

The abstract theses of "The Childermass" are those of Mr. Lewis's other recent books—"The Lion and the Fox," "The Art of Being Ruled," and "Time and Western Man." His gospel of greatness, his love of strongly marked character, his admiration for the intellectual non-moral attitude are presented through contempt for their opposites. Here once more he is greatly concerned over the contemporary increase in homosexuality whose origin he traces to feminism and the war and whose dire effect, he prophesies with unconscious humor, will be the creation of a race of neuter workers even more amenable to industrial discipline than the traditional *pater familias* has proved. Women are notably absent from "The Childermass"; presumably Mr. Lewis does not consider them worthy even of his satire. This, I venture to think, is a sad defect. Woman, whatever one's opinion of her, at least exists; heaven would not be heaven nor hell hell without her; no picture of such a feministic period as ours can be more than a sketch, however masterly, if it fails to put women in the foreground.

More distinctively individual than Mr. Lewis's ideas, however, is his style. This is likely, for good or ill, to have almost as much influence as the styles of Joyce and Gertrude Stein, and for the same reason. Like Thomas Carlyle, so many of whose ideas he shares, Mr. Lewis is a reactionary in thought but an experimentalist in style. Like Carlyle he takes full advantage of the immunities of genius and scorns linguistic restraint. His "abrahamic clowns" in their "expressive saxanglish tropology" indulge in "swatch-cove exegetics" and "stentorophonic controversy" until one's ears ring from the uncouth sounds. Hostile to democracy and all its ways though he deems himself, his enormous vocabulary is ultra-democratic, admitting all classes of words from the most technical to the most vulgar. Hostile to naturalism as is his philosophy, in his writing he is *plus naturaliste que la nature*. Sweaty masses of fat, stinking breaths, gaping mouths, and snoring noses have an irresistible attraction for him. Similar to Joyce's cloacal obsession is his delight in descriptions of retching. His eye and nose are sharper than his ear. The rhythm of sound makes little appeal to him; in fact, no other writer of anything like his importance is so lacking in a sense for time and continuity. But of this limitation he has actually made a distinction. His amazingly subtle observation isolates and immobilizes each situation; his characters move by jerks; his universe is a vast puppet show. In "The Childermass" this is all to the good; the mechanized movement and the physical ugliness are an appropriate symbolism for the mental decay portrayed. This adaptation of form to content in "The Childermass" is, however, simply due to Mr. Lewis's having at last found a content to fit a previously existing form derived from his instinctive way of looking at life.

That this is the case may be seen by glancing at his other volume brought out during the present year, "The Wild Body." This work is made up mainly of stories or rather sketches written before the war. They have been largely rewritten in his later style (what a chance for doctoral dissertations, when Mr. Lewis shall have become a classic, to compare, e. g., the punctuation of the earlier and later versions!), but the view of life has remained unchanged. In an expository essay Mr. Lewis tells us that his is the point of view of comedy which goes into guffaws when it sees "a thing behaving like a person" and—since all human bodies are precisely in that situation—may appropriately guffaw whenever it perceives a human being. This is a very inadequate account of comedy, but it adequately describes Mr. Lewis's own procedure. In "The Wild Body" the characters are avowedly treated as things, mere grotesque and hideous puppets—but the author hardly makes it clear why he treats them in this manner save through his own wilfulness. In "The Childermass" the "thinginess" remains and is appropriate. Mr. Lewis, in a word, aside from his fantasy, sees and writes as a pure behaviorist. In so extraverted an age, with its craze for action at all costs, and its idolatry of "objective-mindedness," this style of writing is sure of a vogue. Obviously, it belongs to the very spirit of the times which Mr. Lewis so deplors. He is not only, as he boasts, "the Enemy" of the age; he is also the Enemy of himself. But in so being, he is a very good friend, as well. Without something to attack he would be dumb, but luckily he always has his material at home. Of him may be said what Alectryon says to the Bailiff: "The trouble is that only your hatred is creative; it is your only way of being creative."

