

S·4·N

Issue 24 & Year 4

Jan.·1923·Feb.

And The Sea Shall Give Up Its Dead
Thornton Wilder

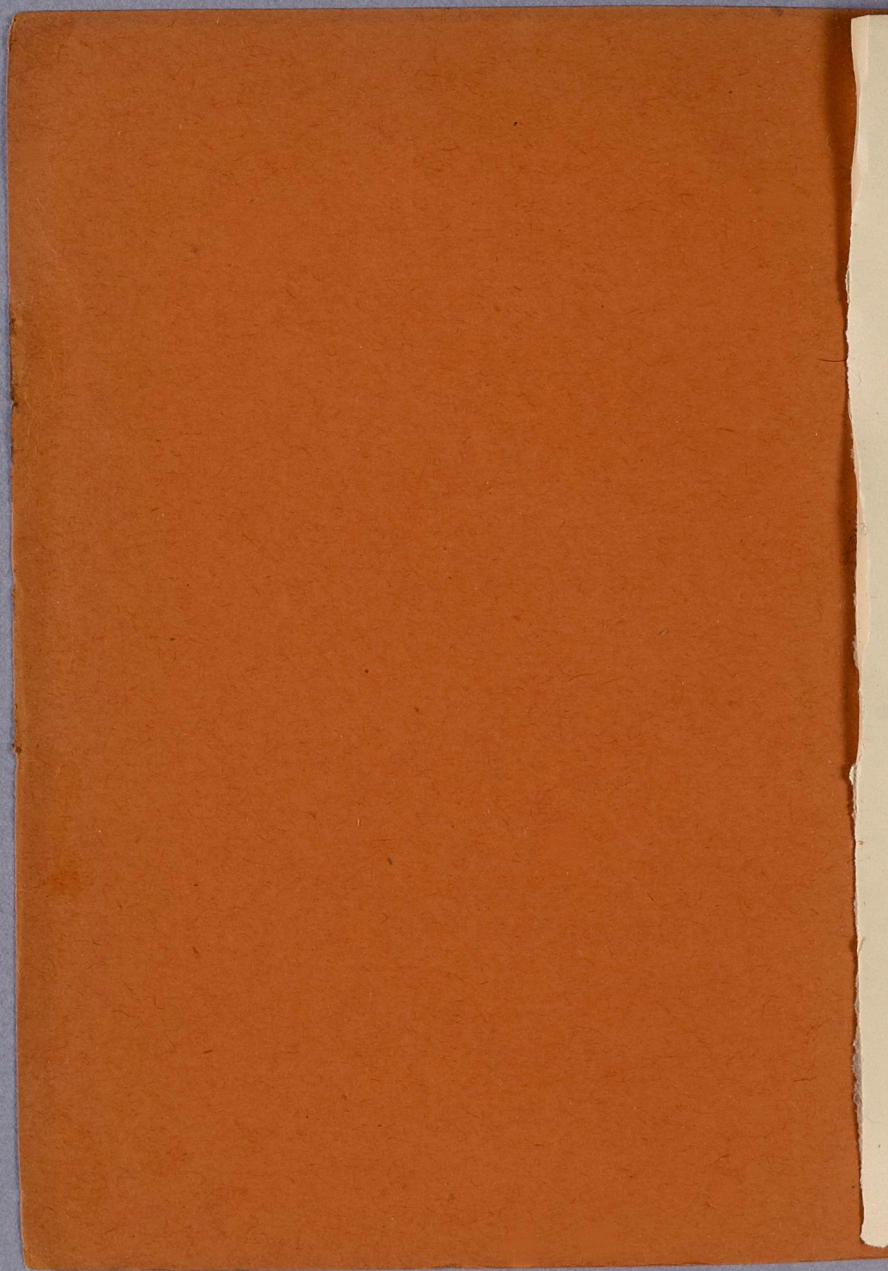
Marchand d'Habits Virtue
Ramon Guthrie Loring Andrews

