

The Protestant Garrison in America

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THE educated American of the old stock does not like to use racial and religious terms in discussing politics. He does not wish to be rated as a Klansman, sullen and bigoted. But his fear that it is impolite to mention Jews and Catholics as such in political comment has been recently alleviated, although in a somewhat disturbing way. For he now realizes that he must label as Protestant or as English or North-European many ideas of his own which in the past he had hoped were truly universal, not of narrowly racial or religious origin.

At this point the Early American, if he may call himself such, perceives that he is a member of a sort of Protestant Garrison in America, made up on the whole of the descendants of those who came here first, and who are making an effort to rule and mold a Republic which they have fallen into the habit of considering as peculiarly their own. He does not like this. It makes him seem part of a blind and selfish biological process rather than the exponent of universally beneficent ideals. His belief in those ideals has until very lately been earnest and naïve. He had been touched deeply by what James Truslow Adams calls "the American dream". He had hoped that America forever would be a refuge for oppressed minorities, that the Goddess of Liberty would continue to ask no questions, but would enlighten the

world always with an ideal above race and independent of religion, free from all those rooted hates and age-long obdurances which he finds so unlovely in the Old World. And to the Early American the doctrine of separation of church and state has been very dear: it is especially annoying to confess that the American Republic is, in a way, but one denomination of a specific religious sect.

Whether he likes it or not, however, and with whatever finicky qualifications he as an individual may euphemize, the American of the old stock finds that his group as a whole has already begun to act with considerable solidarity and determination. In 1924 we restricted immigration of Jews and Catholics, giving preference to folk of North-European and Protestant background. In 1928 the Old World, watching from the sidelines, decided that we would not seriously consider giving the Presidency to a Catholic. In 1932 we scouted the Fascist doctrine of a corporate coercive state, a doctrine ultimately Catholic in philosophy and origin; we ignored the Jewish dogma of economic monism now prevalent in Russia. Instead, we resumed that path of pragmatic liberalism stemming from Protestant tradition which we had been treading with Woodrow Wilson when interrupted by war.

The Early American who prides himself on being not only a good citizen but a loyal member of the brotherhood of man finds himself, then, in a predicament. He had thought he was a mind and a soul, and he wakes up to discover that he is a microbe, one of a colony of a certain species bent on pushing back those of other kinds. Is there any escape for him?

By what path can he find his way back to a course along which he can proceed in the faith that he is breathing an air liberating, universal, and inspiring?

II

Most Americans, confronted with this dilemma, either dogmatize or recant. That is, despite the special racial and religious origins of Americanism, they proclaim it absolutely and eternally valid; or they abjure their traditions and declare all peculiarly American lore and practice to be archaic, immoral—a disease to be eradicated. Such recantation usually is clothed in communistic terminology, just as the dogmatism tends toward the fascistic.

Dogmatic “Americanism” and fervid recantation are not, however, the only possible solutions of the problem. There is another way out, which one might tentatively call that of Protestant Liberal Pragmatism: one may admit that he is of the Protestant Garrison, that the roots of his habits of thought and practice are in the Reformation; that he must function underlyingly as a mobile and independent Liberal, no matter how many years he may chance to vote one ticket or co-operate with one party; and that in his general mode of approach to all problems he must be tentative, experimental, pluralistic, rather than an absolutist or monist of any sort.

As part of this hacking out of a formula for self-redemption, then, one might resolve not to leave all racial and religious honesty to the Klan. There might be nailed down as an essential element of one’s political credo the thought that came to so many Americans during the discussion of the 1924 immigration

law, but which some of us refused to accept until long afterwards. This idea was well expressed by John R. Commons:

We find that our democratic theories and forms of government were fashioned by but one of the many races and peoples which have come within their practical operation. . . . It is the distinctive fact regarding colonial migration that it was Teutonic in blood and Protestant in religion. . . . The Protestant Reformation prepared the hearts of men for the doctrines of political liberty and constitutional government. . . . When once established in England and America we find that other races and peoples, accustomed to despotism and even savagery, and wholly unused to self-government, have been thrust into the delicate fabric.

It is true that our own Protestant forbears in the British Isles supplied some of that "despotism and even savagery". Commons points out that some of the dominant American traits were transmitted to us by immigrants from the original Protestant Garrison which oppressed Catholic Ireland: the advance guard of pioneers in that settling of the West which did so much to mold our tradition was recruited to a great extent from the so-called Scotch-Irish, Protestants planted by James I in Ireland to exploit the natives. And certainly the Jews in Europe have long been subjected to despotism and savagery by men of our stock and tradition as well as by Catholics.

