

In the Realm of Literature, Music, Art and Drama

Turning Over a Page

JUST as the Victorian era marked the turning of a page in English literature, so music is about to turn over a leaf just now, according to Edwin Evans, who writes in "The New Witness": "Every musician knows something of the difficulty of turning the page, for it does not often happen that the printer or the copyist provides him with a convenient opportunity for doing so, and the imp of the perverse usually ordains that the need for it will occur when both mind and hands are fully occupied. The difficulty, however, is not confined to turning a page of music, which is a small matter. It recurs, and is proportionately greater when the time comes to turn over a page of musical history, or in fact any kind of history or any evolutionary process. Even when every one is conscious of having arrived at the bottom of the page, there is a moment of mental flurry. English literature, for instance, turned the page on the Victorian era in the middle nineties, but one need only review the writings of that date to realize how difficult the process was. From the Congress of Vienna to the present peace conference is a completed page of European history. Everybody is aware of it, but the newspapers give everyday instances of quite intelligent people who are not ready for the turn-over. However, these matters concern other sections of this journal. My business is with music.

Moving On

"A well filled page of musical history has reached its end. The fact that it is inscribed with the titles of many masterpieces does not obviate the necessity for turning over, and an encouragingly large section of the musical community has succeeded in performing the feat, some with alertness and dexterity, others with a reluctance which one may respect when it was due to sentiment, but not when it arose from mere indolence. Many have shown that nothing short of a devastating earthquake would wake them up. The war has caused some strange permutations in musical opinion. Such conversations have been really too complete to inspire full confidence, and it is necessary, sometimes, to examine the credentials of those who loudly proclaim the end of the German era in music history. Opportunism is by no means confined to politics, but, as in politics, it does occasionally coincide with a correct estimate of the conditions. It is the opportunist's tendency to overstate his case which commonly gives him away. To turn over the page does not imply either condemnation or oblivion of its contents. It is not necessary to quarrel with the German classics in order to show that their revolution of the musical wheel has run its full course.

"Every time that I have touched upon this subject, one of those readers who can never realize that a sentence of plain English means neither more nor less than it states writes to me to protest against a wholly imaginary suggestion that the German classics should be banned. I would no more think of banning the masterpieces they produced than of banning the "hundred best books" from our libraries. I would be generous. I would give them a much larger share in our music than the average Englishman gives to those books in his reading. A large proportion of the books we read is based upon actualities. Is it too much to ask that a corresponding proportion of the music we hear should have the same relation to the world we live in? "The trouble is that the average musician or music lover keeps his music in a watertight compartment, free from the contamination of the world without. He habitually regards music as a concourse of sweet sounds, apart from the many who inhale it as a drug. Like all great art, music is an interpretation of life as perceived by the artist, and it can no more be stripped of its psychological significance than a page of literature."

My Mirror

THERE is a mirror in my room
Less like a mirror than a tomb,
There are 99 many ghosts that pass
Across the surface of the glass.

When in the morning I arise
With circles round my tired eyes,
Seeking the glass to brush my hair
My mother's mother meets me there.

In the middle of the day
I happen to go by that way,
I see a smile I used to know—
My mother, twenty years ago.

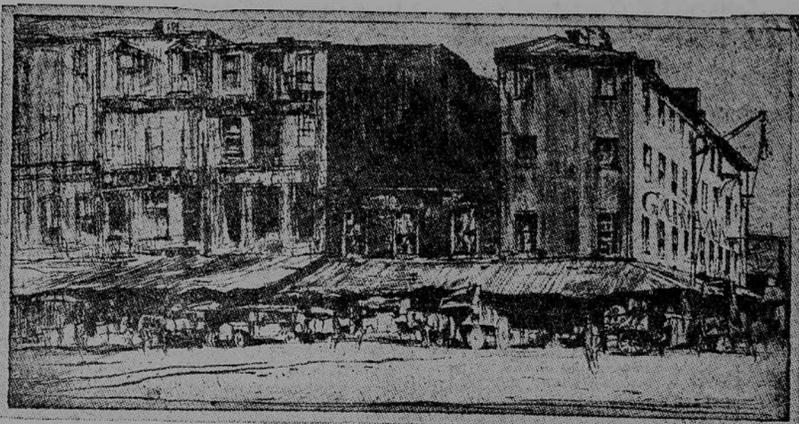
But when I rise by candle-light
To feed my baby in the night
Then whitely in the glass I see
My dead child's face look out at me.
—Aline Kilmer, in *The Bookman*.