Woman, Bed, Shirt, Soap, Etc.
Reginald Marsh

Traffic May 5, 1921
John Drury Barbara Sessions

Friendless And Unfriendly
Max Robin

Lilies That Fester
John Peale Bishop



[
ociety
onsidera-
es of art
Fitts,
U.S.A.
sms of
icited.
ssues
iety



S·4·N

Publication of S₄N Society

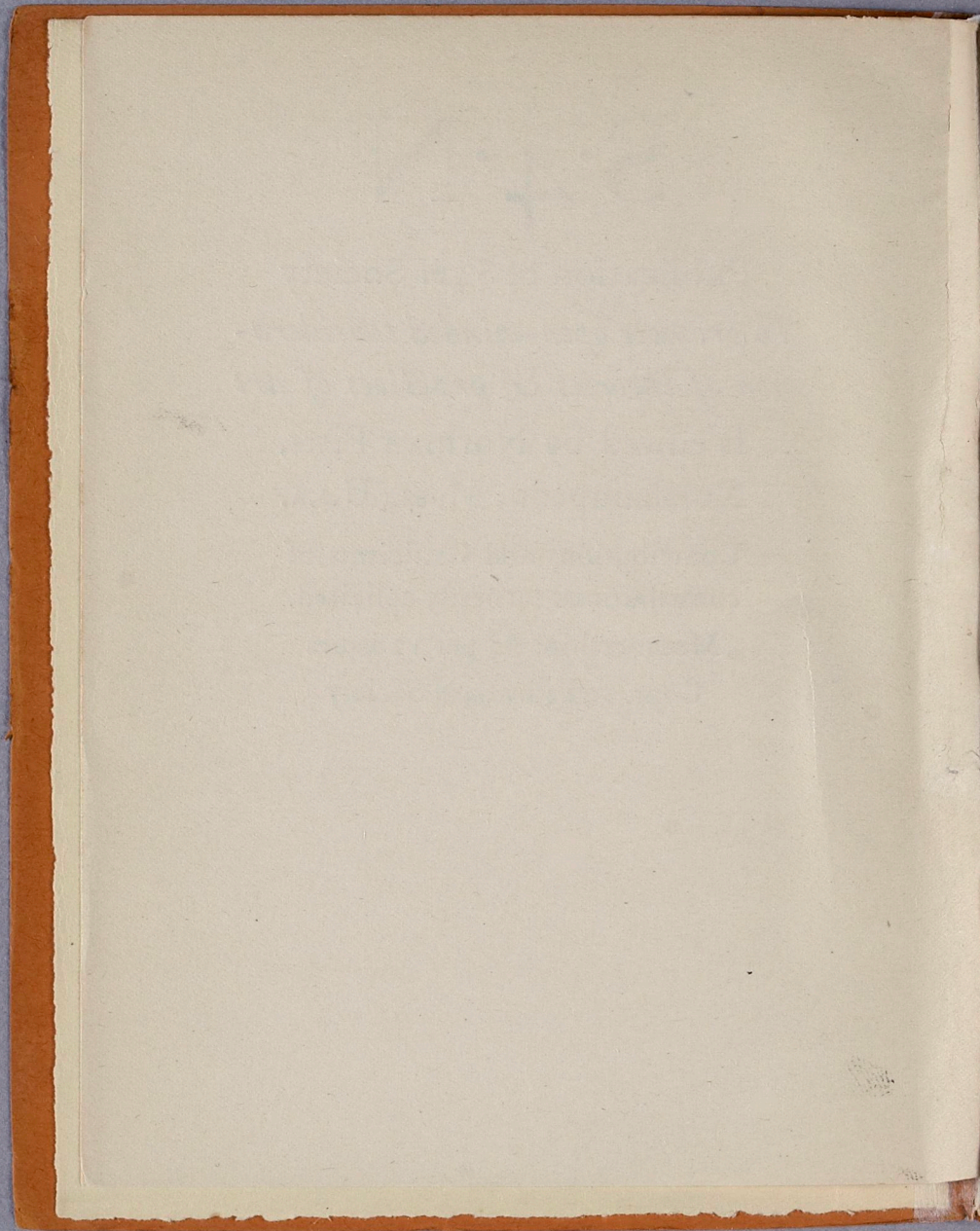
To promote open-minded consideration of theories & practices of art

Is edited by Norman Fitts,
Northampton, Mass., U.S.A.

Contributions and Criticisms of
contributions earnestly solicited.

Membership: \$3 per 12 issues

Copr. 1923 by S₄N Society



24th Issue
January-February
1923

24th Issue
January-February
1993

7

IN *THIS* ISSUE

THORNTON WILDER and RAMON GUTHRIE are charter S₄N-ers.. The former's contribution is No. 2 in his second series of '3-minute playlets for 3 persons'; the latter's, a chapter from his novel.

JOHN DRURY, once farm hand, bus boy, book clerk, police reporter, drama critic, is now *Caprice's* Chicago editor.

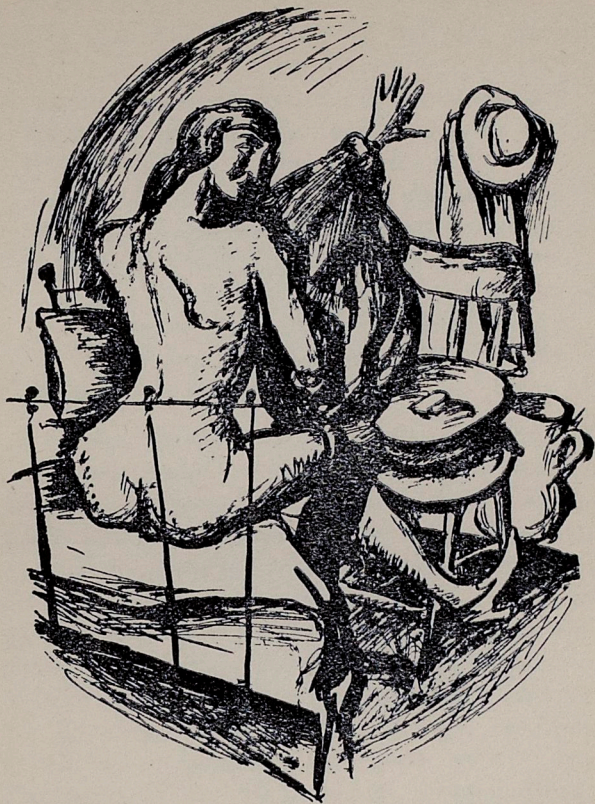
MAX ROBIN is contributor to *Broom*, etc.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP has already appeared in Issue 20; REGINALD MARSH, in 21 and 23; BARBARA SESSIONS, in 11, 17, and 23; LORING ANDREWS, in 23.

IN NEXT ISSUE

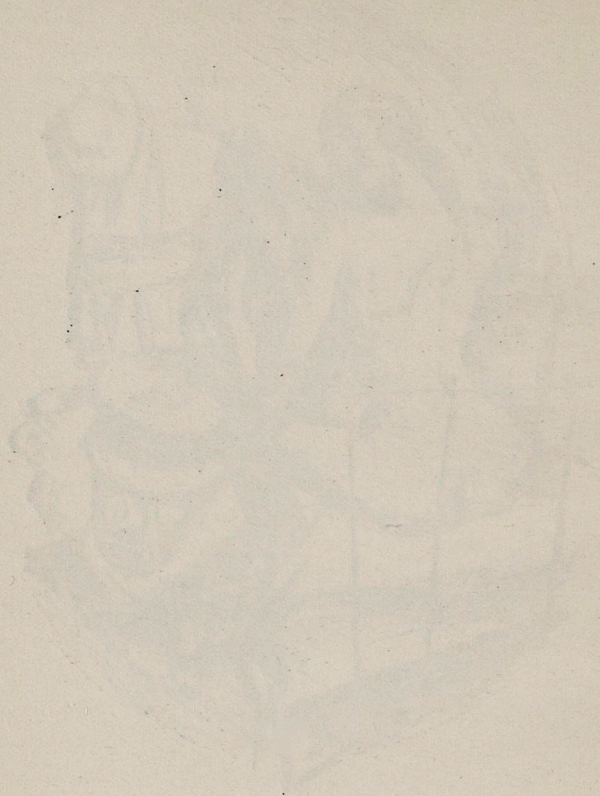
Pierre Loving, Hart Crane, J.P. Bishop, Jean Toomer, Emmett Dunn, Wayland Williams, William Troy, and others.