Nevertheless, after all due allowance has been made for the past, the Early Americans can truthfully call themselves Liberals or even Radicals and yet claim they still have something especially cogent to say about this Republic. Part of what they have to say

may consist in more frankly calling Jews, Catholics, and Protestants by name. The Klan and the Nazis are not to be headed off by obscurantism. Dogmatic "Americanism", never confessing its racial-religious roots, will not suffice either. Nor will very much be achieved by those hysterical recanters of Protestantism already referred to above, who join the more belated immigrant stocks in denouncing the old America as "Puritan" and in crying out that only Fascism or Communism can save the new America. Surely it is not necessary to evade, nor to dogmatize, nor to recant: we might try encouraging the development of the best traits of all the groups under principles established by the founding group. Those principles remain: democracy, individualism, and federalization of all major tendencies in the commonwealth rather than surrender to them or suppression. Those principles are not sacred, universal, eternal, but had their origin finitely in the Protestant Reformation. The basis of any claim for their rightness in America is not absolute, but pragmatic and relative: folk of Protestant tradition got here first, built the Republic, exemplify its policies, and still outnumber those of other faiths. Liberty and order are best served by reasonable adherence to the general lines of the system as settled by those first comers.

We have already learned much from Jewish and Catholic criticism. Perhaps we shall learn more if we admit the racial and religious origins of our ideas, yet firmly advocate them. We have a tradition that is worth teaching. The Jews, and especially the Russian Jews, have had a training too exclusively economic to enable them to appreciate fully our more nor-

mally comprehensive system. The Catholics, and especially the Irish Catholics, have on the other hand experienced a schooling too straitly political to qualify them for that fruitful linkage of political and economic considerations which we call democracy.

In short, it is at least possible that folk of the Protestant Garrison should pluck up the courage to say, in as good-humoured and politic a manner as possible, but firmly: "Jews understand economics. Catholics understand politics. *We* understand both!"

III

The Civil War prevented conflict in this country between Protestants and Irish Catholics from coming to a head, for in that war the Protestants were so busy fighting among themselves as to what newer immigrants, voluntary or enforced, were to be exploited, and in what manner, that they were diverted from the rancours of the incipient feud with the Irish Catholics. Afterwards, the Protestant South had to form its famous alliance with Catholic Tammany. In the Far West, where early there had been hostility to Catholics, difficulties with Chinese and Japanese immigrants soon developed, and the Irish took the lead as spokesmen for the white stock in general. The Smith-McAdoo feud, however, and the South's refusal to vote solidly for a Catholic even when he bore the sacred name of Democrat, reminded us all that the old feeling smouldered, had not been extinguished. The 1924 immigration law, adopted by statesmen who could not too frankly express religious preferences, gave the Irish a large quota on the basis of the 1890 census, although it cut down severely the other

Catholics. Numbers of Irish Catholics have thus continued to come to America. This has strengthened the Catholics, and increased the Protestants' uneasiness. The Irish Free State's drift away from England has also doubtless added to our Protestant Garrison's prejudice against the Irish. All this means that sentimentality about Ireland is not so strong with us as it has been.

For centuries in their homeland the Catholic Irish have, as E. A. Ross puts it, "been engrossed with an old-fashioned problem—that of freeing their country. Meanwhile, the luckier peoples have swept on to ripen their thinking about class relations, industrial organization, and social institutions." The Irish come here, see the hated Anglo-Scotch tribe intrenched in Wall Street, in the South, in the West; they build a machine to resist this dominant group. Solidarity of the Catholic Church makes for the firmness of Tammany's structure. Catholics of other races in America turn for leadership to the Irish. All Catholic races have for centuries watched power shift from their sea in the south of Europe to that northern ocean where Protestantism developed and flourishes: naturally, all the Catholics in America hold together against Protestant exploiters disguised, but disguised very poorly, the Catholics feel, as "Americans".

