

printing, considering that it was done in Italy, is not bad, though there are some irritating errors (notably on page 28 where there is lamentable evidence of the proof-reader's neglect). The illustrations are, as I have said, generous in number and admirable in execution.

## The True Hazlitt

NEW WRITINGS. By WILLIAM HAZLITT. Collected by P. P. HOWE. Lincoln MacVeagh: The Dial Press. 1925. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BEN C. CLOUGH.

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WHAT are these essays? Nineteen of them have never before been assigned to Hazlitt, and others have been regarded as questionable. Yet of these the greater part carry their passport in their own style. And what a style! It would be a graceful *tour de force* to write of Hazlitt without using the word "gusto," but why be so artificial? "Gusto," then, is here; "gusto" and allusiveness. In the very first essay, before Hazlitt has written ten lines, we find quotations from Lear and from Henry IV. (Has any editor applied himself more successfully than Mr. Howe to the tracing of Hazlitt's innumerable quotations?) And then there are personalities, with that acid tang which used so to exasperate Coleridge and Lockhart—among others. "Landor has done, with respect to the ancients, pretty nearly what Mr. Lamb has done with so much success with respect to our elder writers—dressed up original thoughts in borrowed phrase, to draw attention and give an appearance of greater novelty." "Mr. Haydon wonders he is not elected a member of the Royal Academy. . . as if they chose people merely for their talents as artists." "Mr. Jeffrey has a prejudice against authors, as a justice of the peace has against poachers." "In his bloom [Southey] stood on his own ground and ventured from the crowd . . . he crosses the desert of age under the protection of the caravan and in a company of pilgrims." As we read this last characterization we may recall that Wilson had said a year earlier (1828) of Hazlitt, "[he is] excommunicated from all decent society." Wilson spoke untruthfully, but he spoke in print, and we can hardly doubt that his words hurt.

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Still, Hazlitt always had sufficient fortitude to get along without popularity. That so bold a speaker must often have needed it, there is new evidence in the present volume. He chastises the true-born Briton in Shavian fashion: "The Irish are hearty, the Scotch plausible, the French polite, the Germans good-natured, the Italians courtly, the Spaniards reserved and decorous—the English alone seem to exist in taking and giving offense." And again, "The English are the only people to whom the term *black-guard* is peculiarly applicable—by which I understand a reference of everything to violence, and a contempt for the feelings and opinions of others." And (the English being once more under discussion) "the egotism of a whole people is proof both against conviction and shame."

It should not be inferred that we have here an ill-tempered book. Nothing could be more genial than some of the anecdotes retailed. Hazlitt had the reporter's *flair* for what is nowadays called a "human interest story," and he gives us some delightful morsels about Lamb, Lord North (a ghostly figure, who comes alive in these pages for a moment), Beau Brummel, Fox, and others.

But all this is, after all, the lesser Hazlitt. The greater appears in these pages also; let me transcribe a passage, for the sheer pleasure of it. It is from "Travelling Abroad."

Sometimes, as I gaze upon the dying embers in my room, the ruddy streaks and nodding fragments shape themselves into an Italian landscape, and Radicofani rises in the distance, receding into the light of setting suns, that seem bidding the world farewell forever from their splendor, their pomp, and the surrounding gloom. Or Perugia opens its cloistered gates, and I look down upon the world beneath, and Foligno and Spoleto stretch out their dark groves and shining walls behind me! You seem walking in the valley of the shadow of life; *ideal* palaces, groves, and cities (realized to the bodily sense) everywhere rise up before you—"The earth hath bubbles as the water hath, and these are of them."

## "Untidy Charm"

STILL MORE PREJUDICE. By A. B. WALKLEY. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. \$2.75.

Reviewed by EDWIN SEAVER

DESPITE the etymology of his name, what distinguishes the critic is not so much his judicial faculty as his ability to communicate his impressions of the work criticized." This statement, quoted from Mr. Walkley's paper on "Critical Disquietudes" in the present volume, is the key to all the animadversions of that "delightful," that "agreeable," that "pleasant" gentleman of well-bred prejudices. And without troubling to consider the ultimate worth of Mr. Walkley's criterion of critical distinction (though there is nothing new in that criterion and it has often enough been discredited) we might very well apply it to this, his latest offering. How then should we communicate our impressions of "Still More Prejudice"?