WOMAN, BED, SHIRT, SOAP, ETC.

REGINALD MARSH



AND *The* SEA Shall GIVE UP *Its* DEAD

The clangor of Judgment Day's last trumpet dies away in the remotest pockets of space and Time ceases like a frayed ribbon, with simultaneity, lateness, slowness and duration. In the nave of creation the diaphanous bleachers are already building for the trial of all flesh. The play opens several miles below the surface of the North Atlantic, where, like slow bubbles in a neglected wineglass, the spirits of the drowned rise through the water.

A WOMAN (*to the gray weeds of whose soul still cling some vestiges of color, some stained purples and some wasted reds*): At last I could struggle no longer. I said to myself: Only think, Gertrude, you have actually arrived at the moment of death. Even then I was unwilling to believe it, in spite of the agony of my lungs which seemed on the point of bursting. One is never really able to believe that one will die. It is especially difficult for sovereigns who seldom, if ever, confront inevitable situations. You know that I was Gertrude XXII, Empress of Newfoundland, from 2661 to 2698?

A STOUT LITTLE MAN: Your Imperial Highness' experience is much like mine. I lived about five

hundred years before Your Imperial Highness. I had always dreaded the moment of extinction. Yet it is less painful than many a headache; the mental suffering is less terrible than the sudden realization that one has wronged a friend.

THE EMPRESS: We know now that the real pain comes in these ages that have passed since then. Have you too been swinging in mid-ocean, tangled in a cocoon of seaweed, slowly liberating your mind from the prides and prejudices and vanities of a lifetime? That is what is painful.

THE LITTLE MAN: I was a Jew and was very proud of my race. Living under the tacit contempt of gentiles I nourished the arrogant illusion that I was notable. It has taken me a thousand years of painful reflexion to disembarass myself of this conception. I was a theatrical producer and thought myself important to my time, wise in human nature, witty, astute, yet kindly. Each of these ideas I have shed with a hundred times the pain of losing a limb. Now I am reconciled to the fact that I am naked, a child, a fool.

THE EMPRESS: In my life I believed fiercely that everything of which I said *my* had some peculiar excellence. It was impossible for me to imagine a citizen proud of any country save Newfound-

land, a woman vain of any hair save the golden. I had a passion for genealogies and antiquities; my line was so old that all these things derived glory from having preceded me. Now these many years I have been lying, wrapped in barnacles, divorcing my soul from all that it once loved. Even my love for my son and my son's love for me has fled through sheer inconsequence. All that is the second death and the one to be dreaded. I was afraid that when I had shed away my royalty and my beauty and my administrative talent and my astonishing memory for names and my pure descent, I was afraid that there would be nothing left; but underneath all these ordures I have found a tiny morsel of God. What was your name?

THE JEW: Horatio Nissem.

THE EMPRESS: Speak to that man who is rising through the water beside you.

HORATIO NISSEM: Who are you, and what particular follies have you laid aside?

A TALL THIN DREAMY MAN: I was a priest of the gospel and a terrible time I have had taking leave of my sins. I tremble to think how but a few minutes ago I still retained a longing for stupidities. Yes, sir, for the planets. In my lifetime I loved them; they visited my dreams in

the shape of women. Mars, a warlike woman in red and gold; Saturn, a learned woman in violet. I felt sure the planets had personalities and I looked forward after my death to hearing their songs. Now I know that sun and moon and stars have fallen, like dust, into the lap of their maker. I told myself that after death, too, I should sit through all eternity overhearing the conversation of Coleridge and Augustine and Our Lord; there I should embrace my loved ones and my enemies; there I should hear vindicated before the devils the great doctrines of Infant Baptism and Sacramental Confession. Only now have I been delivered from these follies. As I swayed in the meteoric slime I begged God to punish me for certain sins of my youth, moments I remembered well of rage and doubt and pitch. But these seemed of no importance to Him. He seemed rather to be erasing from my mind the idea that my sins were of any consequence. I see now that even the idea that I was capable of sinning was a self-flattery and an impertinence. My name was Father Cosroe; now my name is Worm.

THE EMPRESS: We cling obstinately to our identity as though there were something valuable in it. This very moment I feel relics of pleasure in the fact that I am myself and no one else.

Yet in a moment, if there is such a thing as a moment, we shall all be reduced to our quintessential divine matter, and you, Mr. Nissem, will be exactly indistinguishable from me. God himself will not be able to tell the Empress of Newfoundland apart from the Rev. Dr. Cosroe.

HORATIO NISSEM: I am afraid. That will be terrible. I refuse to give myself up. Oh God, let me not be mistaken for a gentile!

THE EMPRESS: Do not cry out. Fool! You have waked up all my rebellious nature. Oh God, do not take my identity away. I do not ask for my title or my features,—do not take away my Myself!

THE REVEREND DR. COSROE: Your screaming has aroused my madness. Let me keep my particular mind, oh God, my own curious mind with all I have put into it.

The three panic-stricken souls reach the surface of the sea now lit by an all-sufficient light. The extensive business of Domesday is over in a twinkling and the souls, divested of all identification, have tumbled, like falling stars, into the blaze of Unicity. Soon nothing exists in Space but the great unwinking eye of Divinity, idly meditating a new creation.