Americans of the original Protestant stock, facing voters who cast ballots according to race and religion, become, as said above, sceptical about democracy. This is partly because unconsciously they are seeking some more effective method of coercing Catholic immigrant blocs; and partly they echo directly the natural cynicism of Catholic politicians concerning American

political ideals. Other elements coalesce with this movement. Of late years, for example, the standardized assaults upon democracy and "Puritanism" have emanated from a Baltimore clique. In Baltimore there is a strong Catholic tradition. There is also a powerful Southern element, of course, and ever since the Civil War the overthrown gentry of the South and their apes have extolled the alleged political superiority of aristocracy to democracy: lately they have learned to substitute the words "moron" or "yokel" for the original terms, "poor white trash" or "hill billy". Also, since Baltimore is an old city of the industrial-financial part of the United States, it has many well-to-do folk who fear radicalism will take hold of the masses. Such persons encourage criticism of democracy and of the "Puritan", that bugaboo of the Catholic or of the renegade Protestant who has a sentimental misconception of the Catholic attitude toward morals.

Political cynicism is not so demoralizing for the Catholics themselves as it is for these renegade Protestants, who of course in denouncing the "Puritan" are fouling the nest of their own origins. Catholic thought in general is marked by a deep-seated dualism which inevitably and almost wholesomely, one might say, emerges as cynicism when the Catholic is in an alien, Protestant environment. The Catholic mind sets up the eternal and the temporal, the absolute and the relative, in violent contrast: in the eternal realm all moves with absolute perfection, and that movement is channeled by the infallible Church; in the temporal realm, when one finds how hard it is to apply eternal dogmas, one does the best one can. In a Catholic coun-

try, all the citizens face the same difficulty and achieve mutual easements and strengthenings. But in an alien, Protestant country, the Catholic minority finds especially troublesome this severe contrast of eternal and temporal, and accordingly practical adjustments to political and commercial life are made with a natural cynicism. The very title of one of Mr. Santayana's best known books, *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, embodies this opposition of the excessively attenuate and the mortally crass. If in this suave American philosopher of Spanish Catholic origin is to be discovered urbane sanction of the body's blind searching for its own, in the Irish Catholic politician the cynicism is of course much more crude. And it is still more so in the fulminations of the undergraduate protestant against his native Protestantism and democracy.

This growth of cynicism concerning American and "Puritan" ideas, culminating in a suspicion directed at the entire democratic process, increases the hankering after Fascism. Its ideal is, of course, a corporate state built on the model of the Church of Rome—a glorified Tammany headed by a very exalted sachem indeed. Fascism demands from the citizens an exclusive and archaic type of loyalty, instead of that pluralistic and equable or elastic devotion characteristic of Protestant peoples. Fascism would fixate, in the style of Catholicism, the hierarchy of those socially and economically established. Officially, the Catholic Church cannot sanction the doctrine, because Fascism is Catholicism minus God; fundamentally Catholic in attitude, it yet heretically sets up as its object of worship the nationalist state. And Rome has not forgotten that it was in that rebellion against Catholicism which

we call the Reformation that the modern national state was set up.

The success of the modern state in Protestant regions makes ambitious individuals in Catholic countries endeavour to transfer to the state the Catholic obsession for the idea of the eternal, the absolute. The original Catholic social hierarchy was, of course, military-agrarian, or, as we usually say, feudal. But as the result of the forces freed by the Reformation, the national state grew upon the basis of a new group, the middle class, traders and industrialists. This typically Protestant class is now alarmed by the furor raised by the international Jew and his Communism, and also by its own class tendency to dig, as Marx put it, the grave of capitalism: the consequence is that the uneasy Protestant middle class is now somewhat inclined to pay heed to the essentially Catholic doctrine of Fascism. This drift is, paradoxically, as indicated above, accelerated by dread of the very group, the Irish Catholic one, which has indigenous Fascist tendencies. For wherever the Catholic Tammany system prevails, one man is Boss of the entire political structure. This sets the Protestant to scheming for a one-man Boss system of his own.

IV

The Jew has for centuries been denied opportunity to function politically within a nation of his own building. He has had to specialize in economics. Now he is proud of the limitation. He smiles at the Protestant's naïve interest in politics.

