

# Fortnightly Review

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### EDITORIAL

WITH this number the Fortnightly reaches the end of Volume I. Whether the year has been a successful one or not is for our readers and not for us to decide. But we think it only fair to ask to be judged, not by the popular conception of what it was thought we should be, but by the ambition which we set before ourselves. We explained our intentions in our first number; they may conveniently be restated. First and foremost we have tried to encourage literary work of every sort in prose and poetry. The small amount of material offered for publication from amongst the undergraduates has been a little disappointing, but the student's life is a busy one, and there are not many with the time and the inclination to devote themselves to composition. We hope we have shown, however, that our original faith has been justified, and that there are enough writers in the University to make some sort of literary journal desirable. Possibly we have been too self-consciously a literary journal, losing by this, perhaps, the lighter touch, the more humorous element. If this has been the case we hasten to assure our readers it is due not to the deliberate selection of serious articles only, but to the fact that they are the type which the undergraduate of McGill seems to feel he must tackle when he takes up the pen. Contributions in the *Punch* tradition we should seize upon with editorial glee, not only for our own sakes, but because they would be a most healthy influence within the University.

The other aim we set before ourselves has been the cause of no little antagonism in certain sections of the student body. We announced at the outset of our

career that we should take up an editorial attitude on questions of student politics, and we have consistently done so, regardless of whether or not our attitude was likely to be popular. At the same time we stoutly deny ever having spoken through sheer contrariness or desire to startle; our criticisms are always based on assumptions that are at least arguable. Much of the annoyance we have apparently caused is due, we feel, to the regrettable fact that there is no tradition of criticism at McGill. Such attempts as there have been to start independent journals for this purpose have generally ended in sudden disaster; the popularity which the *Literary Supplement* won last year would have been short-lived if it had ventured into the realm which we have dared to enter. That a student paper should venture to attack what it disliked, and go on attacking it, and still continue to exist—this is for some the unpardonable sin.

Another criticism which has been levelled against us, and one which we are more anxious to meet, is that our attitude has been one of superiority. If by this it is meant that we hold ourselves aloof from the affairs of the University, we meet the attack with a flat denial. We loathe as heartily as anyone the frame of mind of the Pharisee who draws up his skirts and passes by on the other side. But if it means that we believe ourselves to be in the right and our opponents wrong, then we frankly admit that for practical purposes we do work on this assumption. We have faith in the ideas which we seriously propound; we do consider them better than the ideas which we attack. This is the sole justification for any form of criticism, which must necessarily be a choosing between



standards and an affirmation that one standard is better than the other. If this cause people to think us "superior", then it is unfortunate, but quite unavoidable.

We would not close on a note of apology, however. On all sides—amongst members of the Faculty, graduates and undergraduates,—we have met with a certain very definite and very valuable assistance which we would acknowledge here. Particularly would we thank those members of the Faculty who by sending us contributions have enabled us to set a standard of writing to which undergraduates must strive hard to attain; the students who so kindly volunteered to collect subscriptions for us last autumn, and those who contributed still more effectively for us by writing; the Garden City Press, and especially Mr. Munson, for dealing most patiently and efficiently with Editors all of whom are unbusinesslike (always excepting our superlatively able Managing Editor); and finally the janitors of the several buildings, who went to considerable trouble to place our copies in the hands of subscribers.

And so, gentle readers, we bid you *au revoir* (for we trust it is only that), and we hope that all undergraduates will write good examination papers, and that all Professors will enjoy correcting them, and that everyone will have a long and idle summer holiday, and that next year the Fortnightly will be swamped by the number of contributions it receives, and that the Editors, whoever they may be, as they prepare for Volume II, will still think upon those words of Cyrano:

*Ne pas monter bien haut, peut-être, mais tout seul.*

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IT has frequently been the experience of the Editors to be reproached, or less frequently, praised, for opinions expressed in articles published in the *McGill Fortnightly Review*. This, we feel, is most untoward. A statement appears in each number of the Review beneath the list of Editors, saying:-

"The Editorial Board is responsible only for opinions expressed in the editorial columns, and hopes to publish articles on controversial subjects by contributors of widely divergent views." We feel this statement is tolerably clear; however, if it is not, we would hereby state once for all that opinions expressed in articles have nothing whatever to do with editorial opinion.

As regards the influence upon the acceptance of MSS. of opinions contained therein, we would say this. The first requirement for all matter submitted is literary merit; granted that, all articles must "have something to say," and, if serious, must say it at least plausibly; if ridiculous, must contain the merit of humour. Our readers will have observed that, pursuing this policy, we have indeed been able to realise our hope of publishing articles of widely divergent views. If there have been some views, current in the University, which have not found expression in our columns, that is due to the fact that either their advocates have been unable to present them in form acceptable according to our principles, or that they have not seen fit to submit contributions to us at all, which may or may not be a reflection upon the views themselves.

Editorial opinion is inevitably the lowest common denominator of the views of each of the Editors. It is thus frequently the case that an individual Editor has written his full opinions in an article. Under such circumstances an Editor's article is to be considered as of exactly the same standing as any other article. Editorials alone are *ex cathedra*.

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THOUGH we have on more than one occasion criticised the actions of the Students' Council during the past year, it would be unjust and ungrateful to let Basil Maclean retire from his two years' tenure of the office of president without endeavouring to express something of the very real feeling of cordiality which his sincere and unsparing efforts on behalf of what he believes to be the best interests of the University have awakened in the minds of all interested in the administration of student affairs. The good of the undergraduate body as a whole is the sole motive that has ever actuated Maclean while president of the Council, and if, as we think, he has in one or two cases misunderstood what is best for the Students' Society, it will be more fitting at the present time to look at those instances where he has undoubtedly placed us all under an obligation. The Student Directory, the Summer Employment Bureau, and the very complete arrangements made for the comfort of students in hospitals are instances of this. The greatest, however, is the tradition that he will leave behind him. There have been few presidents who have worked harder, more unselfishly or with more real ability than Basil Maclean. He has never shown favouritism in any form whatever. His interests have been many-sided, and he has given sympathy and support to many wide-spread activities. Whoever is elected to take his place will have the advantage of his example and the disadvantage of inevitable comparison.

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WE have been interested in the formation of the Campus Problem Groups. But we are wondering whether they are the direct product of a spontaneous desire for discussion or whether they have been artificially created by two or three enthusiasts. At any rate, they are a good sign of the times, and they may become the nucleus for the growth of an influential body of opinion at McGill. We hope that they are a further evidence of the birth of a new criticism, healthy and self-examining.

In remarking on the Campus Problem Groups, we should like to suggest that the meetings be not reported in the Daily by a reporter sent from that organ. The article in the Daily should come from the pen of the leader of the group or some person specially elected at the meeting for the purpose. No one attending such groups should feel that he will be quoted verbatim. He should be able to consider himself untrammelled in the expression of different points of view, which would not necessarily be his own. After all, these groups are *discussion* groups, and not mass meetings organized with the intention of passing a number of resolutions.



## Where the Colleges Fail

B. K. Sandwell

I am going down to New York next month to tell the Rockefeller foundation how higher education ought to be sold on this progressive North American continent. The present methods are mediaeval. I am aware that the college industry *seems* to be growing, but at what a paltry rate! I do not suppose the annual crop of graduates increases faster than two per cent. per annum, while the sugar consumption goes up five per cent., the rubber consumption twelve, and the moving picture expenditure twenty-seven. If we don't do better than this we shall soon be turning out more bootleggers than bachelors of arts.

It is all due to defective salesmanship. The article the college sells is all right; it is just about what the public wants. It is a nice standardised product, all parts interchangeable, a child can use it, there is nothing to get out of order, it requires no attention after purchase, and it pays for itself in five years. It is comfortable; in fact you hardly know you have one, and women take to it as readily as men. There is as yet no successful substitute for it, and no competitive product. If the steamship lines had brains enough to grant a diploma to anybody who spent two or three years running round the world, I suspect they could get away quite a bit of the university business (John Smith, L.C.P., F.N.G.L., would sound rather good—Licentiate of the Canadian Pacific, Fellow of the North German Lloyd); but they won't do that for a few years yet. So it isn't the goods that are wrong; it is the method of marketing them.