THORNTON WILDER

VIRTUE

I know a woman who is afraid
Of the music that the hands of man could draw
from Heaven
On the harp-strings of her body:
Her nerves are twisted tighter than the Gorgon
knot
In the fretting of her perturbed slumbers,
Her heart is a hammer striking lonely convent
chimes
On the anvils of her ribs,
And through her dreams stroll pallid choir-boys
Chanting thin-voiced hymns
Of single blessedness.
Smile, lady, smile
In the cold embraces of your lover, Time;
For you will find him chaste and true—
Laugh, lady, laugh;
For, in your long dark bridal bed,
Your ashen lips shall be demure and still,
Taut as a drawn bow-string.

LORING ANDREWS

FRIENDLESS *And* UNFRIENDLY

HE plainly sickened me. A short stout fellow he was, piggyish-looking, in eyeglasses. True, we went to school together, but what else had I in common with him? And yet he insisted on running after me. I avoided him and he persistently followed.

He cornered me one day. Am I so and so? Yes, I am so and so. Didn't we go in the same class at P. S. this and this? Yes, we did. He thought it was I. What am I doing now? Where do I live? I have changed. I look fine. And then, without my asking for it, he related to me all that he had been through since he went out of school.

He had peddled with candy on the East Side. He had sold newspapers, was pinched for not having working papers. (I recall now that he had left school a year or two before me, which was a year or two before graduation.) Then followed more hard luck. He was employed in a theatre, where there were gangs and fights. He worked in a shoe factory and after that in a shirt factory. The place was non-union, and he started to agitate. The boss fired him. I could not imagine him an agitator; he looked too fat and soft for the job. But he said it seriously and

I believed him. I was glad when he left me. I did not like him. I don't know why. Perhaps because he reminded me of the past, of my schooldays on the East Side, of one tall kindly teacher we had and who later became a doctor. I can't analyze this very well. I know I did not like him.

I walked with a friend one day and suddenly we came upon him. "Let's turn aside," I cried in alarm. My friend, knowing my ways, followed me and he wanted to know what was the trouble. Well, there was no trouble. I just met some one whom I did not like. All I saw in him was flesh, lots of probably unclean flesh, with a tattered overcoat on top, his face unshaved, his legs thick and unshapely and his shoes effeminized and worn. He reminded me of the old, the forgotten, the ugly and dismal in life.

I never thought of him. Why should I? There was so much to do—which I always managed to leave undone. More important people and things passed me by. And of a sudden he showed himself in my way again. I don't know from where he emerged. But there he was, a little better dressed than formerly, his shoes polished, also the wide back of his overcoat. I succeeded in getting away before he could turn his big white eyes in my direction.

Where did he keep himself? In the library reading room. It did not matter, left or right, I was always bound to stumble upon him there. Isn't it remarkable? People whom we are most anxious to be with we seldom find, and this one—surely he was a nuisance.

He noticed me at last. I packed up quickly and left the room.

In the hall, in the catalogue division, on the stairs, in the elevator, everywhere I met him. God! I was beginning to hate those humiliated white eyes.

I rushed out of the subway one morning and hastily ran to the library. At the entrance to the reading room he stood. Our eyes met. I fled from him. I was mad. I cursed. I had something of importance to attend to. My papers unfolded, my fountain pen set, I had scarcely time to start, when for no reason at all I lifted my head and saw him hurrying toward me. And sure enough, he picked my table and the seat opposite me.

I dared not look up. I pretended to keep busy. How? I drew figures, squares, circles, and did not wish him any good luck. Again my head lifted unintentionally, and there again were those white eyes smiling upon me. He was on the point of starting to speak, but I quickly buried my head.

I did not see him, did not hear him, but I felt his presence so near, and my mind was in disorder.

I put my papers together. It seemed to me that he was yawning. I stood up.

"Are you so and so?" he spoke suddenly.

Again those white eyes.

"Go to hell!" I ejaculated.

I did not see him after that. I hurried out. My mood was spoiled. I did nothing that day. I seethed with fury. I saw no reason for the existence of this fellow with the white eyes.

Later came regret. I recalled a look of sorrow, friendliness and servile attachment in those eyes. Why was he following me? Perhaps he had no one? Maybe there was a story in his life, a tragedy of the past boring silently within that fat body? I had insulted him and felt sorry. Now I would listen to him. What was bothering him?

MAX ROBIN

MARCHAND D'HABITS

PHILLIP woke. Jacqueline was still asleep. A wagon was scrambling through the cobbled street. A voice was chanting variations of the cry, 'Marchand d'habits'. There was something fatal and despairing in the refrain, like a sceptic muezzin calling out his dogma to a sleeping city.

"Marchand d'habits! Marchand d'habi-i-its!" the voice screamed plaintively.

Like the shabby old men with crooked, understanding smiles, who sell fuzzy rabbits that jump and squeak when one squeezes a bulb, the venders of old clothes never seem to have commercial relations with anybody. Phillip had a theory that the rabbit merchants were the ghosts of men who in life had been the lovers of Paris and who in death had foregone heaven or been pardoned from hell for her sake. Perhaps the 'marchands d'habits' were ghosts, too. Then 'Marchands d'habits' was the cry of lost souls, for the traffickers in jumping rabbits have no cry unless one admit the treble wheeze of the plaster rodent.

Having restored his mental circulation by these reflections, Phillip sat up in bed. The sun was shining on the roof across the street. Rather a fair day thus far; his birthday, too. He had

almost forgotten it. Twenty-five years old. It was very decent of the weather to be clear in honor of the event. Twenty-five years old. At twenty-five Hoche had become commander in chief of an army and had given his name to posterity and an avenue. Alexander had won Arbela. Keats and Shelley had written odes to Grecian urns and nightingales and things. Bryant had written *Thanatopsis* at a much earlier age. Well, at least he had never done that, thank God.

Of course, there was Julius Caesar—and Gauguin. But Phillip imagined that Providence had intended him to be somewhat more precocious than either of these celebrities.