Waldo Frank says characteristically in *Our America*: "Of the very few quick minds in America today,

the great majority are politically turned . . . a nation of voters. . . . The one door which the Puritan culture did not shut was that of governmental thought. It is a door which most Americans who think at all are wont to take." Our Protestant Garrison, in short, makes money not by direct attention to economics as does the Jew, nor by direct political manipulation as does the Catholic Irishman: but by the indirect and pervasive influence of Protestant political concepts upon economic affairs. The Protestant sets up instinctively that framework of maxim and abstraction which automatically provides him with the best economic opportunity; and he usually, as we all know, speaks of the profitable transaction in self-approving moral terms. This causes the Catholic Irish to call us hypocrites; it makes the Jew feel that we are stupid. The Irishman notes how fatedly our "morality" works in the direction of larger profits for the Protestant Garrison. The Jew considers our much advertised individualism, our characteristic federation of large, loose, freely moving personalities, as much less efficient than the swarming, close-knit union of family and tribe to which the Jews have been habituated by centuries of dwelling, in alien lands, within the tight little ghetto. Consequently Waldo Frank says: "Everywhere it is clear that America is still in the chaotic stage of individual effort: the individualism of the unintegrated herd as contradistinguished from that of the social unit."

Where the Catholic is an incurable dualist, the Jew is a faithful monist. He has suffered persecution for centuries because of his monistic conception of the Deity. He cannot see why the Christian insists upon

having two Persons in the Deity, with a third impalpable Principle to bind them together. Where the great modern American philosopher of Catholic background sets up scepticism and animal faith as dual principles, Morris Cohen makes the title of his book *Reason and Nature* and monistically binds the two together with his principle of polarity in an admirably tight construct even as that other brilliant Jewish philosopher, Spinoza, long ago astonished the Christians with his single-minded pantheism. Mr. Cohen admires the system of Mr. Santayana, even as the latter lauds that of Spinoza: Jewish monism and Catholic dualism draw together, as elder brothers, in scorn of Protestant pluralism, that upstart in the philosophic world. And of course Mr. Cohen unconsciously gives Mr. Santayana's dualism a monistic bent as he absorbs it into his own powerful thought.

What Mr. Cohen cannot abide, however, is the pluralistic pragmatism of William James. For the Protestants, William James and John Dewey, display in philosophy that same tendency to individualize and federalize rather than dualize or monize which Catholics and Jews find so extraordinary in our Protestant American political system. Note the characteristic title of Mr. Dewey's book, *Experience and Nature*. Here is no Catholic caught in the dilemma of dualism, and finally striving to extricate himself by tongue-in-cheek laudation of both horns of the eternal-temporal dilemma, calling the one scepticism and the other animal faith; here is no integrated monistic Jewish mind, polarizing reason and nature, confident that both are but phases of the one powerful and ancient throb of reality: no, in Dewey's title we find

emphasized the Protestant's faith in his ability to fumble his way along, from experience to experience, into a workable compromise with that urgent and mysterious nature he feels all about him and within him. This same struggle between the three different attitudes is to be observed in the conduct of Catholic, Jew, and Protestant on our Supreme Bench. The Catholic justices are prone to build up an intricate scholastic structure of ostensibly eternal jurisprudential truth, and then use it to rationalize whatever temporal expedients are seemingly necessary. Mr. Justice Holmes the Protestant Liberal has dwelt in his decisions upon large ethical-political abstractions congenial to the temperament of the founders of the Republic. Mr. Justice Brandeis the Jewish Liberal on the other hand marshals economic facts and details with an amazing ability which Protestants and Catholics alike despair of equaling.

This Jewish monistic emphasis upon economics emerges, in certain classes and under certain conditions, in the communist "cell" as the unit of civic activity just as the Irish Catholic dualism results in the twin activities of church and state, this latter being in America, of course, Tammany. For if the Irishman is the natural leader of those who think in terms of a highly organized racial-religious group which sees an opportunity to transform its folkways into political power, so is the Jew the organizer of the poor and homeless and propertyless who think in terms of economics. And of course it is the Russian Jew among Jews as it is the Irishman among Catholics who has good reason for becoming a leader of the disinherited. The German Jew, who came earlier,

united with German and Scandinavian immigrants and with some of the older Protestant elements to form the Socialist Party. This has now become, despite its nominal Marxist basis, a refuge for the Protestant Liberal, such as Norman Thomas, who holds to the traditional democracy and yet objects to both the stupid toryism of all too many members of his own racial-religious group and the sophomoric radicalism of those who occupy themselves with mere "Puritan"-baiting.

