

always interested in accounts of other countries, and especially of the cultural developments, if any, which are taking place in them; and we are also particularly interested in the sciences which impinge on art, in psychology, biology, anthropology, philosophy or physics, and are still open to articles on political and educational subjects if there is something original about them. HORIZON is more impressed by the quality of an author's mind than the correctness of his opinions, and it does not take sides in controversies except in those in which the liberty, security, and status of artists and intellectuals are threatened.

LOUIS MACNIECE
THE LIBERTINE

In the old days with married women's stockings
Twisted round his bedpost he felt himself a gay
Dog but now his liver has begun to groan,
Now that pick-ups are the order of the day:
O leave me easy, leave me alone.

Voluptuary in his teens and cynic in his twenties
He ran through women like a child through growing hay
Looking for a lost toy whose capture might atone
For his own guilt and the cosmic disarray:
O leave me easy, leave me alone.

He never found the toy and has forgotten the faces,
Only remembers the props . . . a scent-spray
Beside the bed or a milk-white telephone
Or through the triple ninon the acrid trickle of day:
O leave me easy, leave me alone.

Long fingers over the gunwale, hair in a hair-net,
Furs in January, cartwheel hats in May,
And after the event the wish to be alone—
Angels, goddesses, bitches, all have edged away:
O leave me easy, leave me alone.

So now, in middle age, his erotic programme
Torn in two, if after such a delay
An accident should offer him his own
Fulfilment in a woman, still he would say
O leave me easy, leave me alone.

PETER USTINOV

CRISIS IN THE THEATRE

THERE are four groups of people who contribute towards the success or the failure of the theatre as an art. The first, and most important group, is that of the workers on the stage side of the curtain: the actors, the authors, the designers, the directors, the technicians. Next in importance comes the group who laugh, cry, or sleep on the other side of the curtain. The third: the men with the money; and last, and by all means least, the critics.

The cause of the present crisis in the theatre is not far to seek. It is, quite simply and quite depressingly, that not one of these groups is pulling its weight. This sounds a very sweeping statement, but it is, I think, true. The blame must be shared by everyone interested in the theatre. Mr. Michael Redgrave blames the critics. He is flattering them. At their worst they can be responsible for only their own meagre share in the general disgrace.

Let us deal first of all with the people who earn their living on the stage, the actors and the authors, and see what is wrong in their department. Are our actors good? On the whole, yes. And are our dramatists good? On the whole, no. Here lies part of the tragedy. The acting of a period is governed largely by the drama of that period, and our dramatists have unfortunately fallen into certain set patterns copied from the leaders of each respective genre. The average dialogue of a modern play compels the poor actor to run the same old gammut of conventional situations and platitudinous lines *ad nauseam*. Mr. Coward has been one example for young dramatists to follow, Miss Dodie Smith another. Too few of them have been daring. Influences, especially in youth, are pardonable, even essential, but they should never be used coldly and consciously. Conscious copying of the masters, especially in cases where the cause of that master's greatness or popularity is not fully understood, leads to almost the entire output of rejected plays. If an aspiring dramatist wishes to be successful, the last thing he should do is to sit down at his desk with the intention of writing a successful play. How often have we come across the stock lines in the stock situation!

X. You mean that he . . . that you . . . that I . . .