It is universally recognised that this is the age of the consumer. He can sit tight while the producer hustles round and tries to sell him things. But the universities are still sitting tight and demanding that the consumer come to them. Why should a college insist that the purchaser of education come to a certain definite place and spend a certain definite time getting it? There is no reason, except that they did it in Bologna in 1500 and in Oxford in 1600. And here we are in North America in 1926! If I want cheese I do not have to go to a cheese factory; I telephone the grocer and he sends it up. If I want religion I do not have to go to church; I tune in my radio set and get two sets of prayers and sermon every Sunday. If I want an automobile—but I do not even have to want one; if I have money enough to buy one, a score of agents will camp on my doorstep and teach me to want the kind they have to sell. But with education it is not so. The only people who are doing anything to "sell" education are the football players. They are doing noble work, especially when we consider how few samples they carry. But they can't do it all.

What is needed, as I propose to tell the Rockefeller Foundation, is first of all a merger of all the universities and colleges on the continent into one vast University of North America, of which the existing institutions will be branches. This should present very little trouble. The saving in operating costs alone will be something inconceivable, something fantastic. Uniform textbooks all over the continent; a single examination paper in each course to be written by students from Maine to California and Prince Albert to Tia Juana; centralised manufacture of gowns, hoods, diplomas

and football togs; uniform architecture for all future buildings; constant inspection of operations at each plant (pardon me, college) by expert cost-reducers from head office; a consolidated advertising and selling department—these are only a few of the main lines of economy.

But the great gain will be the enormous improvement in the delivery of the article produced. Every branch will be giving exactly the same lectures at the same hour all over the continent. An education can thus be acquired anywhere and everywhere. The student can take the first six lectures in Philosophy 2 at McGill in September, then move southward with the family in the Rolls-Royce or the Ford and take the seventh at Amherst, the eighth at Harvard, the ninth and tenth at Yale, a few more at Columbia, and so on down the line till he writes the Christmas exam at Miami. (Students in certain courses will have to detour round Tennessee.) New Yorkers can sit on Tuesday and Thursday at Columbia and on Saturday at McGill, and thus participate weekly in the important silk-and-alcohol commerce at Rouses Point. Hockey players will flock north while tennis enthusiasts are going south. It will be possible to get an education while travelling in lingerie, or qualifying for a divorce, or hunting big game in the Rockies.

The Rockefeller Foundation ought to appreciate all this, if anybody should. What is it, after all, but applying the gasoline pump system to what is, next to gasoline and tires, the most important luxury article in America? The college buildings will have to be brightened up a little with electric lights and gilt paint; but at McGill the Roddick Gates, and at Toronto the Memorial Arch, can easily be made to look like a filling station. The only objection that has ever been made to this proposal was raised by a non-academic person, who pointed out that the professors would not know the students, nor the students the professors. I communicated this objection to a professor, who at once replied, "Who wants to know students?" and to an undergraduate student, who even more promptly answered, "Thank goodness for that! Who wants to know professors?"

## What is Hid

WHEN you lift a pale flower  
To your face,  
I know a poet has little power  
To paint such grace.

When in a hushed alcove  
We touch, and touch,  
I know a poet writing of love  
Is silent overmuch.

Poets make stars of what is hid  
For men to wonder at,  
Yet the quiver of an eyelid  
Is more than that.

R. S.



## Mr. Mencken

Louis Schwartz

POMPOUS academic critics with a touch of frost about the temples have not yet reconciled themselves to this *enfant terrible* of American letters. To some he is a diabolical boy with a bean-shooter, popping at everything in sight and amazingly accurate of aim; to others he is a smart Aleck mouthing the argot of his tribe; to still others he is inspired by the Wilhelmstrasse to introduce discord into the Anglo-American entente, a boor with an endless flow of vituperative language, a curious mixture of pedantry and journalism, a wind-bag of sound and fury, a blatant posturer shouting at the top of his lungs. For Mr. Mencken is irreverent, violent, and barbaric. He preaches contumacy toward God, the laws, the clergy, the politicians, the courts, the *polizei*, the professors, and the farmers. He denounces religion, poetry, and romantic love as lies and delusions. He proclaims the hero of contemporary civilization and he avows a yearning to see "the whole human race gently stewed" and thereby happy. The college pundits shudder at his nerve.

Despite these pale, professorial shadows of English critics, H. L. Mencken, to-day, is to a respectable minority the voice of his era. From the half-fabulous Antichrist of Baltimore, whose name, it is said, was used by exasperated mothers to cow naughty children, he has risen to be one of the most important publicists in America, editor of a powerful and widely-circulated magazine, the creator of a new sort of writing. His peculiar prejudices and animadversions on the pageant of Life are written in Americanese of a racy bumptiousness so vivacious and interesting that he is eagerly followed by a large number of people. He is, moreover, training a surprisingly large group of youngsters, who should be the future makers of American literature, in a new type of criticism. Himself one of the "belligerent young generation", at forty-five Mencken is essentially a young man's critic, violent and destructive.

But how does one account for his tremendous popularity? His cardinal theory—his original principle—simply stated, is that Americans as a whole, that is, his reading public, are lewd fellows of the baser sort. Consider such tremendous pulpit-thrashing as this:

"The American people, taking them by and large, are the most timorous, sniveling, poltroonish, ignominious mob of serfs and goose-steppers ever gathered under one flag in Christendom since the fall of the Eastern Empire."

Surely this is not complimentary to the people of "these United States". Curiously enough, however, this candid opinion is greeted with cries of joy and exultation. "This is trenchant criticism," they shout to one another. "He is exactly the kind of man we are needing, an iconoclast, a fearless critic unafraid to attack," they cry gleefully and each poltroon, serf, boob and coward smiles with delight and congratulates himself on belonging to the "civilized minority". It is little wonder, then, that Mencken appeals so strongly to undergraduates. Are they not opposed to professors, to religion, to morality? Mencken denounces with mordant acidity and vehement invective the rule of the rabble. Armed with the Nietzschean doctrine, he has crusaded tirelessly against the conventional

dogmas of American thought and the conventional lies of American life. He is loud in demanding the rule of the fittest. And are not college men the fittest? It is only natural, then, that the *American Mercury* should be the intellectual diet of undergraduates.

As a critic, Mencken is plainly destructive. His hatred of the hokum and buncombe which Americans applaud is too genuine and too intense to permit him to be governed by the accepted norms of polite criticism. He is not what is called "sympathetic", his criticism deals but little with people from their own point of view. He simply brings the other man's statements and reactions to the bar of his own dogma, and having judged them by that measure, proceeds to accept or reject them. Criticism with him is an exploiting of his own preconceptions and aversions, not an honest following of the truth, lead where it may. On this Mencken himself says:

"The plain truth is—and how could it be plainer?—that I practise criticism for precisely the same reason that every other critic practises it: because I am a vain fellow and have a great many ideas on all sorts of subjects and like to put them into words and harass the human race with them. If I could confine this flow of ideas to one subject I'd be a professor and get some respect. If I could reduce it, say, to one idea a year, I'd be a novelist, a dramatist, or a newspaper editorial writer. But being unable to staunch the flux, and having, as I say, a vast and exigent vanity, I am a critic of books, and through books of *Homo sapiens*, and through *Homo sapiens* of God."

He is a critic of beautiful letters but they must be in prose. Poetry, he holds, is written and appreciated only by the mentally immature, the undeveloped, the morons. There again, criticism is not written in superlatives; it does not roar in Rooseveltian strenuousness. He derives a fiendish glee in damning with a crackle of superlatives some tinsel god of the *Poo-boisie*. He is positively final and autocratically dogmatic in his generalizations, and this is not criticism but buffoonery. The trouble with him is that he is obsessed with journalistic contemporaneousness. The journalist must "put his stuff across" or fail miserably, and Mr. Mencken is preeminently a journalist, with the journalist's point of view.

He displays, however, a sincere respect for the genuine artist. If he recognizes integrity in obscure work he will fight hard for it. Let a book be damned by the prudes and he will rush in as its champion. He fought for Dreiser, for Cabell, and for Sherwood Anderson—all considered leading American writers to-day. Courageous to the point of braggadocio, he cheerfully insults our organized moralities. He is forever flaying the scourge of puritanism—"the virtuoso of virtue", the "moral expert", the professional "smuthound" and has set himself to destroy "its power to boycott, devitalize, and suppress every artistic manifestation which has seemed to threaten the omniscience and omnipotence of "Primitive Methodism". Pointing with pride to a digestion ruined by alcohol, he is particularly violent over Prohibition. He used to belong to a club in Baltimore which met every Saturday night in the back room of the workshop of a repairer of musical instruments. The club had to be abandoned after prohibition because two members died of the ill effects of near-beer. . . . .