It is a commonplace that the theoretical structure of Communism as of the earlier Socialism was evolved by a Jew. Marx had studied the Hegelian dialectic in Germany and the industrial revolution in England. Hegel's dialectic may perhaps be thought of as a description, in terms of logic, of the characteristic Teutonic-Protestant instinct for progress or evolution, or blind enthusiastic growth, or barbarism, as Mr. Santayana might prefer to call it. Hegelianism in its political implications laid a sanction upon the Protestant national state and especially upon the one built up by the Hohenzollerns. Marx twisted this sanction to establish the monistic sacredness of the process of historical materialism which he with infallible Semitic eye perceived under the welter of feudal, agrarian, metaphysical, and religious tendencies manifested in the industrial revolution in England. Many things were happening, but one thing he saw clearly. This enormously simplified religion of materialism, with its implicit slogan of Nothing Matters but Matter and Marx Is Its Prophet, has as we all know had a great career in the modern world. Communists in America, armed with this philosophy, have almost completely

coerced the Protestant Liberals intellectually. If the Liberal advances with pragmatic hesitancy some theory of what is happening or should happen in the Republic, he is laughed off the scene by those who have adopted the implacable monistic dialectic of Marxism, with its rhetorical emphasis upon only one element of the vital process. Any poor idea the Protestant Liberal may have is dismissed at once as "bourgeois ideology", as surely as in other quarters any emphasis he may strive to lay upon the rights of America is offset by prolonged keening over the wrongs of Ireland.

It ought to be added that the Jew should not be held responsible for any tendency toward nationalism, militarism, or crass imperialism which nominally socialist or communist groups manifest when in power. The Protestant Teutonic majority in Germany modified the original Marxism, making it nationalist, capable of backing the Kaiser in his military adventure. In Russia, after Jewish revolutionary energy and economic monism had done so much to establish power for the Communists, Trotsky the Jew, still dreaming of emphasis upon purely economic international aspects of Communism, was ejected by Stalin the man of Orthodox Catholic background, who naturally dwells upon the authoritarian nature of the state, just as that other man of Catholic background, Hitler, does in Germany, or Mussolini in Italy, or as did Porfirio Diaz in Mexico. It is especially interesting to see Hitler strive to compel German Protestants to emulate the structure of his own mediaeval church's organization, at the same time that he stirs up the mediaeval sport of Jew-baiting.

V

The foregoing sections have tried to remind the reader of the limitations of Jew, Catholic, and Protestant as molders and rulers of America. The Protestant, it has been indicated, has on the whole been too fortunate to be trusted completely by Catholics and Jews. He has been successful pioneer, conqueror, and exploiter now for a long time: the problem is how to utilize the vortices of his energy without being swept by them into disaster or without being congealed with them into pathetic stony mementoes of dynamism long perished such as we see in encrustations of lava no longer molten and alive. The Catholic, on the other hand, has for centuries functioned as a conserver, a resister, an obduracy: we must somehow learn to appreciate and use this vital bony structure without ossifying likewise all other organs of the body politic and cultural. The Jew has over too prolonged a period been compelled to function without any bony structure at all, with no enduring mountains and valleys of a territorial nation to shape and steady his neurotic intelligence: we must set ourselves to the task of digesting more capably the countless darts and thrusts of his eager mind upon the vast hulk of our slowly expanding consciousness.

When it is said that "we" should do these things, to whom is the reference made? To the Protestant Garrison! It is to be insisted that while we have certain defects, and although we lack the social solidarity of Catholics and the economic intelligence of Jews, we can better serve the interests of all concerned by appreciating, civilizing, and practising our own vir-

tues, instead of hardening into dogmatists or vainly striving to recant our essential qualities. We are pioneers, settlers, holders, rulers. We have a ready eye for the rough contour of a landscape, whether it be needed for a clearing, a farm, a battle, a government, or a poem. Let us use that eye more honestly, more thoroughly, more intelligently, but never blind it with dogmatism nor strive hysterically to pluck it out and cast it away. We have established America, and have invited or dragged folk of other races and religions here. Let us see if we can deserve to continue to rule this thing we have created.

It may be objected that this entire line of argument sounds perilously like the effort made by British intellectuals to rationalize that Empire won by antecedent force and greed; finding themselves on top of the heap because of their ancestors' brutality, they now endeavour to prove that they can be of service to those whom their forbears enslaved. The only way to meet this objection is to admit its truth: the Protestant Garrison occupies the same position amidst folk of other races and faiths in America that the Protestant Scotch and English hold in the British Empire. Nor is this merely a coincidence: we are the same people. Insisting upon the separate identities of the British and American Empires is a little like exaggerating the very real difference between London and Manchester. George Washington and George the Third did not quarrel about whether there should be an Empire; they discussed the details of its administration. Lord Cornwallis after his defeat at Yorktown dined with Washington and then proceeded to the Orient, where he helped to oust the French and subdue the East In-

dians, while Washington and his successors saw to it that the French and other European governments were held back while we were subduing the Indians of the West.