If we may be so vulgar as to quote from the remarks of Chesterfield—not the English Lord but the American cigarette—"Mild, but they satisfy." Mr. Walkley has gusto, but it is a gusto eminently British, eminently Tory, eminently well-behaved. Mr. Walkley has taste, he has learning, he has considerable charm, he has insight, but again it is the taste, the learning, the charm, and the insight of the well-behaved British tory. He is without doubt "the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship" or indulged in prejudices. Yet at the bottom of these prejudices so indulgent is always the legendary obstinacy of John Bull, a stolidity in the face of the new and therefore strange expression, a tolerance which is but a pseudonym for indifference, a perpetual good humor which is almost gustatory in its complacency.

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One begins inevitably by finding Mr. Walkley hugely pleasurable, becomes a trifle disconcerted to find him dealing with Duse and "simple French cooking" in the same rhythm and evidently with the same relish, and ends by feeling just a bit irritated by his insistent and undifferentiated urbanity. Hang it all, one says in closing the book, surely the *London Times* is not the measure of all things, of Sarah Bernhardt as well as Prime Minister Baldwin, of expression as well as Jane Austen.

Mankind, says Mr. Walkley, may be divided into two categories: the humorists and the non-humorists. Of course the classification is absurd; one might as well say mankind is divided into those who love tripe and those who detest it. Yet this classification, which we realize must not be taken too seriously and which even to lift from its context is to betray us in the camp of the non-humorists, is indicative of Mr. Walkley's prejudices. They are charming, but they do not mean anything.

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Indeed, Mr. Walkley provokes us most to merriment when he least intends to. As in his paper on "Untidy Charm," where he reduces some several centuries of debate as to the difference between classicism and romanticism to the ridiculous (and oh how beautifully English!) conclusion that it is entirely a matter of tidiness.

Greek statuary, Latin prose, French tragedy, the verses of Boileau, the essays of Addison, the paintings of Nicholas Poussin, the precepts of Lord Chesterfield, the tastes of Horace Walpole, the singing of Farinelli, and the acting of Talma were all tidy. The plays of Shakespeare (it was the real gist of Voltaire's complaint) were untidy . . . What makes Marcel Proust's prose so difficult to read is its untidiness (*sic*) . . . Classicism said, in error, only the tidy is charming; no, replied Romanticism, there is also an untidy charm.

Could anything be neater? Never mind distinguishing between Phidias and the sculptor of the Venus of Milo; "Greek statuary" is sufficient. It is not necessary to differentiate between the classicism of Cicero's prose and the neo-classicism of Boileau's verses. Nor, evidently, need we discriminate between what Mr. Walkley chooses to call the untidiness of Scriabin's music, a music essentially classic, and the art of the Dadaists, of romanticism gone to seed.

Such laxity in what purports to be criticism is undoubtedly charming; it is even untidily charming. It is inevitably the criticism that is content with impressions and with prejudices.



## Wings

### I. THE END

WELL, tomorrow I'm going to be married to the most frightfully brilliant man in the world. His name is Herbert Jazzbo Smithers. He writes the ads for the lingerie and fancy goods department of one of our largest department stores, where I was a saleslady till today.

First time I seen him we was getting ready for a special white goods sale. He came to my counter to get what he calls local color. I heard someone behind me say, "Oh you kid!" Just like that, "Oh you kid!" I turned around to knock the block off some fresh guy and seen him, five feet up to his eyebrows and seven inches from them to his bald spot. I seen he had class, all right, first look.

"Hail to thee, fair regent of the nightie," says he picking up a garment.

"Guess again," says I, fluffing my bob.

"By the mass, 'tis backed like a camisole," says he laying it down. "And you. You are beautiful, indeed. But have you a soul? Do you sense the poetry in all this? Do you feel the thrill of our sheer linens and fine cotton goods?"

"Not," says I. "Mine's silk."

"My God!" says he kinda thick. "Got a date tonight?"

Well, he come and I'll state he had some speed. It wasn't ten minutes till we was all cozed up. First time he kissed me he give my hair a kind of funny little jerk. I screeched and he says, "O most resplendent hair! To thine own self be true and thou canst not then be false to any man."

"S'matter, Jazz?" says I. "Why all these here declamation stuff?"

Well, he kep on coming, but he can't seem to give me the opening I'm looking for and maybe he wouldn't if pop hadn't of come in that time. Pop's a boss plumber and used to telling people where they get off at. Well, he come in late one night and Jazz didn't hear him.

"Wot t'ell!" says pop, givin us the evil eye, "when's the weddin'?"