Providence had been to him a benevolent and infallible godmother. In return for her bounty, he had accorded her a complete power-of-attorney and enough faith to have transformed the earth into one great tennis-court. Being an appreciative old lady, she doted on him and sat up many an evening knitting him socks that never seemed to wear out and mufflers that completely baffled the most insinuating winds. She had commenced the friendship in his infancy by giving him one of those fantastic crazyquilts called *genius*—an article in the fabrication of which she is both dextrous and prolific. She usually gives them to babies to whom bureau-

cratic old Fate has given only such drab christening gifts as a pair of serviceable sabots or a switch called Necessity. Often the bright patchwork will so catch the child's eye that he will entirely overlook his more prosaic presents, and in the end they are hidden away in the attic or burnt up in the fireplace.

Providence is more of an artist than a craftsman. Her multicolored gifts are seldom quilted sufficiently to keep out the cold; but Phillip was her favorite godson, which was perhaps the reason why she had always managed to slip an extra blanket or two under it on cold nights.

Of late years Providence had become almost coquettish in her attentions. She had given him gifts of privileges and immunities that had made even Phillip marvel mildly. It was grace to her indulgence that he had been able to break with impunity all ten commandments and several amendments and footnotes thereto. A dangerous and improper immunity, you say? A necessary one in these days when footnotes and amendments have become so numerous that humanity has been obliged in sheer self-defense to put a bounty on the violation of them. Moreover, the gifts of Providence are usually dangerous and improper, incipiently at least. That is why the interesting grasshopper, who puts nothing into life but his

heart, sings until the day he dies, while the dour ant only works and is obliged to communicate his feelings to a very limited audience by means of frantic wigwagging with his antennae.

There was Jacqueline. She had never seemed to fit into the benevolent plans of Providence. (Perhaps Providence is at heart a Puritan, like you, gentle reader—and I.) Their lives had become so interwoven that Providence might well have given up the task of disentangling them. It might even be that this was the reason that Phillip was twenty-five and had passed safely through the prodigy class without ever having been one. Of course, Phillip had never made any effort to accomplish anything, but, then, if Jacqueline had been either altogether different or altogether nonexistent— The thought did not seem to lead anywhere. Hypotheses of three factors are apt to be indigestible early in the morning.

The third factor still slept, a braid of hair, a glimpse of cheek, and contours of the counterpane. There was a fatality in those contours. Thus had the Sphinx lain in the road to Thebes.

How easy it would be to rise noiselessly and leave her sleeping. By the time she awoke he could be on his way to some white little city in the south of France where he could sit all day

on the sunny terrace of a café and write innumerable playlets and perhaps even a novel, if he did not get discouraged and abandon it in the mazes of the first chapter.

He bent close to her and listened to her breathing. Her hair was warm and seemed to reach out to him drowsily. It reminded him of a baby that had once slept in his arms with soft fingers clutched confidently about his thumb. Phillip laid his head beside hers, where the ends of her hair tickled his nose. The road to the little white Thebes in the south where great novels were to be written grew narrower and narrower until at last it was only a ribbon that lay between the motionless paws of the Sphinx.

The twinkle in Providence's eye snapped out with a click, and it is whispered among the muses that the good old dame even threw her thimble at the cat. Phillip must have dimly sensed her disappointment, for he propped himself up on one elbow and murmured disinterestedly, "Yes, girl, between us we seem to have checkmated Providence rather thoroughly".

Jacqueline stirred luxuriantly and yawned.

"Tu me causes?" she asked.

"Non, je chante. C'est aujourd'hui mon anniversaire," he answered.

"Embrasses-moi donc."

Phillip kissed her and held her warm cheek against his for a moment. Then he rose to his knees and threw back his head.

"Marchand d'habits!" he howled, while Jacqueline looked at him with amazement—for how was she to know that this was the cry of lost souls?

RAMON GUTHRIE

TRAFFIC

The kaleidoscopic symphony of day,
Thoughtless but grandiloquent,
Rises inevitably
To climactic horns and brasses
Of the feverish afternoon
And then crumbles apart
Into muted violins of evening
That disturb the frailer senses
With a trickle of futility.

JOHN DRURY

LILIES *That* FESTER

*Myron, qui paene animas
hominum ferarumque aere
comprehenderat, non invenit heredem.*

G. PETRONIUS ARBITER

OLIVER CROWE, Amory Blaine and Leopold Bloom were all engaged in the advertising industry; here their resemblance ceases. If Mr. Benét has ever come in contact with the art of Mr. James Joyce, *Young People's Pride* (HOLT) shows no trace of it. The influence of Mr. Fitzgerald has departed; the influence of the magazines which have influenced Mr. Fitzgerald is still to be detected.

I am not attempting to be clever, for I have observed that one is under no compulsion to be clever in the *SN*. I wish quite seriously, indeed solemnly, to point out what I believe to be Mr. Benét's most annoying failure. Mr. Joyce and Mr. Fitzgerald, different as they are in temper, differing widely as they do in the results obtained, have this in common: both were brought up in a Catholic tradition and are acquainted with the doctrine of Original Sin. Both, in presenting characters quite obviously derived from their own youth, make no attempt to slur over the more

odious and ridiculous features. But Mr. Benét, who is I suppose of Protestant upbringing and hence unaware of the value of the Confessional, presents his characters as if they had no share in the Fall of Man. It is occasionally suggested that they have a few 'modern' faults—but these only make them the more charming. Oliver Crowe's shoes do not conform to quite the latest model, but that is only because his really fine qualities are not appreciated at the aforementioned advertising agency. His vision is myopic, his pyjamas are striped; but the idea that these could render him ridiculous, even at the moment when (honorably and with the full sanction of Church and State) he is about to fulfill his functions as a male—(I take it that's what he's doing when the book ends)—is hastily scouted. Ted Billett is no Perceval; once it is true, he followed the Grail—if you allow Miss Weston's rather nasty and doubtless pedantic interpretation of the real symbolism of the Lance and the Cup—but that was a long time ago and in another country. Besides, even if the wench is not dead, he is very honorably ashamed of himself and ready, indeed willing, to assume that it was all the result of the war's taking him so young and still unmarried beyond the influence of Yale and Elinor. And so on, even to Mary

Ellen's cute habit of taking off her drawers in public. It is not that Mr. Benét lacks all vision; it is that he has chosen to see through glasses, rosily. It is not that he has no sense of proportion; it is that he has been too conscious of an audience to whom that 'essential strength and sickness of the human soul' which it is the business of literature to present, would be unpardonably offensive.