His prime quality, however, is his craftsmanship as a writer. It is his method and style that have made Mencken famous. Daring and brilliant, his work is easily read. His treatises on philosophy and philology, unsatisfactory as academic contributions, are clearly intelligible to the layman. He has a Rabelaisian delight in the roll and swing of words of strange coinage. It has been said of him that "he is the Paul Whiteman of our letters. He has jazzed prose, playing with heterodox virtuosity in two or three tempos at the same time, lugging in skilful discord and daring juxtaposition, pounding out his vigorous, hybrid style with extraordinary ease and effectiveness. Mr. Mencken splashes around in his vocabulary as happily as a street urchin in a public fountain". His blasts sound like the rumble of revolutionary tumbrils. Concerning his motive as a critic he has this to say:

"When I denounce a book with mocking and contumely, and fall upon the poor author in the brutal, Asiatic manner of a drunken longshoreman, a Ku Kluxer, or a midshipman at Annapolis, I am only saying that the fellow disgusts me—that his ideas and manners are somehow obnoxious to me as those of a Methodist, a golf-player, or a clog-dancer are obnoxious to me—in brief, that I hold myself to be a great deal better than he is, and am eager to say so".

Mencken's, undoubtedly, is the most raucous and the most arresting voice to-day. He is the civilized consciousness of modern America, its learning, its intelligence and its taste, realizing the grossness of its manners and mind and crying out in horror and chagrin. What an idol for the undergraduate!

### The Students' Society Meeting

THE Students' Society meeting held last Wednesday revealed at once how easily such a presumably democratic gathering can be made the instrument of mob tyranny, and how far McGill is from being free from such a danger. Political theorists, if any of that all too rare species were at the meeting, must have found there much food for thought. Two motions were discussed: one proposed a referendum for the purpose of showing just how much opposition there is to the athletic levy, the other suggested the strengthening of the Union's feeble finances by increasing its grant by the sum of 25c to be taken from the amount now allotted to the Undergraduate Societies. The first motion was discussed and voted on much as motions should be at any meeting and it was passed by a small majority. The second motion disclosed at once why the room was packed with a number of faces seldom seen in the precincts of the Union. The Medical Undergraduate Society had decided, after previous discussion as a faculty, that if twenty-five cents were taken from them by the vote of students anxious to save the Union, they would be the poorer by twenty-five cents. Having reached this momentous conclusion, they paraded at the meeting to see justice done. It is not certain whether they had previously announced that defaulters would be punished; appearances would indicate that they had. At any rate neither Mr. Godine's sane plea for a vote on the merits, nor Mr. Jamieson's description of the financial situation of the Union, nor any arguments that could be discovered, were able to effect the smallest change in the attitude of a group that had

come prepared to defeat the motion irrespective of anything that might be said in its defence.

We are not denying that there was an arguable case against the motion—indeed, it would have seemed to us more fitting to have suggested taking the twenty-five cents for the Union from the ten dollars that is devoted to athletics—but we do most strongly object to the methods adopted by those opposed to it. Faculty spirit was evoked at the expense of university loyalty, and that spirit was not only narrowly self-interested but one which seemed to find its best and most appropriate expression in half-hearted attempts to shout down opposing speakers.

### Search

J. S. Glassco

WHAT is it we seek? Is it beauty? Is it honour? Is it happiness? The bubbles go racing through the wine and vanish. We raise it to our lips. . . . Through the window we see the yellow leaves of the plane-tree, drifting in the autumn breeze. Soon the trees will be stripped and bare. Another will hold this self-same cup, will ask the self-same question: What is it we seek? One after another, things pass away. . . . But there is something there, and we cannot find it.

The small, unhappy boy, impatient of his youth—he wants to be a man, or perhaps an engine-driver. He is an engine-driver. Is he satisfied? No; the stations and the signals flash by. The day finishes and starts again. He peers ahead, still seeking the elusive answer. Moments come when, blinded by beauty and ecstasy, we have found it. But alas! they pass. This is not what we are looking for. . . . These are but pin-pricks in the vast carcase of our being. So we go on, searching, backwards and forwards, up and down. We listen for sounds and portents. We peer into the eyes of our fellows. Do they know? Have they found it? No; they are peering into ours for the self-same reason. They cannot find it. They, too, are searching and waiting. The priest is talking of God, and we nod knowingly. The philosopher repeats something he has read in a book written by a Greek three thousand years ago, and we say: "Yes. Well?" The scientist dissects a beetle, and makes something go faster or slower, and we murmur, "Wonderful, wonderful!" The artist throws the shadow of his various calf-loves on the screen, and we applaud him, because for a moment he diverts us, and gives a vague hope that we may stumble across it. Whatever it is, it must be the most wonderful thing in the world, because it is so intensely believed in. . . .

### Pastorale

THE bellow of the lusty bull  
Astounds the timid cow  
That standeth in the meadow cool  
Where cuccu singeth nu,  
And holdeth her in mystic trance  
Beneath the timeless trees  
While ebon-bellied shad-flies dance  
About her milk-white knees,  
And sets her dreaming of the Groom  
That doth attend his bride,  
Until she lows for him to come  
And fawn upon her side.

—Vincent Starr



## Reality

Dr. A. S. Eve

THERE is no more perplexing question than whether some thing or some idea is or is not real. It is easy to admit that all experience is real, and if we do not admit it then a raging toothache makes a strong advocate of reality, but it must be remembered that the reality of pain is not admitted by a powerful section of the community. Indeed the intrepid Bréboeuf and the dauntless girl martyr of Lyons testify to the conquest of pain by the exalted spirit of man or of woman.

It is easy to deny the reality of anything except perhaps the consciousness of the individual. There is something so abominably egotistical, so ludicrously exaggerated, in the view that I alone exist, and that the existence of all else depends upon my consciousness, sleeping when I sleep, dying when I die, that most men would rather be called ugly names like "naive realist" than succumb to the conviction of an absolutely self-centred idealist.

It is the glory of science that it selects as real those things which exist in common in the experience of mankind. Every idea which can be put to the proof, not by one, but by many, which as Herschel said "emerges triumphant from every test of fair discussion," that is the body of knowledge which claims the title of truth.

It is not denied that there is knowledge outside the borders of what is now called science. We pass from the sublime heights of clear sunshine into the shadowy valleys of values where men grope uncertainly and with small guidance for the pearls of great price, for that which is infinite in possibility and priceless in possession, the immortal gifts of the spirit.

Those who love to explore the border line between science and religion will do well to read "Science, Religion, and Reality," edited by J. Needham, and published by the Sheldon Press. The preface is written by Lord Balfour who elegantly poises on the philosophic fence. He states, "Thus to set limits to reality must always be the most hazardous of speculative adventure. To do so by eliminating the spiritual is not only hazardous but absurd. For if we are directly aware of anything, it is of ourselves as personal agents, if anything can be proved by direct experiment it is that we can, in however small a measure, vary the "natural" distribution of matter and energy. We can certainly act on our environment, and as certainly our action can never be adequately explained in terms of entities which neither think, nor feel, nor purpose, nor know. It constitutes a spiritual invasion of the physical world,—it is a miracle."

Might not all this be said not only of men, but of mice, of mosquitoes, of dogs, of amoebae? All of these may claim to vary the "natural" distribution of matter and energy.

Eddington's article on "The Domain of Natural Science" is an interesting statement of the viewpoint of a leading relativist. He claims that "making up your mind" does not infringe the "identical" laws of nature, such as conservation of energy, mass, gravitation, etc., but that this process *may* interfere with the "statistical laws" such as the second law of Thermodynamics, or of course with transcendental

laws, laws not yet understood, e.g. quanta, and of course with laws not yet discovered! But indeed he is very frank in admitting that human consciousness is outside the cycle of physics. The driver of a four horse coach knows full well who are pulling the coach and where the energy comes, but the slightest touch of a rein may end in ditch and disaster, or in safety and the journey's end.

The conclusion of the great Dean Inge is worth the rest of the book. He frankly states that he writes as a Christian, but surely one of the most truth-loving since the Immortal Founder.