Jazz takes one look. Then he swallows his Adam's apple with some difficulty.

"I woo in haste," says he. "But mean to wed at leisure."

"You do?" says pop and goes to the mat with Jazzbo. "Now," he says. "How about it?"

"Intentions strictly honorable," gurgles Jazzbo. "Object matrimony."

"It better be," says pop, and they agrees on a date for the wedding, while pop is still sitting on his stummick. I tell you there wouldn't be so many old maids around if all the girls' fathers was boss plumbers.

### II. THE BEGINNING

He did not often go to church . . . But here he was, at a wedding . . . What hideous clothes! . . . Why didn't people wear their lingerie outside? . . . Such linens, such nainsooks might have been seen . . . Such and so various . . . True beauties dwell in deep retreat . . . The fault, dear Brutus, is not in them, but in ourselves, that they are underlings . . .

*Here comes the bride* . . . Veiled . . . God, what lace! . . . Was the rest—? . . . Her name was Aileen.

A curving arm of beach. . . Coney Island . . . The bride had gone abroad . . . He must follow . . . He flung off his clothes, all but a simple singlet of white samite . . . "I shall swim to her."

A beach again . . . Ilfracombe . . . Aileen in the moonlight . . . Draped in a flowing shawl . . . Great luck! . . . He seized it . . . Tore it from her . . . Wrapped it round him . . . She turned . . . Just in time . . . Not too soon . . . "You!" she said.

"You," he answered. "Where have you been? . . . What have you seen?" . . .

"Canterbury" . . .

"Yes, yes but—The Irish Linen Stores?—Have you been there?" . . .

"I've been to Tintagel" . . .

"Yes, yes—but Swears and Wells, Peter Robinson's, Liberty's—Such texture!—filmy, sheer—such color!—ravishing!—"



She bent her head . . . "Don't! don't! it might break!" . . . She straightened . . . "Tears" he said wildly, "Why?" . . .

"My husband," she whispered, "cares nothing for such things—doesn't know georgette from Giorgione."

"My God!" A tear splashed on her hand.

"Time to put the chains on," she said. "We're skidding. You forgot to put the three dots after 'My God!' . . . Did I ever meet you before?" . . .

"Thousands of years ago. When I was a king in Bab—" . . .

"Don't!" She shuddered. "It reminds me so of all the others. But you—you're different" . . . She looked at him with awe . . . "You're the only man I ever met who could appreciate one's true inwardness." . . .

His arms closed round her . . . Then the slow, the solemn, the quite usual consecration of their first kiss . . .

"It had to be," said he . . .

"Yes, I suppose so. That's the usual excuse. But we—we are like Dante and Beatrice." . . .

"Like McCutcheon and Macy," he murmured, "Like Wanamaker and Gimbel" . . .

A shadow on the beach . . . "My husband! He's very hasty!" . . . Lance-like, his slimness clove the wave . . . All night he swam . . . Then Liberty Enlightening the World . . . Home again!

Back again . . . At the old job . . . Quarter column for the silk stocking sale . . . Whenas to walk my Julia goes, Ah, then her dainty limbs disclose the shimmering sheen of silken hose . . . Full fashioned . . . Extra length . . . Wearever feet . . . \$2.98 per pair . . . Former price \$3.50 . . . God! what genius! . . . There isn't another man in New York— . . . Damn that telephone! . . .

"Well?" . . . "Yes, of course, I knew your voice Tessie. How could I mistake it, foolish child. 'Tis the voice of the lobster—uh, that is—nothing" . . . "The last time? Why?" . . . "Off Brooklyn Bridge?" . . . "No, frankly I don't. I did once, you know. But you don't interest me any longer" . . . "All right, Tessie. I'm sorry, but—well, you see how it is" . . . "By-bye. Be sure you don't hit a ship and hurt somebody" . . .

Damn the woman! . . . An artist mustn't be interrupted . . . But they have no consideration . . . What next? . . . Men's . . . All right . . . In Xanadu did Kubla Khan, Where Alph . . . No . . . Wear cotton socks . . . That's better . . . Wear cotton socks, that worthy man? Not so. He wore mid snow and ice, The Moonglo Sock, of rare device, of navy, taupe or tan or vert, priced low at ninety-eight per pair . . . God! what genius! . . . Wings! That's what it is. The Wings of Pegasus! . . .