Plot Number 1—(we are dealing with the novel)—exhibits certain invariable features: two persons usually of the same age, but always differing in sex, come together in the early pages of the book; the desire to see them married is incited in the reader; circumstances arise which, however trivial they may appear, are sufficient to keep the amorous ones apart until the fourth chapter from the end; thereabouts, the papers are found to have been forged, the bastard is proved the legitimate heir to the estates of the grandduke, the heroine finds that the hero did telephone after all, the supposed libertine is discovered to have visited the bawdy house under circumstances so extraordinary that moral judgement must be suspended, kind hearts receive an influx of Norman blood; and the final chapters are scented with orange blossom. *Pride and Prejudice*, probably the most successful treatment of

this plot in English, contains also a second pair of lovers, whose vicissitudes parallel those of the first, and whose ultimate happiness depends no little on the machinations of Elizabeth Bennett and her noble pursuer.

The only difficulty this plot presents is to find circumstances which will keep the lovers apart for at least two hundred pages. Mr. Benét has found, or thought to have found, his complication in *Young People's Pride*. This was a happy hunch. How a young American of no means, embarrassed by a university education and its attendant ideals, is to attain to marriage before his youth is gone is a problem of some social importance. Oliver is frequent, and Ted is common enough in the early twenties; both their morals and manners offer considerable interest to the detached observer. But, just as in *The Beginning of Wisdom* Mr. Benét threw away an excellent theme (What will be the result of an enduring marriage between a sensitive Yale student and the daughter of a decayed dentist of neither breeding nor social importance?) for no theme at all, so here he wanders from *Young People's Pride* to write a lot of claptrap about a middle-aged business man—presented as a patchwork of the presswork of paid publicity agents—and his mistress who is shown reading Dickens, although

she would seem to have acquired irony from the pages of Mr. Cabell. In Ollie's case the American Express Company—(Lordy *bless* the American Express!)—appears suddenly as a *deus ex machina*; Nancy's pride is softened by her mother's unintentional revelation of the missing telephone call. Ted who is not so much embarrassed by his lack of funds as by the painful recollection of a bit of belly-bumping done long since on the slopes of Montmartre, is saved at the last minute by Oliver's mendaciously laying down his virginity for his friend. In all charity, it can not be said that either problem has been approached, much less solved.

In rapidity, sprightliness and in the presentation of the actual scene, the book is a gain on *The Beginning of Wisdom*. The construction is far better, but not yet good enough for me to be especially grateful for it. The style shows every evidence that Mr. Benét did not consider his book worth writing.

When I say that Mr. Benét's style is bad, I do not mean that it is bad as Mr. Rupert Hughes' style is bad; it has that peculiar and utterly disheartening badness of a man who can write and is at present only using a twentieth of his talent. It has the quite awful vulgarity, not of

a dance in the two-a-day, but of a dance done by a greyhound. Consider the following passage:

"It was Nancy just as some of her clothes were Nancy, soft clear blues and first apple-blossom pinks, the colors of a hardy garden that has no need for the phoenix-colors of a poppy, because it has passed a boy's necessity for talking at the top of his voice in scarlet and can hold in one shaped fastidious petal, faint-flushed with a single trembling of one serene living dye, all the colors the wise mind knows and the soul released into its ecstasy has taken for its body invisible, its body of delight most spotless, as lightning takes bright body of rapture and agony from the light clear pallor that softens a sky to night."

That is: Nancy's handwriting is like Nancy, who is like her clothes, which are like the colors of a hardy garden, which are not like the colors of the poppy (which is like the phoenix), nor yet like the boy who must speak at the top of his voice, which top of the voice is like scarlet in the color scale, and so on to that last terrible crib from *Tristram of Lyonesse*, which has nothing whatsoever to do with the subject. No one without a rare gift for metaphor could have written that passage, but when metaphor is employed to get as far as possible from what one wants to say, it is time to weep.

And when one comes on "He stepped back with a gesture of defeat but his *feet* gripped the floor" and remembers that it was written by a poet, there seems nothing to do but agree with the *New York Times* that the book tells a truth as old as the race. I have not seen the review, only that one sentence quoted in an advertisement but I take it that the ancient truth is none other than this: You can't make a sow's ear out of a silk purse.

Young People's Pride fails because it is constantly pretending to be something it is not: it pretends to be a study of manners in America in the third decade of the XXth century; its main episode belongs to the cloak-and-dagger romance: it pretends, by its elaborate sentence structure, its allusions and its imagery, to be better written than the average serial of the higher priced magazines; it is not. It is not that Mr. Benét displays no talent for the novel; there is evidence enough that he might, slowly and laboriously, have written a creditable history of manners, or, by stuffing his ears with cotton, have produced an excellent romance of a new and difficult kind. But he must choose where he wishes to abide. If again he descends from the Ivory Tower to the level of the street he had better leave his romantic baggage behind; else

when his editors arrive by appointment at the
foot of the stairs they may find him squashed
under a trunk of Spanish leather and all the un-
imaginable trappings spread out on the muddy
floor.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP

MAY 5, 1921

A purple passion of violets blazed through the
grass
In the wide spaces of sun under the elm trees.
That day I could do nothing but kneel among
them,
Marveling how from moment to moment each on
its slim cool stem
Lifted the magnificent intensity of its face more
radiantly upward.
The earth learned so soon that you were dead.
Already it seemed to hold your hair
Tangled among the roots of violets.

BARBARA SESSIONS

COMMENT *on* ISSUE XXII

Literary Secession : Gorham B. Munson

Wins ten dollars.—THE EDITOR

HAS real thought and a sharply defined attitude.

—JEAN TOOMER

Let us be thankful for this clear statement of the aims and impulses of a movement which flowers in such a skeletonized, devitalized hybrid of naturalism and expressionism as *After Hours*.