The late Lord Rayleigh stated that "there is not and never could be any conflict between true science and true religion;" this is generally admitted, but we are yet a long way from truth in either. The wars between religions have always been more bloody, more lasting, and more terrible than the skirmishes between religion and science. Yet to quote Inge;

"Those Churchmen who airily declare that there is no longer any conflict between Christianity and science are either very thoughtless or are wilfully shutting their eyes. There is a very serious conflict, and the challenge was presented not in the age of Darwin, but in the age of Copernicus and Galileo."

However the conflict today is guerilla warfare, and there has been more vehemence in the small rifts of the Presbyterian Church, some years ago in Scotland, and more recently in Canada, than in that mightier worldwide arena where conflict or peace still hang in the balance between religion and science.

One ground is common to both. Religion and Science are both hostile to loss of freedom and to superstition. Not merely may we so deteriorate that "our brains may follow our teeth, claws and fur," but "the temptation to confound accumulated knowledge and experience with intrinsic process is almost irresistible; but it must be resisted. It is quite unnecessary to go to Australia or Central Africa to find the savage; he is our next-door neighbour.\* The mentality of the stone-age exists on our platforms and in our pulpits. There is no superstition too absurd to find evidence in modern England: fetishes and tabus dominate London drawing rooms."

Inge has no doubt that the religion of Christ can and will weather the storm, and the outlook seems to the writer hopeful provided there is a return to the religion of the Founder from which we appear to have wandered so far and so unwisely.

Inge is shrewd enough to know that Einstein's relativity theories can never prove or disprove materialism, or the converse; and he adds, "In fact, I am still unconvinced that it has much importance either for the metaphysician or for the theologian."

Yet there is a wide difference between the "absolutes" of Newton and the "relatives" of Einstein, and this difference is pervading the human understanding with the potency of novelty.

One great drawback exists today—the philosophers do not know enough science, and the men of science are largely ignorant of philosophy. Hence the great subject of the Philosophy of Science is like a neglected

\*Wily Dean! Are we not all someone's next-door neighbour?



garden choked with weeds, and there are no adequate gardeners. Here is a great region for a pure and ardent spirit, who can think, learn and speak a clear language.

As Inge says: "We must remember that religion, like some chemical substance, is never found pure, and it is not at all easy to isolate it in order to learn its properties." Just as it is difficult to separate religion from magic in the beliefs and practices of savages, so the difficulty is not less among civilized people. Religious beliefs always impinge upon natural science.

The whole article must be read to secure the wise outlook and broad sympathy of the Dean, who though called "gloomy," actually emits a radiant and beneficent light.

Leonardo da Vinci said, "The study of Nature is well-pleasing to God, and is akin to prayer. . . . Who knows little, loves little. If you love the Creator for the favour you expect of Him, and not for His most high goodness and strength, wherein do you excel the dog, who licks his master's hand in the hope of dainties? But reflect how that worthy beast, the dog, would adore his master if he could comprehend his reason and his soul."

Thus spoke Four Centuries ago, Hear Today!

"Whether our dogs would respect us more if they knew us better may be seriously doubted; but I think we may say of natural science what Bacon said of philosophy, that while a little knowledge often estranges men from religion, a deeper knowledge brings them back to it; though we may add that the religion to which deeper knowledge brings us is not the same as that from which superficial knowledge estranges us."

### Evening

THROUGH the swift hours the world's great painter  
[Day  
Hath splashed the canvas with his colours gay—  
Flame of the dawning, amber of riotous noontide,  
Rainbow hues of the sun's last dying pride,  
And now, as a weary child tired with hours of play,  
Into the golden valley hath flung his paints away.

The silent meadows wait in breathless hush  
As dusk-clad Evening, with her quiet brush,  
Bathes in mist the gaudy palette of the Day  
And etches all the land in tender gray,  
While the sweet incense which the hours have wrung  
From sunlit woods and flowers, about her form is flung.

Black silhouette against the paling sky  
An elm-tree stands in loneliness on high,  
And tangled in its meshes, one white star  
Hangs—Night's first beacon in the cloud-swept bar,—  
And in the deepest shadows dancing fireflies gleam  
Like jewelled necklace broken in a fairy dream.

Here would I choose to fold my hands and pray  
When my last sun is setting, and in gray  
Death tones the garish canvas of my hours.  
Here would I lay me, with the grass and flowers,  
One with all things living, hid in the earth I love,  
While my soul wings beyond the stars, to God above!

—Stella M. Bainbridge

### Fabulae Difficiles

THE following have been selected by Vespasiano from an interesting Ms., which has lately come into his possession. The Ms., is entitled: "Fabulae Romulo et Remo a vulpe matre pia narratae." Unlike most such documents, it is actually dated, A.U.C.O. It will be noted by those interested in folklore that the selections shed an interesting light upon the origin of the age-old English nursery rhymes.

The crudity of certain lines is not surprising at such an early date.

\* \* \* \*

#### Parvulus Johannes Honorius

Parvulus in latebis consedit Honorius ille  
Et crustum Christi festum festivus edebat:  
Extraxit crusto, perpolice, prunum:  
Clamavit nunquam quam se puerum meliorem.

\* \* \* \*

#### Tres Mures Cæci

Hercule! Tres mures cæci! Velociter errant:  
Quærun uxorem mortiferam agricolæ.  
Heu! Caudas tenues discindit falce cruenta!  
Ut temararia tam parva animalia sint.

\* \* \*

#### Bacchanalia

Euce! feles ululant: Strepitusque lyrarum:  
Mox etiam lunam vacca super salut.  
Ipse canis risit parvus, quod talia visit,  
Discus enim furcam corripuit cupide.

### The Bird

BREAST-BONE and ribs enmesh  
A bird in a cage  
Covered for the night with flesh  
To still his vocal rage,

Curb his wild ardour, and  
Circumscribe his wing  
Till One shall unwind the band  
And let the door swing.

Who now unseen and  
Inarticulate awaits  
One to unwind the band  
And open the gates.

Free then of the flesh hood  
And the cage of bone,  
Singing again a good  
Song, I shall be gone

Into that far and wild  
Where once I sang  
Before the flesh beguiled  
And the trap was sprung.

—S.







## Decadence

A. Edel

A friend of mine once related to me a dream that he had had the previous night.

It seemed to him that he was standing in a strange and unknown room. It was hot and stifling. His head was swimming and his consciousness seemed ever on the point of leaving. A thick mist hung over him, and swooping down, enveloped him. Confused noises were ringing in his ears, nor could he distinguish the sounds in that tumult. Then suddenly it was all cleared away. The mist was gone but the noise continued. He heard Words—thousands upon thousands of them—no coherence, no unity. They circled about him and started piling up, one upon the other forming a wall around him. He stopped to read them—Efficiency, Banner Year, Humanity, Executive, Radio, Jazz, Bootlegger, Art for Art's Sake, Relativity, Bolsheviki, Charleston, Evolution, Psycho-analysis, Proportional Representation, Compulsory Lectures, Classicism, European Students, Elections... They came on faster and faster. Higher grew the wall. It was beginning to enclose him. It seemed as if the words would never cease. He beat against them with his fists, but to his dismay he found them to be solid brick. Each word was a little brick. And now he himself was being struck by the flying weights. The wall had reached his height and was closing over. He was suffocating. He shrieked for help. He fainted. He awoke....

\* \* \*

Though I lay no claim for election to the position of a soothsayer I concede that this wild fantasy admits of a very ready explanation. We are, it is true, literally surrounded by words at the present time. All about us they come—some in slow winding streams through fruitful fields of thought, others pouring down precipitously without set purpose. In all these torrents that empty into our present age, is there anything sensible, even slightly original, or at least flavouring of originality? Or are we merely copying and acting as mouth-pieces for the past, or what is worse, saying, but meaning nothing?

Every period of progress, of real advance in civilization has been inevitably followed by a time of stagnation. It seemed that the intellect of man had been drained and was now devoid of resource—that the effort of creation had overcome the creative power. It is the old question of *fin-de-siècle*. It occurs in movements, great and small, in schools of thought, and then in whole periods of history. It is the oscillation of the pendulum to and fro, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, sometimes with irregular movement, sometimes steadily. There is no assurance of its course, but this much is certain that for every crest of a wave there is a hollow, for every height there is a depth, and that human history is a cursory motion over hill and valley. This may seem contrary to any doctrine of progress, but it really is not so, for what is done cannot be undone, and when a renaissance follows a decline, it is able to build on over the height of ancient grandeur.