But after all this has been granted, what is to be done? Shall we wax hysterical and strive to abdicate from what we cannot hope to annul—our past? Would this not be to make the obvious blunder of assuming that because our own past is full of brutality, the past of other races is full of only sweetness and light? Or, if it be suggested that it is not the past but the future that is important, must we at once assume that only races other than our own can have anything worth while to say about the future? Why should the American of Protestant background, the moment he has sloughed off some of the more gross superstitions of his tribe, take up the additional superstition that while he may learn from Stalin or Mussolini, he cannot reasonably expect to be taught anything whatever by Ramsay MacDonald, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, or Norman Thomas?

Any honest Liberal will find as he strives to think out his position in these matters that he is afraid of being mistaken for a kind of Klansman. Perhaps this difficulty must be met as was the preceding one about the British Empire—by honestly admitting there is a rough truth to the essentials of the Klan position. These simple folk with their fiery cross are perhaps trying to remind the intellectuals that in the midst of our subtleties we must not forget certain simplicities. And often we do forget them. On the whole, our business as intellectuals is to be effective dreamers, that is, to forget reality in order that reality, later on,

having been fed in the meantime by our brooding forgetfulness, may become somewhat different from what it now is.

Yet never is the useful intellectual wholly dis severed from his tribe. Again and again he must reject and oppose that tribe's superstitions; yet often, too, he must accept and transform them. Possibly it is as much his duty to receive dumb hints, inarticulate "hunches", from the much abused American yokels or hinds or even Rotarians, or from the purple-faced colonels of the high tory tradition in England, as it is the duty of Stalin to receive them from his peasantry and his Peter the Great, or Mussolini from his vine-dressers and condottieri. The intellectual must not, he can not, leave these suggestions or superstitions in their original form, but he can perhaps achieve more genuine intellectualism than he otherwise could, if he admits that after all his principal task is to elevate, expand, and civilize those crude raw materials turned up by the so-called mass mind which is just now under such a cloud. In short, he finds himself in America part of a tree of life, a growth from the darkness of the past into the obscurity of the future. And he may possibly feel that he has a right to remember that he and folk of his basic tradition constitute the root-stock and the trunk of this tree.

We return at the end, then, to a biological image—not of warring microbes, but of growth, cross-fertilization or engrafting. It is better to have a thing as solid and earthy as this, maybe, than the old gusty, rootless dream. Jew and Catholic and Protestant are growing into America now, and much that is traditional is become merely provincial. But as the old

State lines and rights fade, those Protestant principles of federalism and democracy which they represented will manifest themselves in the tracing of boundaries between the types of co-operation and influence which the great constituent races and religions can contribute to America. Nor will those boundaries be barriers: they will be acceptance of actuality's outlines, that civilization may increase.

A Letter to a God-Daughter

MY DEAREST PHILIPPA,

You cannot believe how delighted I was to get your letter asking for counsel and advice about your reading. I had begun to believe that there was very little that a sponsor in baptism could do these days, once the engraved silver mug was presented, and the Add-a-Pearl necklace fairly on its way. It used to be great fun to send you books when you were a little thing; and I still have, carefully preserved, the misspelled notes of passionate gratitude I had from you, written when you had come out of your trance of joy after reading George MacDonald's *A Double Story*, and Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy*.

I wish it were as simple to choose books for you now. It's not at all unlikely, it seems to me, that you may not turn back to me for help on this subject once you have read my letter. For one thing, I suspect that your teacher, Miss Greer, and I do not see eye to eye on modern literature. I might as well confess early as late that I shivered with apprehension at the line where you reported her as having said that if she had her way she'd make a bonfire of all the "required-reading" books, and replace them with "good modern novels that would really teach the girls what life was like". It seems so very probable to me that she and I would not agree on which modern novels were good, in the first place, not to speak of what life is like. And when you quoted her as considering Sinclair Lewis a master of satire I was confirmed in my doubts.

It is very nice of you to say you wish I knew Miss