—H. M. PARSHLEY

His diagnosis of literary conditions here seems to me just and at times brilliant. I like especially the characterization of P. Rosenfeld, though it may not be quite strong enough.—ROGER SESSIONS

A splendid source of advertising, even calling for editorials in sober, sedate newspapers.—EDMOND A. MERAS

How can any young American be a unionist when secession is so pleasant? . . . Alas, how soon our dearest idols are thrown down! . . . All-hammering Mencken, has it come to this? . . . Away with 'genteelness'! Come out of her, my people!

—NEW YORK TIMES

A prescription as old as the one for castor oil.—
BURTON RASCOE (in New York *Tribune*)

Formal qualities alone, and especially the 'abstract form' of our contemporary cerebralists, will never constitute a literature; and little is to be expected of a criticism that regards them as the weightier matters of the literary law. . . It still remains for the critical faculty to make intellectual situations of which, as Arnold said, the creative power may profitably avail itself. Until American criticism is able to do this, our secessionists will be simply leaving one wilderness for another.—
THE FREEMAN (per Van Wyck Brooks?)

A thorough sane article on a nebulous insane movement.—OLIVER JENKINS

Good statement of fact and needed vituperation.—
J. B. WHEELWRIGHT

One of the clearest statements possible regarding purely aesthetic concerns.—HAROLD D. WINNEY

A tiny seed that may become a tree looms larger than the weed already grown.—J. T. NICHOLS

Worth attention and will win it.—JAMES WALDO
FAWCETT

It is good to see the T. N. T. in *S4N* energizing something better than personalities.—R. F.
BEARDSLEY

The great masters of literature plod along obscurely in youth but ascend in an unbreakable curve of steel to the heights of their powers. Tradesmen, only, form unions and organizations. Let each young writer say as he pleases and to hell with the rest of the world. Munson might be greater if he didn't go about starting new magazines and movements.—JOHN DRURY

Good premises; poor, even anticlimactic, conclusions.—EMMETT DUNN

New things are not *ipso facto* models. Incoherence is not a virtue, nor is art *all* theory. Indeed, when one begins to theorize, art is dying.—ROBERT WITHINGTON

Is he just a plain fool, or only a fool when he writes?—WAYLAND WILLIAMS

Interesting reading, but Bassett makes it seem absurd and affected.—EVE WOODBURN LEARY

Secession? : Richard Bassett

Let me be knocked down by Bassett rather than be picked up by Munson, to paraphrase an ancient.—CHARLES J. FINGER

I sympathize very much with his point of view, which he states unusually clearly and well.—ROGER SESSIONS

Clear, concise, sincere.—EVE WOODBURN LEARY

A saner mind than Munson's.—WAYLAND W.
WILLIAMS

It is so obvious that men unite on principles,
that principles do not unite men, that this
dullness has no place, at least in this issue of
S4N.—J. B. WHEELWRIGHT

Think of the paper, postage, printers-ink and
printers-art involved!—J. T. NICHOLS

The purpose of any real literary movement is to
clarify and direct. American artists, until now
largely isolate, need just this clarity and direction.
A writer must concentrate upon his problems,
upon method. The least that a group can do for
him is to provide a medium of exchange, and an
inevitable sharpening of ideas. With these things,
the public has no concern. It is interested in
results. Hence the public has no place in a group
discussion. . . . Authentic movements are never
negative. The secession from mediocrity has as
its complement (and its main purpose) the issuing
into real achievement. And a movement that
produces nothing above the average is no move-
ment at all; it is a fizzle. . . . Munson's aesthetic
interest may appear to lack balance; but, if so,
it is because of the anaesthetic condition of the

great bulk of American authors. An individual excess thus serves the purpose of mass balance.

—JEAN TOOMER

1. There *is* need for a movement, or movements, which will actively secede from the conditions of mediocrity in order (a) to create a current of ideas, (b) to create an atmosphere of danger for ideas. See Matthew Arnold and T. S. Eliot for the advantages supplied to the creative worker by such a situation. 2. The Messiah-awaiter's attitude is irresponsible and stagnating. It is a question of individuals functioning at their utmost rather than resigning in favor of hoped-for geniuses. 3. "The aim of literature is to produce good writing of all kinds." Granted, and is not the ultimate test for good writing its aesthetic qualities? Spinoza and Mallarmé, Thomas Mann and Aristotle, are good writers because they control and purify structure and its constituents. I used the word aesthetic in its true and wide significance, best exemplified now by citing Aristotle as one of the very greatest aestheticians in literary history. Incidentally, the five positive points of my program are contained in the *Poetics*. 4. Presumably, a writer must give literary treatment to the phenomena of life.

If he gave musical or architectural treatment, he would be, not a writer, but a composer or an architect. If an engineer uses steel to build a bridge, does he betray a lack of interest in that material? I can't see why a writer who uses American slang to produce a literary effect thereby demonstrates that he is not interested in it. 5. "The reasons that induce young men of this generation to write and carve and paint will not be primarily aesthetic." That's just the trouble. For one T. S. Eliot, there are one thousand variations of H. G. Wells who produce a voluminous unsatisfying literature impelled solely by humanitarian, scientific, religious, egoistic, or other extrinsic reasons rather than by a pure desire to write beautiful literature. The best way, it seems to me, to hit a bullseye is to aim at it.—GORHAM B. MUNSON

After Hours : Kenneth Burke

Wins five dollars.—THE EDITOR

The kind of cameo tale a real writer chisels when he forgets he is a secessionist or any other *ist*. His replacement of the usual prose similes by quick incisive metaphors is an achievement, especially since, Whistler-like, he has so thorough-

ly erased all signs of his labor as well as all marks of the eraser.—PHILIP GRAY

Close observation and reporting; well done—its fault being the modern disproportion of elements.—EMMETT DUNN

Realism with a touch of cerebration to antidote the flat dullness that usually obtrudes.—LLOYD E. SMITH

Not particularly good Burke; any one willing to take the pains could have written it.—J. B. WHEELWRIGHT