It is another question as to whether this intellectual oscillation is the result of material causes. Here is room for an economic interpretation of the course of history. But the causes do not concern us at present. Suffice it to say that a Silver Age necessarily

follows a Golden Age in any and every collective effort of human mind. What then are its characteristics?

It must be remembered that in using the term Silver Age we do not refer to a complete degeneration, an entire cessation of intellectual effort. But by far the most prominent feature of such periods is lack of originality—a strange antithesis to the period of fruitful production which preceded it.

"But", someone will interrupt, "your argument is entirely fallacious. Look at Alexandria in the Hellenistic period of Greek culture. Where before that time did such genius burst forth in the field of science? And yet it is generally conceded to be the Silver Age of Greek civilization."

True, we must admit. Far be it from us to belittle Eratosthenes, Euclid, Ptolemy and a host of others. But if science was at its height at that time, it simply means that it was not the Silver Age of the scientific movement. But the period is called Hellenistic to show that in general it lacked that brilliance, that creative energy and vitality which had characterized the Hellenic Age. The purity of expression was gone. In practically every branch of effort there seemed to have been a descent. Such, it is generally claimed, are the Sceptics and Cynics, and the Academics and Peripatetics after Plato and Aristotle. Tragedy shows no really great names. Comedy may have one or two. Art, as a whole, though in certain respects it may have become more finished in many ways was really and truly finished. The true spirit of originality was lacking. Genius seemed worn threadbare. Science was, perhaps, the exception, but that is the difficulty in attempting to judge whole periods of history as forming a Silver Age. It would be much better to consider the separate movements. However, a general statement can usually be made concerning the age as a whole and the verdict of time on the Hellenistic period is that it was a Silver Age.

What impresses us most in surveying that period is the immensity of the literary output—thousands of volumes, encyclopaedias, commentaries, collections, compilations, investigations of detail. Perhaps it was the influence of the scientific spirit. The contribution was great, and we must not fail to recognize such achievements. But as we have said before there is in such periods little or nothing truly creative. One would think that all possible ideas have already been expressed. And so it comes about that the Form is emphasized at the expense of the Content. For if the material is the same only a change of Form will give delight. So we find it in the Alexandrian writings, especially the poets. So, too, it was under the Roman emperors in the latter days of Roman civilization. Artificiality, style—that was what the writers of the time were looking for,—no freedom of expression, but neatly turned phrases, alliteration, antithesis, chiasmus and a thousand other dainty tricks. In Roman schools of rhetoric, for example, on what questions did the students sharpen their intellects. "Should Caesar cross the Rubicon?" Or a more delicate problem: "Should a son who has fallen into the hands of pirates and whom the Captain's daughter has rescued and run off with on the condition that he marry her fulfil his promise, if his father objects and threatens to disinherit him?" After such questions had been debated a few hundred times, the only thing to look for was a new mode of expression, twists and turns of the language.



And so if we pass through other periods of decadence in the history of the world we find the same common features. They follow a period of creative activity. The minds of men seem to be exhausted. All effort is devoted either to criticism or commentaries on what the previous age has achieved, or to finding new forms for expression of the material furnished by that fruitful period. Or perhaps there is a tendency to throw overboard what has just been brought forward and to go on expeditions into the archaic. Whatever is done the result is the same, artificiality, emphasis on trivialities, emphasis on Form over Content. Note that the Silver Age makes no contribution at all to civilization. It constitutes a pause in the advance, a stopping, sometimes to chronicle and survey the results, sometimes to continue slowly and imperceptibly in the onward march. But sometimes, too, they are a complete break in the forward movement. Yet they seem to be inevitable. And whether the *fin-de-siècle* is the result of material conditions or is itself an attitude which brings these about is an altogether new problem.

However, I have far from explained my friend's dream which set me wandering over this long path. Yet it should be apparent by now. We are bombarded with words, some so meaningless, so bombastic, so nonsensical to even the casual listener that we are led to think there is nothing original in our age, that old outworn doctrines are being hurled at us with a shower of ideas and standards that no clear-thinking individual could possibly accept. But despite all this, and the disgust we may at times feel with conditions as they are, we cannot venture to term the present a Silver Age. The most we can say is that it seems so to us. It may be that amid this turmoil, this confused mass there is something abiding, something that will delight posterity. Perhaps it was so in Babylon, in Athens, in Rome—in every great centre in any period of history. There is that difficulty with contemporary criticism. We are ever inclined to locate the Golden Age in the past and condemn our own as mere Silver. It must be admitted that when we look about and behold the Form prevailing over the Content, after hearing something a thousand times, we search in vain for a new thought; when we see artificiality rampant, and freedom bound on every side by convention and ignorance, we are naturally inclined to be skeptical. If the age has produced anything of worth it will undoubtedly come from a chosen few. Perhaps it was always so.

### A Poem

TAKE in your long arms  
The torso of a wave:  
Stroke its lithe loveliness,  
Let it tenderly lave  
Arms, breast and shoulders,  
Sinews and thighs  
From the yellow of love,  
Her immoderate eyes,  
The ache of her fingers,  
The whips of her hair,  
And the bruise where her mouth  
Moved here and there.

—A. J. M. Smith

### A Child's Garden of Verses

#### Conformity

MUCH madness is divinest sense  
To a discerning eye;  
Much sense the starkest madness.  
'Tis the majority  
In this, as all, prevails.  
Assent, and you are sane;  
Demur,—you're straightway dangerous,  
And handled with a chain.  
—Emily Dickinson

#### The Witch

TOIL and grow rich,  
What's that but to lie  
With a foul witch  
And after, drained dry,  
To be brought  
To the chamber where  
Lies one long sought  
With despair.  
—W. B. Yeats

#### Desire Gratified

ASTINENCE sows sand all over  
The ruddy limbs and flaming hair,  
But desire gratified  
Plants fruits of life and beauty there.  
—William Blake

#### Oh, That All The World Were Mad

OH that all the world were mad!  
Then should we have fine dancing;  
Hobby horses would be had,  
And brave girls keep a-prancing;  
Beggars would on cock-horse ride,  
And boobies fall a-roaring;  
And cuckolds, though no horns be spied,  
Be one another goring.  
—William Rowley

#### Reason Has Moons

REASON has moons, but moons not here  
Lie mirrored on her sea,  
Confounding her astronomers,  
But oh, delighting me.  
—Ralph Hodson

#### To The Oaks Of Glencree

MY arms are round you, and I lean  
Against you, while the lark  
Sings over us, and golden lights, and green  
Shadows are on your bark.  
There'll come a season when you'll stretch  
Black boards to cover me:  
Then in Mount Jerome I will lie, poor wretch,  
With worms eternally.  
—J. M. Synge



## Discussing Sport

A. P. R. Coulborn

"*HEU fugaces*—", dear readers. The session is drawing to a close, and this is the last number of the first volume of the Fortnightly. The Daily too, will soon be ceasing effervescence. As a matter of fact the Daily must have forestalled me in bringing you these pieces of news. But I come to praise the Daily not to bury her. Her editorial Saturday March 6 on "What Is Sport" was entirely in the right spirit. And though the excellent opinions expressed for the most part in the letters of correspondents on the Athletic Levy may not justly be accredited to the Daily herself, yet she may be congratulated upon affording the space for their publication.

I cannot altogether, however, agree with the history of sport as seen through the spectacles of the Editor of the Daily, and would first give here my own view of that subject. On the whole I think the Editor is right in taking the history of sport under Greece and Rome as an unit, and that under Mediaeval and Modern Europe as another. Yet there can be small doubt that sport together with everything else became decadent in Greece in days after the Peloponnesian War, and the development from Greece to Rome was not rigidly continuous. The history of Rome is a remarkable phenomenon in that Rome really has two histories, the one up to the end of the Republic, which concerns only the growth of the city itself and of the mastery of Italy; and the other of the Empire which swept into its toils all the Mediterranean world, thus diverting the natural development of Italy and the city of Rome into new channels.

No hard and fast line can of course be drawn between these two eras. The division is not even synonymous with Rome's speedy conquests after the Punic wars, for the Mediterranean World, and Greece, its hitherto paramount influence, began to react upon Rome much earlier.

