwell, Oxford)

THE Old Oligarch, (being the constitution of the Athenians ascribed to Xenophon), translated with an introduction by James A. Petch, M.A., (Basil Blackwell, Oxford.)

It is refreshing to find, no matter how far back one has to go in the history of the world, a political partizan who (admitting of course that his opponents are rascals) does not claim that his party will be the salvation of the state and will morally regenerate his fallen land. The Old Oligarch would like his party in power, but he recognizes that the commons know on which side their bread is buttered when they keep to the democracy. And he goes on to show why. From an historical and literary standpoint it is not worth a chapter of Thucydides, but it is interesting--for sometimes, though rarely, a political pamphlet can be interesting.

Tailpiece

POOR little wistful Poem,
Tagging in after the others,
What are you all about?

Have you a meaning and moral?
Have you a purpose?

No?

God help you!

What--what would the English Department
Say of such a song?

Vincent Starr