Looking Back Into Old Philadelphia

Etchings by Earl Horter from the Century Magazine



The Cathedral-Dome



The Blue Anchor Inn



Colonial Farmhouse Around Which the City Has Grown



The Old Square and Stock Exchange



Rookeries

Poems by Richard Aldington

Disdain

HAVE the gods then left us
in our need
Like base and common
men?

Were even the sweet gray eyes
Of Artemis a lie,
The speech of Hermes but a trick,
The glory of Apollonian hair deceit?

Desolate we move across a desolate
land,
The high gates closed,
No answer to our prayer;
Naught left save our integrity,
No murmur against Fate
Save that we are juster than the unjust gods.

Proem

OUT of this turmoil and passion,
This implacable contest,
This vast sea of effort,
I would gather something of repose,
Some intuition of the inalterable
gods,
Some Attic gesture.

Each day I grow more restless,
See the austere shape elude me,
Gaze impotently upon a thousand
miseries
And still am dumb.

Bombardment

(Near Lens, 1917)

FOUR days the earth was rent
and torn
By bursting steel,
The houses fell about us;
Three nights we did not sleep,
Sweating, and listening for the imminent
crash
Which meant our death.

The fourth night every man,
Nerve-tortured, racked to exhaustion,
Slept, muttering and twitching,
While the shells crashed overhead.

The fifth day there came a lull;
We left our holes.
And looked above the wreckage of
the earth

To where the white clouds moved in
silent lines
Across the untroubled blue.

Doubt

CAN we, by any strength of ours,
Thrust back this hostile world
That tears us from ourselves,
As a child from the womb,
A weak lover from light breasts?

Is there any hope?
Can we believe
That not in wild perversity,
In blinding cruelty,
Has flesh torn flesh,
Has soul been torn from soul?

Possession

I MUST possess you utterly
And utterly must you possess me;
So even if that dreamer's tale
Of heaven and hell be true
There shall be two spirits riveted
together
Either in whatever peace be heaven
Or in the icy whirlwind that is hell
For those who loved each other more
than God—
So that the other spirits shall cry
out:
"Ah! Look how the ancient love yet
holds to them

Must we despair?
Throw back upon the gods this
taunt
That even their loveliest is at best
Some ineffectual lie?

II

Sand in the gale whirled up,
Pricks and stifles our flesh,
Blinds and deafens our sense
So that we cannot hear
The crumbling downfall of the waves
Nor see the limpid sunlight any more.

But could we thrust from us
This threat, this misery,
Borrow the mountain's strength
As now its loneliness,
Hurl back this menace on itself,
Crush bronze with bronze—
Why, it would be as if some tall, slim
god,

Unburdened of his age-long apathy,
Took in his hand the thin horn of the
moon
And set it to his lips
And blew sharp wild shrill notes
Such as our hearts, our lonely hearts,
Have yearned for in the dumb bleak
silences.

III

Ah! Weak as wax against their
bronze are we,
Ah! Faint as reed-pipes by the
water's roar,
And driven as land-birds by the vast
sea wind.

Epigrams

I

YOUR mouth is fragrant as an
orange grove
In April, and your lips are hyacinths,
Dark, dew-wet, folded, petalled hyacinths
Which my tongue pierces like an
amorous bee.

II

Your body is whiter than the moon-
white sea,
More white than foam upon a rocky
shore,
Whiter than that white goddess born
of foam.

Reserve

THOUGH you desire me I will still
feign sleep
And check my eyes from opening to
the day,
For as I lie, thrilled by your gold-
dark flesh,
I think of how the dead, my dead,
once lay.
—From *The Egoist*.

M. Barbusse's New Novel

Clarté: par Henri Barbusse (Paris Flammarion, 4 fr. 75.)

REVIEWER, writing in "The Athenaeum," says: "M. Barbusse recently published in the French paper 'Le Populaire' an open letter to Gabriele d'Annunzio. The letter was a reply to or a counter attack against the Italian writer's imperialist and nationalist propaganda; a plea for internationalism, for humanity as a whole as against sectional interests; a protest against the stupid and unjust traditions that govern the world, a call for revolutionary change. 'Clarté' is an amplification of this letter. It protests, not against d'Annunzio alone, but against the whole system that d'Annunzio so brilliantly represents and idealizes. The book is not so much a novel as a piece of political and social propaganda made concrete in the history of an individual

Is Thomas Hardy One Of Our Maladies?