The sport of Rome in its earlier days was crude and natural: it was of a lower order than that of early Greece: yet it shewed all the vigorous healthiness, which the sports of all peoples have done, when the civilisations of those peoples have been ascendant. With the influence upon Rome of Greece came something new. It is most remarkable in religion, but none the less in sport, which, by the way, was always closely related to religion in the classical world—"mens sana in corpore sano," might almost equally well have been written "mens pia in corpore sano"—the influence of Greek sport was undoubtedly deleterious. It is true that in the Antonine age Rome shewed some of the benefits of Greek sport, but already the spiritual dislocation, caused by the overwhelming pressure of the superior culture upon the inferior, was apparent. The extreme specialisation of Greek sport had led the Romans in their effort to rival it, into setting sport upon an economic basis of professionalism, which indeed the Greeks had done themselves; and worse than that the crazy political structure of the city itself had long ago hit upon the idea of "sporting spectacles" for the debauchery of the mob. I agree entirely with the Editor of the Daily as to the progressive change of sport from the amusement of the participants to the amusement of the spectators. And I think the latter is invariably the sign of decadence.

The Editor's view of sport in the Middle Ages is not wholly correct in my opinion. He thinks there was very little sport at all beyond the "mock chivalric contests." As a matter of fact the said contests, usually known as "jousts" (expressive word) were immensely popular and of continual occurrence. They had very rigid rules, particularly toward the end of the Middle Ages, and were watched by comparatively large numbers of spectators. They may thus be said to be sport of a highly developed kind. Alongside them in the later Middle Ages were the embryonic shoots of our sports. University students often played "ball," which was sternly repressed by the authorities.

I have gone into this matter thus academically, in order that we may attempt to apply the evidence to modern conditions. The civilisation of the North American continent is a derivative of that of Europe. Such broad statements are hazardous, but I think it may be said that it is more closely related to European civilisation than was later Roman civilisation to Greek. Rome though influenced toward professionalism in sport by Greece, finally produced out of that professionalism her own interpretation—the animal arena. North America plays games cognate with those of Europe and seems likely to do so. Her spirit is sufficiently near to that of Europe for there to be no need of changing entirely the medium of expression as did the Romans with Greek games.

What then is the situation in North America at present? Sport has developed far along the path of professionalism. In many cases it does not make the slightest difference whether the players are paid cash or not. Both in professional games and amateur, which latter includes University sports, every phase and ramification is highly organised, and the whole concerted to produce maximum efficiency in the actual combat. It may still be true that players derive some amusement from playing, but by far the greater part of their stimulus is, on the part of professionals their cash earnings, and on the part of amateurs the position of a petty popular hero. And behold the masses of spectators, too, the counterpart of the foul and vulgar mob of Rome, which delighted in the slaughter of the Christian martyrs by the lions. Would it not seem that here we are confronted with decadence?

Such a conclusion appears irresistible. On the whole I am bound to incline to it myself. The solid facts are almost too strong to admit of any optimism.

Are there, however, any straws of hope to which we may cling? In such broad matters as the lines of development of civilisation, we are largely in the realm of conjecture, and I would have it clearly understood that what I am about to say is said purely as such. There can be no doubt that the growth of civilisation from the extinction of the Roman Empire until today has been continuous; yet, while the general tendency has been always upward, the process seems to be in a wave-like motion: the slope of the curve increases alternately fast and slowly: sometimes perhaps it is negative. To view the question a little differently—the "ingredients" of a civilisation seem to develop in harmony in one scheme of relation to each other for a period, then comes a shift of the kaleidoscope: the relation is rearranged: some of the ingredients slip out, perhaps: and others appear. Such shifts may be slight, or they may be wholesale. A wholesale shift took place at the end of the Middle Ages, and



in the realm of sport, the "jousting" which we have noticed was eliminated. Yet a greater shift took place when Rome fell under the cultural domination of Greece.

Where I have used above the term "ingredients" I have meant fundamental elements, as for instance in the Middle Ages, Latin Christianity, or in Rome the crude but pure and beautiful rustic "pietas." And the apparent results of the "shifts" are seen not among the ingredients, which are as a rule sufficiently obscure to the contemporary eye, but in externals, of which the spirit of sport is a good example. It seems to me that in a few generations observers will be able to detect a "shift in the kaleidoscope" as a result of the late war. Further, the nature of our present "Western Civilisation" is a dualism, just as was that of Greece and Rome in their later days. On the one hand we have America, and on the other, Europe. Moreover, potentially if not actually, I feel that there is less cultural disparity between America and Europe, than between ancient Greece and Rome. And with two strong poles of emanation, each, as it were, both pushing and pulling at the other, it seems to me that "shifts in the kaleidoscope" may be more easy than in the case of a civilisation of one centre only. Peradventure from some future revolutionary shift, or possibly, even from out of the revolution in process to-day, may arise a new order of sport to supersede our present athletic system. But who knows? And in any case the new one would swell to the bursting like the old one. *Pauvre humanité!*

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### Trivia

#### *The Athletic Levy*

"YES, we are in favour of the Athletic Levy,"  
Shout the Major and the Coach in a chorus,  
"If you say it is unjust, if you murmur it is  
[heavy,

We reply, 'Yes, for you—not for us.' "

#### *Professor Windbag*

Professor Windbag, Ph.D.,  
Astounds his Freshman class  
With 1880 heresy  
That shocks each lad and lass  
Into a most profound respect  
For his courageous intellect.

#### *McGill Daily*

"Why is *The McGill Daily*?"  
Asks the pessimist sourly.  
"Thank God," says the optimist gaily,  
"That it isn't hourly!"

#### *Epitaph*

Here lies the body  
Of Thomas Trimble:  
He thought the Scarlet Key  
Was a Phallic Symbol.

—Simeon Lamb

## TWO POEMS

### *Below Decks*

"TALK to me, bones!"— The shifting candle-light  
A moment touched the speaker's face with gold,—  
Deep-creviced, as the lightning's flash to sight  
Might bring some mountainside rain-worn and old,  
Showed the deep lines from lip to chin, the bold,  
Dark, deep-set eye, hooked nose, and streaked the  
[black  
And tumbled hair with yellow, then leapt back

To catch and linger on the fluttering dice,  
The dull, piled silver and the greasy board.—  
"Little Joe dies!"— The trimmer saw the price  
Of many beers drawn in, counted his hoard  
And threw his last ten shillings to be scored  
Out with the rest. Long fingers, cold and grey  
Like wind-stirred paper, garnered Fortune's pay.

The watch was changed, and from the fire hole,  
Loud with the beat of steel, the growl of flame,  
Where for four hours they had shovelled coal  
Three blacks, still sweating, leaden-footed came,  
Lit cigarettes and sighed and joined the game  
In weary silence.— Overhead the deck  
Was washed with silver from the torn moon's wreck:

And still the sea in pleading monotone  
Cried to the stumbling ship; and still below,  
Where the bent candle's flickering flame was blown  
Swiftly across dark faces, at each throw,—  
"Talk to me, bones!" or "Fade him, Little Joe!"—  
The gambler told his eager litany,  
Still hungry, still importunate as the sea.

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### *The Winter Road*

ONCE when the late trees wore a sombre gold  
And leaves already drifted hurrying by  
We walked this road together, watched the bold,  
Broad-colored waves of evening ebb and die;  
Lights bloom along the shore, then turned again  
Homeward beneath a drift of autumn rain:

So when I walk the winter road alone  
With ghosts of glory glowing in the west,  
And stars awaking where the day has gone  
There comes a peace, and all the grey unrest  
Of longing merges:— you have gone this way  
As lately as the golden-skirted day.

So lately that a clear effulgence clings  
About the brown-scrawled trees, and in the air  
The slow, sweet music of your passing rings  
Till, quieted, my thought becomes a prayer  
For your returning.— Silently night fills  
The sky, and breathes upon the folded hills.

—Goodridge Macdonald



## Downhill

### Thoughts on the Decline of Democracy

#### "Vespasiano"

(Concluded)

#### III

IN Czecho-Slovakia, and I believe in other countries too, voting is made compulsory. And those who omit to vote thereby commit a penal offense. This recalls the edict of Diocletian which compelled people in towns to accept municipal office. Although in the latter case the unwillingness was due to the fact that those in municipal authority were made personally responsible for the payment of the tax allotment in their locality, while in our present case, the unwillingness is due only to the irksomeness of going to the polling booth, the situations are essentially similar, for they both represent a system on the decline due to the refusal of the individual to comply with it.