Now, the toilet articles . . . Tinkham's Talc— . . . Damn that telephone . . . "Well?" . . . "Who?" . . . "Maybelle Maginnis? That fluffy blonde at the corset counter?" . . . "Well?" . . . "What, Swallowed her gum and died with my name on her lips?" . . . Well, I can't help it . . . If these women will— . . . When lovely woman stoops to conquer and finds too late there's nothin' doin', . . . Let's see . . . Oh, yes, Tinkham's Talcum . . . Full many a nose of reddest red, I ween, The fairest flappers on their faces wear. Full many a rosy nose will blush unseen, If Tinkham's Talcum's used with proper care . . .

Now the lingerie . . . There's a girl there. Good looking . . . Easy mark . . . In innocence, a child . . . I'll go down and get a little local color and look her over . . . Perhaps— . . . Who knows? . . . But not marriage . . . Not marriage . . . The Bane of all Genius . . .

CHRISTOPHER WARD

Several writers have founded a new series of book publications under the title "Le Roseau d'Or" (Plon), the first volume having just appeared: "Trois Réformateurs: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau," by Jacques Maritain. There has also appeared "Le Comédien et la Grâce," a play by Henri Ghéon, and "L'Amour du Monde," a novel by C. F. Ramuz. G. K. Chesterton will contribute shortly a volume on "Saint François d'Assise."

## The BOWLING GREEN

HAMLET, played in contemporary costume, is said to have been well received in London (I love to think of Hamlet in Oxford bags and Harrold Lloyd spectacles.) That proves (we shall be told) that Shakespeare is always new. What remains now is to have some of our local bedroom farces dressmade in clothes coeval with their gags—seventeenth century at least.

Burton Rascoe, in his able and interesting little book on Dreiser, has the sound journalistic acumen. He knows that a crowd will always gather along the curb to see a good scuffle. Mr. Rascoe's purpose, he says, is twofold:—(1) to prove Dreiser a great writer (2) to prove Mr. Stuart Sherman's "naïve innocence of the actual world." So far Mr. Sherman, with surprising guile for a naïf innocent, has deprived the scuffle of its zest by saying nothing, like the Tar Baby.

Mr. Rascoe's essay on Dreiser is able, and makes me want to try (for the third time) to wade through "Sister Carrie." Wonder if it can really be as heavily done as I remember it. "A Traveller at Forty" I thought delightful, and some passages in "A Book About Myself." The others I haven't read, and am open to conviction.

"Among the scenes which are deeply impressed on my mind," wrote an Eminent Victorian in a diary of travel, "none exceed in sublimity the primeval forests underfaced by the hand of man; whether those of Brazil, where the powers of life are predominant, or those of Terra del Fuego, where death and Decay prevail. Both are temples filled with the varied productions of the God of Nature:—no one can stand in these solitudes unmoved, and not feel there is more in man than the mere breath of his body . . . It is easy to specify the individual objects of admiration in these grand scenes; but it is not possible to give an adequate idea of the higher feelings of wonder, astonishment, and devotion, and which fill and elevate the mind."

Who, then, wrote this? A Very Wicked Man: the godless and satanic blaster of piety, the disbelieving infidel who anointed the gospel pavements with banana peel, whose mere name lately set primitive skulls jangling like cowbells—the young naturalist who wrote "The Voyage of the Beagle"—Charles Darwin.

It was in a bookshop in a great railway station, and we were speaking jocosely of the pleasure of discovering for oneself the things that the Properly Instructed had known since Kingdom Gone. And then the young woman booksellers (how untruly is it said that Young Women in Bookshops don't know that any books were written before "Peter Whiffle") said "I'm discovering Chaucer."

I was so surprised and pleased that I felt it almost impossible to continue the talk; we passed on casually to other topics. But it improves me to remember now and then that hidden in the great world are occasional zealots who have learned, or will, about Chaucer. Our blessed Chaucer, teller of so many tales "thrifty for the nones" (viz. profitable for the occasion) and who would not—greatest of all literary mottoes—"falsen his mateere," falsify his matter. Through all his work, strong as Latakia and sweet as Perique, there rises the effusion of his rich bodily person: his gay tenderness, jolly vulgarity, bursting humor, agonizing pangs of self-proach; and his masterful brevity when speed is necessary. I thought of "Troilus and Criseyde," which wise men have called the first and certainly one of the greatest of modern novels. Every now and then—perhaps three times a year—I think of Chaucer's description of the dawn in "Troilus," where he indulges in his favorite trick of a little chaff in the very act of describing beauty that he loves—

On hevenē yit the sterrēs were y-sene,  
Although ful pale y-woxen was the mone  
And whiten gan the orisontē shene  
Al estward, as it went is for to done,  
And Phebus with his rosy cartē sone  
Gan after that to dresse him up to fare. . . .