WRITING in "The New Age," Edward Moore declares that criticism is a branch of pathology and that Hardy would certainly come first in a collection of pathological studies:

"To write of Mr. Hardy with impartiality is still a task of the utmost difficulty: we suffer too much from him, or, if not from him, then from the malady from which he suffered. For Mr. Hardy is one of our maladies. He is, however, a great malady and one of which, in the immemorial fashion of valetudinarians, we might even feel proud. In a collection of pathological studies of modern writers—a volume now overdue—his name would come first. And that is not because he is most 'representative,' because he is the epitome of his age—who, indeed, could even imagine an epitome of this age?—but because his genius is the greatest, and the malady from which he suffers, the most profound of his time. It is obviously not the task of a critic who is interested in his own era and even in the next to 'appraise' writers, to treat writers as static entities in a world of pure being called literature; but rather to find out what influence they will exert, what virtue or what danger his time may anticipate from them. In the present, at any rate, the work of the critic is not to chatter enchantingly about books, or to coax the reader into the paths of culture. On the contrary, criticism is in our time simply a branch of pathology. Its most awkward disability, however, is that in exposing the sores of the age it attracts a crowd which is interested not in the age, but in sores. This, unfortunately, is unavoidable.

"The malady which underlies Mr. Hardy's pessimism and determinism—assuming, of course, that these things are now recognized as symptoms of disease!—is at once subtle and obvious. It is obvious as soon as it is perceived; its subtlety lies in the success with which it conceals itself, so that to find it one has to search persistently. At first the unsoundness in Mr. Hardy's works makes itself known to us as something vaguely lacking; we feel there is an obvious, an incredible defect somewhere, but we cannot tell where it is. The critic who said that the power presiding over Mr. Hardy's world was not Fate at all, but fatality, put his finger almost upon it. This observation has been of the most admirable utility; it has aroused people's suspicions; if Mr. Hardy's Fate is not quite Fate, they have said to themselves, may not his men and women have the same fault? Finally—this is a comedy of criticism—Mr. Hardy's place in literature was actually decided by this casual but profound observation. Before it was uttered, one might have put him in the first order of writers; after, one

simply could not. Even in literary criticism, it appears, the power of a truth is not small!

"Had Mr. Hardy's fatality been something not essential in his art, had it not been the thing most vividly realized in it, this criticism would not, of course, have mattered greatly. But the fact is that his fatality is his greatest creation; it is as much more real than his characters as God is said to be more real than men. So that if God is false! Well, let us test it with the true God of Fate, with the Fate of the Greeks. It has become a fashion to find resemblances between Mr. Hardy's Fate and that of the Greeks; for what reason, outside of fashion, it is hard to say, for there is an almost complete contrast. What was the character of the Greek Fate? Precisely its inevitability, its expression of Law. What is the character of Mr. Hardy's Fate? Precisely its perversity, its expression of Whim deliberately malicious and ironical. If there arises in the Wessex novels a situation which promises equally well for good or for evil, we may be certain that the evil will prevail. Granted that this is determined by an outward force; the fact remains that this force knows nothing of cause and effect, and is simply, indeed, chance with a dash of Schopenhauer. The essential character of Mr. Hardy's Fate is exactly that it is unnecessary; the essential character of the Greek Fate, exactly that it is necessary."

How Cartoons Are Prepared

"IN MAKING a drawing for reproduction, first comes the pencil sketch," says R. W. Satterfield, in "Pep." "Here, young beginner, you must watch your step. Plan out in your mind just how that drawing is to be placed on your cardboard. Then draw lightly until you get your composition. When you feel you are right, strengthen your essential lines and erase the scrawly ones. Don't erase with a hard rubber, as it will roughen up the smooth surface of the cardboard, making a spongy surface that will not take sharp pen lines.

"Now, as they say in the classics, comes the winter of your discontent—putting on the ink. Don't get fussy and don't be afraid to lean on your pen. A good strong pen line, black as night, is what you must aim for to insure reproduction. "To correct a pen line requires the skill of a master. If you must take out lines use a sharp knife, but be careful, boy. If you have a large surface that you have fooled, paste a piece of thin, hard paper over your mistake and try again. Chinese white is sometimes used in making a correction, but it is not always a success in the hands of a beginner. "Start right—few corrections, and none at all of the sort that will endanger reproduction."

