

A PAGE OF VERSE

A HILLSIDE HOUSE

BY JOHN CLARE

(Hitherto Unpublished)
[*Madrigals and Chronicles*]

THERE is a house stands in a lonely way,
The hill seems falling on it all the day;
It seems half-hidden, like a robber's den,
And seems more safe for robbers than for men.
The trees, look! — bushes — scarcely half as big —
Seem taking root and growing on the rig.
The cows, that travel up with little heed,
Seem looking down upon the roof to feed,
And if they take a step or stumble more,
They seem in danger then of tumbling o'er.
The cocks and hens that fill a little space
Are all that look like home about the place.
The woods seem ready on the house to drop,
And rabbits breed above the chimney top.

RELEASE

BY JOHN CLARE

(Hitherto Unpublished)
[*Spectator*]

THE sheds are cleaned and littered down before
The drapsing cow comes from the weary moor;
Upon the hovel-beams the fowl perch high;
Around the cribs the straw-fed oxen lye.
The gears are hung behind the stable thack;
The teams at rest are pulling at the rack.
The hedger in the ditch has hid his tool
Under a stumpy thorn — and from the school
Boys homeward wend and leap and splash in play
Through all the little pudges on the way.

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

NECKTIES AND OTHER THINGS

THE folly of feminine fashions and fripperies having grown threadbare — though happily the fripperies themselves have not — as a theme for moralists who envy Jeremiah's laurels, a German journalist, Herr Egon Jacobsohn, arises in the columns of the *Prager Tagblatt* to cast a critical eye upon the vestments of his brother men in the Czechoslovak capital.

It will be interesting to see how much good his satiric blasts will do. Herr Jacobsohn will receive a small check from the editor — which is always agreeable and an end to be desired. But will the gentlemen whose hats, handkerchiefs, neckties, rings, sticks, and rubber soles he criticizes be stirred to reformation of those objectionable habiliments? Not likely!



Criticizing people's clothes is as innocent a pastime as ever was invented. There are limits, to be sure.

It won't do to hint that Jones's new hat has an inexpensive look or that his new cravat suggests the bargain counter; but outside such forbidden zones of criticism you may go as you please. What other critic can do as much?

Print in the dramatic column the unquestionable fact that Mr. Blenkinsop's new comedy would disgrace the office boy, and next time you will be turned from the theatre's door. Announce that Mr. Agamemnon Herkimer's novel suffers from congestion of the plot, and you will hear from the publisher about it. Point out the crying need for surgery in the octave of Miss Aminta Plumbleton's latest sonnet, and her fiancé will cut you dead at her mother's tea-party. Voice an adverse criticism of Signor de Wronski's interpretation of his Concerto in Q minor, and that master will tear out lavish handfuls of his flowing locks — to the great benefit of the mattress-stuffing industry.

But assure Signor de Wronski that the flowing locks are unbecoming, and he will laugh your bourgeois inferiority to scorn. Hint to Miss Aminta Plumbleton that her new gown is a little too-too, and that charming young lady will straightway wheedle a new check out of her dear papa to buy a still newer gown that is — whatever the superlative of too-too may be. (It is obviously a question for the grammarians.)

Similarly Mr. Agamemnon Herkimer will receive your critique on his new pink-and-lavender hose with smiling equanimity; and will subsequently confide to his wife that you are a well-meaning fellow but lacking in *je ne*