The "as it went is for to done" is Chaucer's little stunt to keep his audience in good humor; I can

hear them stirring and smiling gently 'round the great hearth. There are other sides where the immediate audience is forgotten; where (as in every great achievement) the cry is direct to those of his own blood, his fellow-artists of all lands and futures, those who alone will rightly comprehend:—

Go, litel book! Go, litel myn tragédie!  
Ther God thy maker yit, ere that he dye,  
So sendē might to make in some comédie!

Which is the heart's cry of everyone who has ever tried to deal faithfully with tragic matter.

It is one of the queerest ironies that Chaucer, who gives so indescribable a fullness of mortal cheer to the nature mind, is by most of us tackled only in our teens and then shelved forever. Once you get the hang of his spelling (which after all is not much worse than Ring Lardner's; and how Ring would enjoy him; I should love to see an essay on Chaucer by Mr. Lardner in this *Review*) there is little difficulty. He has been a whole South Pacific for the philologists; shiploads of literary biologists have gone forth to dredge in his deeps and come back happy with phosphor-weeds and unknown polyps. But now and then some lucky amateur—for instance Aldous Huxley and Llewelyn Powys goes surf-bathing in Chaucer and runs shouting to us along the sand—shouting the old good news of his incomparable ozone.

I wonder what he would have thought of the Grand Central station, where more pilgrims than Canterbury ever dreamed go pattering by, shriving or unshriven. He would have been quite calm, humorous, and unstaggered. He was himself a kind of Grand Central Terminal of English literature—the terminus at the other end. But if he could have imagined the girl in the station who said "I'm discovering Chaucer," how it would have tickled him.

"XLI Poems," by E. E. Cummings, (The Dial Press) which the editor has handed me to review, conveniently reviews itself. On page 27 I read "Out of the black unbunged Something gushes vaguely between squeals of Nothing grabbed with circular shrieking tightness solid screams whisper." Mr. Cummings is a very real poet. Sometimes writes like this:—

this is the garden: colours come and go,  
frail azures fluttering from night's outer wing  
strong silent greens serenely lingering,  
absolute lights like baths of golden snow.  
This is the garden: pursed lips do blow  
upon cool flutes within wide glooms, and sing  
(of harps celestial to the quivering string)  
invisible faces hauntingly and slow.

This is the garden. Time shall surely reap,  
and on Death's blade lie many a flower curled,  
in other lands where other songs be sung;  
yet stand They here enraptured, as among  
the slow deep trees perpetual of sleep  
some silver-fingered fountain steals the world.

and sometimes he chooses to write like a boy touching fence-palings. If there are any thoughts that he hasn't touched, he goes back and does it. For instance:—

at the the ferocious phenomenon of 5 o'clock i find myself  
gently decomposing in the mouth of New York. Between  
its supple financial teeth deliriously sprouting from  
complacent gums, a morsel prettily wanders buoyed on the  
murderous saliva of industry. the morsel is i.

Vast cheeks enclose me.

a gigantic uvula with imperceptible gesticulations threatens  
the tubular downward blackness occasionally from which  
detaching itself bumps clumsily into the throat A meti-  
culous vulgarity:

a sodden fastidious normal explosion; a square murmur,  
a winsome flatulence—

In the soft midst of the tongue sits the Woolworth building  
a serene pastile-shaped insipid kinesia of frail swooping  
lozenge, a ruglike sentience whose papillæ expertly drink  
the docile perpendicular taste of this squirming cube of  
undiminished silence, supports while devouring the firm  
tumult of exquisitely insecure sharp algebraic music. For  
the first time in sorting from this vast nonchalant inward  
walk of volume the flat minute gallop of careful hugeness  
i am conjugated by the sensual mysticism of entire vertical  
being, i am skilfully construed by a delicately experiment-  
ing colossus whose irrefutable spiral antics involve me  
with the soothings of plastic hypnotism

But whether curious or indolent, mr cummings  
(why shouldn't I review him in his own manner)  
is always

interesting he limits  
himself to public of about Xli  
readers those few who are willing  
to sift his Sheep from his Shoats  
there are never very many.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.