In days when the rapid changes of the Industrial Revolution were causing dislocation and distress, which existing governments were unable to cope with, and at the same time the increase of material potentialities had brought about the enlightenment of the multitude in public affairs, that multitude came to the conclusion that itself alone could solve its troubles. It was natural that as a political parvenu the average man should feel he knew everything. It has been found, however, that the system which gives a deciding voice to the mob is no solution for difficulties, and naturally most ordinary persons have lost interest in it. At last the will of the majority is right—in abdicating its title to exist.

#### IV

THIS is no new phenomenon in history. On a small scale it happened in the Greek city states, and the Mediaeval Italian city states. Something rather similar happened on the grand scale when the Caesars rose to govern Rome, and when the despotism of Napoleon succeeded the dallying Directory of France at the end of the French Revolution, is the most perfect parallel to what is occurring today. France, indeed, is even at this moment in that condition when a despot would be welcomed: it is only the man who is needed. The enthusiasm of the masses on the return of Caillaux was highly significant, but Caillaux was not the man. England has been for years ruled by its Cabinet—England has always loved oligarchies. Sometimes a dominating personality appears within the Cabinet, but there is no danger, even if there is no real leader. Our hoary "English Constitution" seems likely to weather the storm by its old expedient of casting a skin and appearing again as something new.

Italy has Mussolini, a crude military despot, and Spain has Rivera, a poor copy of Mussolini. Russia has stepped forward with something superficially new, but really very typically Russian, and no very wide departure from earlier Russian conditions, and providing very easily for the selection of an oligarchy or a despot. Germany alone of the Powers seems democratic, but perhaps that is because she has had no true democracy before—let us hope she will not linger in long.

#### V

THERE is one thing to notice about our new depositions and oligarchies—that they stand on their merits. I have said much of the inability of the masses to govern, or to influence policy closely, but ultimately they have a certain importance. They are the governed, and though they may not know how government should be done, they do know when they are being badly governed. If a government be only bad enough, sooner or later they will rise up and destroy it. This is as far as they may be allowed to go with safety, and it seems in future as if this is as far as they will go. The test of the value of the new constitutions which are entering politics is to be found in the quality of the methods they provide for the election of a new government when an old one has been destroyed. It would save much trouble and danger if instead of elections, referenda were held periodically as to whether the existing government should be allowed to continue. The votes for it need not be recorded, for in comfortable days men do not observe politics closely enough even to be aware of such a referendum. But if it were found that half or more of the registered electorate voted against, then a change might well be tried. This I suggest as a good method in the negative side of government making.

An equally important question is as to how to choose a new government. Here popular opinion is useless, for, having had no experience of the proposed new government in practice, it is quite incapable of judging it. It seems as if a permanent staff of learned practical thinkers—gentlemen of the type of Jeremy Bentham—should be employed for every sovran territory, to be ready with a new scheme, as each old one is declared to have failed. Two questions may justly be raised here: the first, why not let this staff decide when the old form is worn out; the second, why not let the staff govern themselves?

To the first I would say this. A practical is inevitably more reliable than a theoretical test, and therefore where it is possible to employ a practical test, it is only sensible to employ it. A referendum on the success of a government, by reason of eliciting the opinion of the governed, is obviously the most practical method possible. That the theoretical means of inventing a new government must be used, is only because in the nature of the case there is no practical means available.

To the second question I would answer that the whole virtue of the staff of political thinkers is that it spends its time wholly in studying the question from the theoretical standpoint, and cannot possibly be expected to find time to undertake the practical side of governing too. Further, if the staff be themselves governors, they will obviously become hidebound and wedded to some particular scheme of government. Their *raison d'être* will be governing instead of criticizing government.

Doubtless this scheme has its faults. I do not hope and pray that some Ruritania will put it into practice. It is suggested merely in order to inject a little rationality in political discussion—a thing which seems much needed in days when all that aspiring young politicians can do is to beseech men to take an interest in elections—"for the good of their country!"



## A Note on Eugene O'Neill

Leo Edel

NEW York is again discussing Mr. Eugene O'Neill and his latest experiment *The Great God Brown*. While *Desire Under the Elms* is facing the scorn of the censor in one or two of the states to the south of the Dominion and is completely banned in England, while *The Fountain* is still being dealt with by critics everywhere, the dramatist is pursuing his work and is steadily developing his unusual dramas with their new distinctive ideas in the theatre of today.

*Desire Under the Elms* has perhaps up to the present been Mr. O'Neill's most discussed play, although *The Great God Brown* bids fair to rival it to a certain degree. Yet the latter, a great puzzle to many, indistinct because of the employment of the mask, is not as clearly-defined as the former, and so it is the play of Lust among the farm-folk, which yet holds out the greatest interest, particularly since the prohibitionists and investigators of "moral turpitude" have lately discovered that it is obscene and must be withheld from the easily-corrupted public. But by the time they reached this decision New York had already seen the play and placed its mark of approval upon it, while its latest appearance between the covers of a book brings it still more before the public eye.

The play of course is merely one in a cycle, of works by Mr. O'Neill dealing not with the outward manifestations of life but rather with the forces which are to be found behind that life, dominating and guiding it. This expressionistic tendency is to be noted in Europe too, particularly in the efforts of some of the younger German dramatists, among others those of Franz Werfel, whose *Goat Song* has recently been produced by the Theatre Guild.

Eugene O'Neill's dramas are not of the bookish type, conceived by the writer in the soft-cushioned comfort of his armchair. During the first twenty-four years of his life Mr. O'Neill had many adventures. He was a sailor on a tramp steamer, he starved in Buenos Ayres, he visited South Africa, he came to know the ship from the grimy soot of the stoke-hole to the semi-comfort of the captain's cabin and he found himself in a sanitarium in 1914, five years after he had gone prospecting for gold in the Spanish Honduras. Today, therefore, at the age of thirty-eight he can look back, draw on this wealth of experience, and with the theatrical background of his childhood and youth—his father was James O'Neill, the actor—he is able to give us these dramas which are now practically the only American plays which are attracting attention in England and the Continent.

Mr. O'Neill's works deal with what has been termed the "behind life" elements. He would paint Fear—and so he creates *The Emperor Jones* and gives us a realistic picture of the torment and struggle of a negro in the murky blackness of a forest with the monotonous beating of tom-toms ever-swelling to prey upon his already jarred nerves so working him up to a horrible state of terror. He would give us a picture of *Thirst* and he places a middle-aged man, a negro sailor and a dancing girl on a drifting raft in the blazing heat of the tropics. Poverty he paints in several of his plays and he hates it and finds it

to be the greatest of all of society's crimes, even as does Mr. George Bernard Shaw. But O'Neill treats the theme differently. He goes behind and sees what impress poverty makes on the character and life of the people. Mr. Shaw, on the other hand, launches an attack upon the forces which produce the poverty. If Mr. Shaw's method is clever and subtle, Mr. O'Neill's is certainly more dramatic and effective. And if he wishes to give us a picture of *Desire* he takes us to the semi-primitive farm-folk, with their conventionalized minds and their sordid outlook on life, and so weaves a play which, far from being obscene, is a keen and critical analysis of this great and dominating force.

Mr. O'Neill's plays of the sea, particularly the one-act plays found in the volume entitled *The Moon of the Caribbees*, are delightfully-planned glimpses into the life of the sailor and the conflicting emotions he must experience during the course of his strained existence.

His recent works have all created much controversy. Mr. O'Neill has dabbled in the problem of intermarriage between whites and blacks in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, he has tried romance in *The Fountain* and in his latest play he has employed the mask and has produced a drama which strikes still a newer note in his series of efforts which are justly creating so much interest in the theatrical world.

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## The Red and White Revue

*His Majesty's Theatre*

*March 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th.*

NOW that the paint has been washed off and the profits raked in, it is a convenient time to sit back and survey calmly the whole question of the Red and White Revue. There is no other single performance during the academic year whose preparation occupies so many undergraduates for so much of their time; there is no other occasion which gives the public such an opportunity of viewing what they believe to be the true spirit of the undergraduate body. The event is from every point of view important enough to warrant the most careful consideration, and it must be judged, not only as a sample of student creative ability, but also as a mirror held up to the life of the University.