Whitman And His "Song"

MANY poets have been musicians, too. Sidney Lanier could never quite decide which was his real profession—poetry or flute playing. Walt Whitman's feeling about music is interestingly set forth in "The New York Globe" by Charles D. Isaacson, who writes:

"There is scarcely a poem of any consequence in 'Leaves of Grass' but has its reference to music, for it seems as though the good gray poet viewed all things and all ideas in a musical way. "He did not write poetry, he sang. He does not say I write a poem. It is 'I sing.' He carols, he sings forth a song, a hymn, a dirge, a symphony, a madrigal. 'With additional songs, every spring will I strike up additional songs. My recitatives, to sing with the birds, a warble for joy.' "Oh, trumpeter, methinks I am myself the instrument thou playest," he declares in metaphor, and introduces a poem. 'First of songs for a prelude, lightly strike the loud tympanum.' At another time he says that he is 'a dance, play up there, the fit is whirling me fast.' He begs you to listen to his morning's 'Romanza.' The orchestra whirls him 'wider than Uranus flies.' 'I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera. Ah, this is indeed music; this suits me.'

He Really Knew

"Few writers have known more of the literature of music and could talk so knowingly of instruments, singers, symphonies and the operas. At times he sounds like a professional musician. He talks of the 'pure contralto,' the 'trained soprano.' The tenor is 'large and fresh, the orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me.' He says 'Sing on there, singer, bashful and tender,' though his plea is to the bird. He knows of the Egyptian harp of many strings; there is for him the tongue of violins, the tremulous organ harps' cantabile, the shrill flageolet, the martial clang of the cymbals, the Hebrew lyre, the tinkling guitars, the clattering castanets. He knows of the music of an aroused people in 'William Tell,' Meyerbeer's 'Huguenots,' 'The Prophet' and 'Robert,' Gounod's 'Faust,' and Mozart's 'Don Juan.' He has heard the vast concourses of verses in Rossini's 'Stabat Mater,' the passionate 'Agnus Dei' and 'Gloria in Excelsis.' He loves the symphonies and oratorios of Beethoven.

"Handel, Haydn—the Creation is billows of godhead laves him. He sees Norma of Bellini stalking across the stage; poor crazed Lucia's eyes have an unnatural gleam. He had known Ernani walking the bridal garden, Amina has sung to him, Fernando's heart is breaking. The history of music is at his finger tips—all the chansons of France, Scotch tunes, German airs, Irish ballads, jigs, and dances. He sings of the religious dances old and new, the Crusaders marching, the dervishes endlessly chanting, the wild Corymbantian dances, the primitive chants of the Nile boatmen, the sacred imperial hymns of China. He speaks of minnesingers, gleemen, troubadours, Welsh harpers. He sees the modern Greeks dancing. He is able to discuss the fretting twang of the vina. He mentions Altoni, the teeming lady, Venus contralto.

"But he is a greater music lover; for he hears his music not only in the concert hall and at the opera, but out of doors and everywhere. What greater work is there in all literature than 'Proud music of the storm'? Here he apostrophizes the chords of nature, serenades of phantoms, bravuras of birds, the musical rain, undertone of rivers, measured sea surf, twittering flock, crowing cock at dawn. There are minstrels latent on the prairie. Shrouded bards of other lands may sleep, they have done their work. Science, ships, politics, cities, factories, are like a grand procession with music of distant bugles pouring, triumphantly moving. The violoncello, the young man's heart complaint. There is the musical clear call of surprise and sunset.

"Music is always around him; he is moved not only by the music, but by its exquisite meanings. A transparent bass is shuddering lusciously through and under the universe. A soprano at daybreak sails buoyantly over the waves. There is a singer in the asylum, there is music for all and everywhere.

"Have you read that lovely song 'The Mystic Trumpeter,' who recalls all the world's history and prophesies all the coming greatness? "And among musical prophets who is greater than Whitman? In his story of the American to be he makes special provision in every city for a music house. It was the Whitman at Camden who foreshadowed all that burst of communal singing which is spreading across the continent when he said with prophetic vision, 'I see America singing.' "There are the singing of mechanics, carpenters singing as they measure the plank, the masons singing at work, the boatman, the shoemaker, the hatter, the woodcutter, the ploughboy, the mother, the young wife, the seamstress—all America singing with open mouth their strong melodious songs."