Appealing style.—ALAN CLARK

Especially good ending.—OLIVER JENKINS

Excellent atmosphere.—H. S. BARON

A bit too much in the manner of the little mouse in the corner.—HAROLD D. WINNEY

Introductory Remarks : Daniel Dourouze

I chortle *f.f.* for his common sense.—CHARLES J. FINGER

More irrelevant than Bassett.—J. B. WHEELWRIGHT

The 'great book of Nature' went out with Wordsworth!—REX HUNTER

Girl with Orange : Duerne

Other pictures much better.—J. L. FOWLER

What in hell?—LLOYD E. SMITH

Fake!—J. B. WHEELWRIGHT

Oranges and women are a most unearthly combination for study.—EDMOND A. MERAS

MORE COMMENT *on* ISSUE XXI

Succotash Argument : Wayland Williams

Has a great deal of commonsense, honesty and humor. Could he not propound a new Decalogue for The Younger Writers?—JOHN CARTER

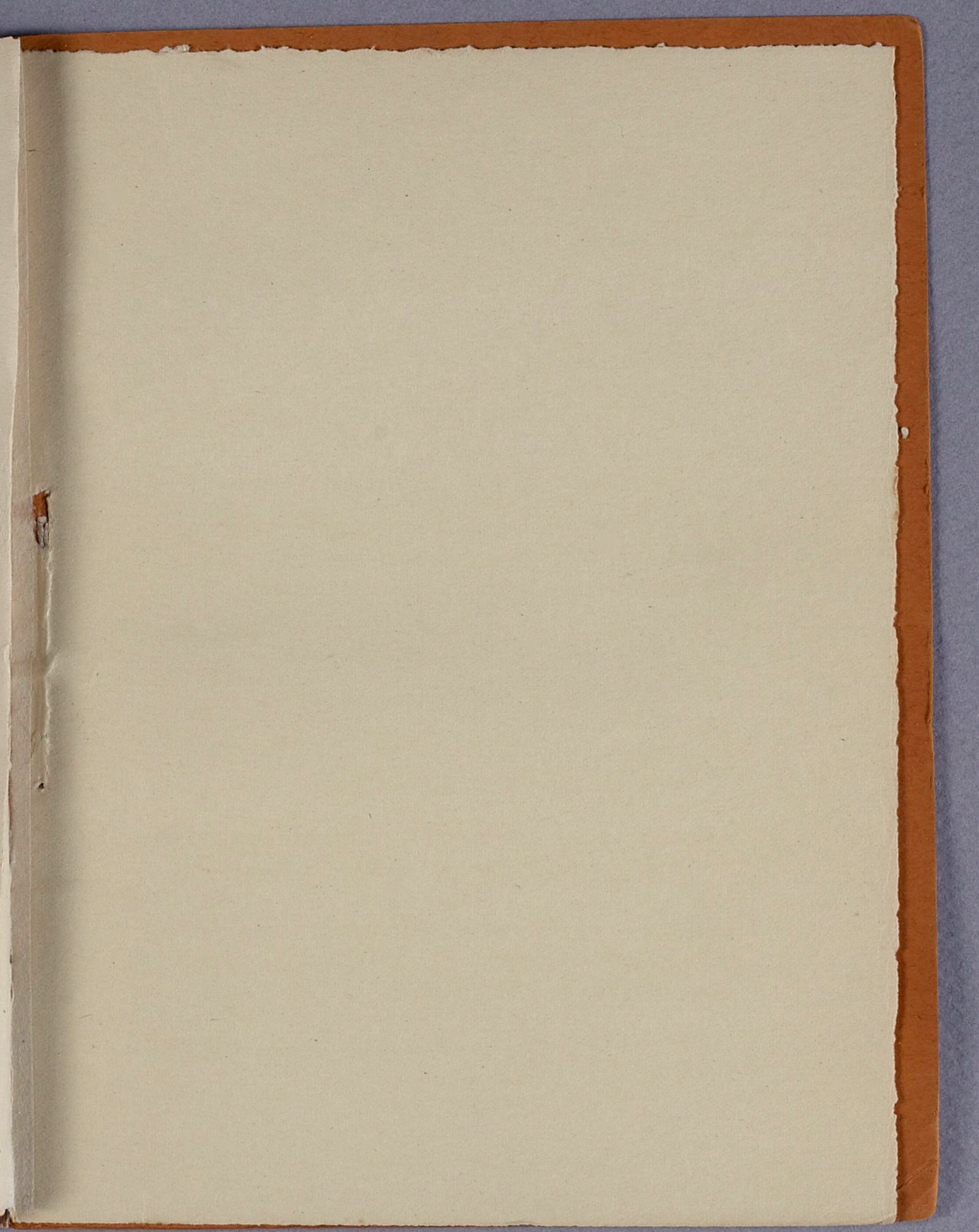
Reasons : Ramon Guthrie

He didn't attempt much and he achieved it very gracefully.—CHARLES R. SWEENEY

Marriage of Strabismus : Emmett Dunn

The description of the Royal Poker Game is amazing. It is Literature.—DAVID N. GROKOWSKY

His lightness of touch will never bring him success as a pick-pocket. He sparkles like a head of cabbage.—CHARLES R. SWEENEY



Other pic

What in h

Fake!—J.

Oranges a
nation for

MOJ

Succot

Has a gre
humor. C
for The Y

He didn't
gracefully

Marr

The desc
amazing.

SKY

His light
success a
head of c



ALL'S WELL

[Charles J. Finger, Fayetteville, Ark.]

OCCUPIES a unique place in periodical literature, and its distinctive character prevents its being placed in any ordinary class. Its editor pleasantly discourses on literature and lust, piracy and poetry, music and morals and other subjects of which he has personal knowledge under the head of Free Fantasia.

\$2.00 the year; 20 cents the sample copy

With each new subscription received before March 31, if 50 cents is added for postage, will be included a copy of Dresbach's *Colours of The West*, published at \$2, and Finger's *Joseph Addison and His Times*.