There is undoubtedly much to be said for the Revue as a proof that a great deal of exuberant imagination and genuine productive ability exists in the student body. It is no small achievement to have taken the best theatre in town and to have staged in it a performance entirely planned, written and set to music by undergraduates. That gives evidence of a very laudable ambition and daring, and no criticism is a fair one which does not give to the producers all credit for the fact.

Without going to the obviously extreme lengths to which S.M.P. and his ilk felt it incumbent upon themselves to stretch their imagination, there were also certain things in the Revue which deserve particular commendation. The scenery and staging were tastefully done, especially excellent being the setting of the closing number, while many of the simpler scenes showed that the producers had mastered the lively art of getting much out of little. The work of the chorus, most noticeably in the Charleston number, and the arrangement of the dances were also praiseworthy. Miss Dunton, who was responsible for the costuming, performed a difficult task with conspicuous success. Much of the colour that was one of the most attractive features of the Revue was due to her very good work, which was seen at its best in the costuming of the Russian skit, the Penguins and the various choruses. Of the acting, the finest performance was that of Bobby Bell. His utterly absurd fooling in the rôle of a small and unusually idiotic boy was the bright spot of the evening, while his song and patter, with Herb Murphy aiding and abetting him as "Poppa", provided in fact the only legitimate laugh in the show. The fact that he was (quite irrelevantly) allowed to wander on the stage to be near his Poppa, who had been impanelled with the jury in the trial scene, was the saving grace of a playlet of peculiar fatuity.

The following actors and actresses also deserve honorable mention: Miss Monica Wright, for her dancing and singing, and the possession of that undefinable something, so beloved of Mr. J. M. Barrie, called "charm"; Miss Cameron and Mr. Wright, for their mastery of the Charleston; Miss James of the Conservatorium of Music, and the lady who so gallantly and ably took her place on the opening nights; lastly, and by no means least, Mr. "Rusty" Davis, who composed the music and conducted the orchestra. If the various authors had done as well by the company in their skits as Mr. Davis did in his music, the captious critic would be hard pressed for grounds of condemnation.

But having said all this, it is casting no personal reflections to ask the all-important question: Is the Red and White Revue, as produced for the last two years, the type of performance which a University should make great efforts annually to put before the public? It is difficult to see how the answer can be given in the affirmative. For in spite of an unquestioned ability in the actors, producers and musicians, it cannot be denied that the general tone of the Revue, with but slight exception, was not such as could possibly bring credit to McGill. It was a true copy of "College Humour". For those who read that "collegiate" magazine, explanation is superfluous; for those who do not, let it be said that it has no sentiment, but only sentimentality, no wit, but only burlesque and broad humour, and then generally of a vulgar nature, and no other way of laughing at students save in so far as they indulge in excessive sport, drink, "necking parties" and cramming for examinations. "College Humour" is the strongest indictment of the American College that can be found in print. To see its attitude of mind reproduced by McGill students on a Montreal stage, as it undoubtedly was in "The Open Date" and "Dear Father", and in the "boy-and-girl stuff" generally, is not only not amusing, but also unfair to McGill, of whose life it is a low caricature. Indeed, the Fortnightly, which has been accused of an affected superiority, has never for a moment looked at the undergraduate and undergraduate through such cynical and degrading spectacles as have some of the authors of the Revue, who yet retain the plaudits of the crowd. If the performance were what it was several years ago, the spontaneous burlesque staged without much publicity by competing faculties, such things might be pardoned and even enjoyed. But they should not be acted in cold blood after months of strenuous work and before the general public. The game is not worth the candle.

The question is at once asked, What do you suggest? Simply this: if the producers of the Revue have no better type of material offered to them, no opportunity of displaying to the public of Montreal something which is a truer reflection of this University's life, then it were better to scrap the Revue altogether, and let the Students' Society forego the profits. The undergraduates with dramatic talent might then concentrate upon the Players' Club, (which, without any noise or fuss, and against no little apathy, is keeping alive at McGill an interest in true drama) and those who wish to dance the latest jazz step or sing in a chorus might stage a one-night affair in some out-the-way theatre such as the St. Denis—or, better still, within the University itself.

F.R.S.

### The McGill Fortnightly Review

Editorial Board: A.P.R. Coulborn, A.B. Latham, F.R. Scott, A.J.M. Smith. Managing Editor: L. Edel.

The Editorial Board is responsible only for opinions expressed in the editorial columns, and hopes to publish articles on controversial questions by contributors of widely divergent views.

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## Correspondence

The McGill Fortnightly Review,  
Dear Sirs,

Although it may be thought that I shew one of the best known symptoms of incipient lunacy, I address this letter to you, one of whom is myself: and this I do that I may meet Mr. Lewis Thomas on equal terms.

It almost seems however, that Mr. Lewis Thomas has not altogether understood my first article on "Universities," as appears when he asks whether my conception of an University is an "exclusive institution, where a body of persons devote a portion or all of their lives entirely to the cultivation of the mind—to thinking—with no other objective than self-satisfaction." I would refer him to the fourth paragraph of "Universities" on this point. I distinctly say there that I would not have an University a "close corporation," which seems to be much the same as Mr. Lewis Thomas' "exclusive institution."

The centre of my idea of an University is however very definitely a body of persons devoting themselves to learning. Education may quite possibly be a "training for life," as Mr. Lewis Thomas remarks, but where did I say anything about education in connection with an University? An University is emphatically not an educational institution in itself: its connection with education is secondary. This is the very core of the question. I laboured in "Universities" my view that an University *does most emphatically not equip a man for a trade or profession*, which is surely the same as a 'training for life,' only a little narrower and more specific. The truth is, Mr. Lewis Thomas and I are at cross-purposes. The kind of institution he pictures is perfectly admirable, and I do not doubt, though I do not pretend to know much about such matters, thoroughly necessary. Only, do not let such establishments usurp the name of University. It is infinitely worse when they begin to crowd the true university out of existence, as they are only too plainly doing to-day.

Mr. Lewis Thomas would like to know how I dare make the statement that Medicine, Law, Applied Science are not university subjects. Well, I dare do a good deal worse than that, when I am in the mood, and shall if I am goaded to it. This, he takes as equivalent to my saying that doctors of medicine, engineers and so on are not thinkers, by which he does not mean "pure thinkers"—those selfish fellows—again he will observe by re-reading my article that I said nothing whatever about their not being thinkers; I only excluded them from the scorned class of "pure thinkers," where, if they agree with Mr. Lewis Thomas, they do not wish to be in any case.

There is undoubtedly much truth in what Mr. Lewis Thomas says about the materialism of many students. I dare say in institutions such as those he is speaking of his arguments are entirely applicable. In Universities, however, of the true kind, such measures as he advocates would not be necessary since the evils of which he speaks would not arise. They have only arisen in our modern Universities, because, as I have pointed out, they are trying to be two things at once.

It is indeed a deep sorrow to me to find that one such as Mr. Lewis Thomas has so completely failed to understand me. It is a dreadful sign of the times. It is against this very utilitarian attitude that I am crying out, and of course Mr. Lewis Thomas is nothing

but a pure utilitarian. He wishes everything—even Universities—to be set directly to the task of improving society. This terribly narrow little spirit is one of our worst heritages from the Nineteenth Century, and it is high time that it was scotched. How many times must I say that the *be-all and end-all of our existence is not—oh so very much not—social uplift*. All this progress, this pep, this go-ahead, tub-thumping evangelising stuff is not the sole purpose of life. There do exist: there always have existed: and there always will exist other things in life besides these. This terrible age seems to have almost lost sight of them altogether, and the awful result is that men, whom one must distinctively respect, are quite unable to appreciate the feelings of those whose aspirations are not theirs. Mr. Lewis Thomas thinks I was temporarily off my mental balance in my effort to preserve that which I love, but I do not imagine that I was or am any more in that condition than anyone else trying to do the same thing. Indeed it seems a most rational procedure to me. I do not reply that Mr. Lewis Thomas has lost *his* mental balance, I merely point to what I have said above and say further that he has the *idée fixe* of the utilitarian. I crave one thing only in this matter, that we may just possibly and by some curious mischance, be not altogether and absolutely right, that there may perhaps be the least grain of sense in other people's point of view, and let them leave my little section of the heretics alone and give us our one little corner—our Universities.

I am,  
Yours as ever,

A. P. R. Coulbourn

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