## Lincoln's Country

JACK KELSO: A Dramatic Poem. By EDGAR LEE MASTERS. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1928. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LLEWELLYN JONES  
Chicago Evening Post

EDGAR LEE MASTERS was born and brought up in Lincoln's country, and the story of Jack Kelso, the vagabond and poet who taught Lincoln to enjoy Shakespeare and Burns, ought to provide him with a happy subject. But Mr. Masters has wandered far from his childhood haunts, and so does this poem. It begins well. Here is a group of Illinois pioneers, among them this lazy, nature loving poet who reads his Shakespeare, here Stephen Douglas, hail fellow well met with the New Salem villagers, quarrelling over politics and the village school-master, here "Abe" Lincoln himself bringing hogs to New Orleans and getting his flat-boat stuck. Then we have Jack Kelso putting on a masque, with Hephaistos and all the other classical figures in it. And one realizes that, after all, pioneer life was not a story merely of pioneers fighting the wilderness and cultivating the soil, but was leavened by the old-fashioned, pedantic culture that these people brought to the wilderness with them. "Hephaistos" played in the Illinois wilderness is piquant, and the Illinois wilderness could never be quite alien when seen through eyes which had been schooled by the older English poets.

But if Mr. Masters saw these possibilities he scorned them, and one can almost imagine that he never saw them. For Kelso soon ceases to be a poet, except on political themes, and becomes a hapless and hopeless wanderer. He has failed to understand Lincoln, he sees in the Civil War a catastrophe to Jeffersonian principles and the prelude to a reign of greed protected by the new federal power. In the third act he has become a railroad contractor, that he may make money and marry the beautiful Isabel of Salt Lake City.

The lady, however, proves to be elusive. She entertains Kelso one evening, he drinks too much wine, and Isabel has the chance to give him a closer inspection than she had hitherto done:

More gray hairs on his head than I  
Noticed before.

(Looking at his forehead)

Veins bulged and blue!  
Surely his age he has mistold!  
What shall I do? It's best to fly.  
The man is old, too old, too old!  
I'll go to Saltair. Here, Yet Wei!

—although why she should go to Saltair I cannot for the life of me guess, for if I remember correctly there is nothing there but an amusement park and a salt works. But go she does, leaving a farewell note for Kelso with the Chinese servant whose name so conveniently rhymed with "fly."

Whereupon Kelso wanders some more, going East this time, and becoming more and more disillusioned as he goes along and finds tariffs and wicked capitalists and corporate greed all over the place. Before a bronze statue of Lincoln he is moved to poetize about it all.

Now there you stand in bronze, a myth adored,  
Freedom's Apostle truly, who meant to save,  
Now used by jobbers, by the exploiting sword  
To slave the free with what you freed the slave.  
All leagues of peace, and manhood rights will fail;  
Wars will arise to wear the masquerade  
Of Liberty, but no Liberty will prevail  
Until the whole world blossoms with free trade.

Well, I'm all for free trade myself, but it was rather a shock to find it blossoming just there.

We then follow Kelso to Washington when the unknown soldier is being buried, and learn, through the revelation of a yegg man that this unknown soldier was really his brother—he had taken particular note where he had been buried on the field.

At last Jack Kelso, now very old—it's a long span from the young Lincoln to the unknown soldier—comes back to the site of New Salem and determines to end his life in the old well in the Concord churchyard. However on the evening he reaches the churchyard the grandson of an old friend of his had happened to reach the well first—and had fallen into it. Kelso hears his cries, climbs down, rescues the lad, and dies of the strain.

A sad showing, but we may console ourselves by remembering that pendulums always come back, and

"Jack Kelso" certainly marks a limit beyond which no-one could go. The return swing must be due to begin.

## The Substance of Esthetic

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. By JOSEPH GORDON MACCLEOD. New York: The Viking Press. 1928.

Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON

Human music, that is the phrase we want: not an atmosphere of grandeur set up by sublime words in an order or ringing changes in a carrillon, not an absolute beauty; nor personal emotion guttering like a candle-flame in the draught of circumstances or wrestling not to drown in the rapids and undercurrents below the weir of the world, not personal beauty; nor a tangle of gnarled ideals for time alone to axe; nor mere life; nor mere utterance; but that unnamed heave as of an ocean tuned orchestral, which in consummation of the wedding of the earth with rain-showers, enchants humanity into sound.

IF this appears more or less unintelligible and curiously eloquent, it is so far characteristic. Moreover the passage is a drive at the thing which Mr. MacCleod is driving at all the time. Form, beauty, quality, esthetic, the sublime, are all mere words, dry pointers, labels tacked up on the gates of mystery. "Human music," the heave of an orchestral ocean, are reaches after the description. What is quality in literature? "It is not a pattern in tune, like music form; nor a pattern in space, like plastic form; but something recalling both, as though the lines of a picture flowed." "Esthetic" is a lifeless term; the thing it means is a swaying, sensitive, vital thing. It is not in the details of the surface but somewhere down in the sea, where if you take a light to see you illuminate yourself alone; "you stand in a circular mirror reflecting only your lamp and your white face startled to see yourself discovering yourself. To analyze the esthetic will be as easy and as profitable as to put the Wellington arch on the top of Mont Blanc."

Mr. MacCleod is a very pregnant and unusual critic. To make art out of reality is to make Beauty out of the Beast, but it is impossible to do so unless you go round about; and his feeling is that you cannot define or describe it, anymore than you can make it, unless you go round about. The nearest definition is a complex of endeavors to define, by suggestion, similarities, figures of speech, by definition after definition consistent or inconsistent. Poetry can only be defined by poetry. The anatomist or botanist does not describe either man or flower. If you want the thing as it really is you want something alive. Its secret, its reality, lies in its life. The rest is mechanism or incident.

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If Mr. MacCleod's esthetic is mystical, it is because he sees that the thing itself is mystical. If you estimate its mystery you eliminate its reality. His method is indirect, but his language is not. It is vivid, concrete, and imaginative. On Milton's Song in "Comus" "Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph," he comments: "Here again the esthetic is superficial, something more like music, made in soft syllables, as if the ink whispered"; and on Shelley's

Swiftly walk over the western wave,  
Spirit of Night.

"But here there is a new thing coming. This is not mere surface charm, sensuous alliteration. There is shape below it. It creeps under the picturesque." And this is not ordinary criticism. It goes below the surface, creeps close to the matter. It treats poetry with poetry. Mr. MacCleod is not a critic to be read currently, or summed up in an epitome, but to be taken bit by bit, and reread with consideration. His terminology is peculiar. It may be forced, but at least it is forcible. The rather frequent obscurity is partly due to words used peculiarly and not always in the same sense; partly to a wealth of allusion too closely packed; partly to the endeavor to get the dimensions of something lying darkly out of reach by searchlights and triangulations from a distance and from different directions. Agreement by the reader with all his judgments on specific points of esthetic, or on specific examples of literature, is neither likely, nor important; but the better instinct one has already for that reality, that substance of esthetic, which Mr. MacCleod is talking about, the less difficulty will he find in either the language or the method of approach.



## Bread and Science

HUNGER FIGHTERS. By PAUL DE KRUIF.  
New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1928.  
Reviewed by D. T. MACDOUGAL, M. D.

Director, Desert Laboratory

**A**S judicial and sincere as are the appraisements in this book an equally meritorious volume with the same title might be written without mention of a single name included by Paul De Kruif.

The almost daily governmental reminders to us of the millions of dollars worth, or hundreds of thousands of tons, gallons, or bushels of vegetables, firewood, cotton, tomatoes, hogs, oysters, potatoes, nuts, eggs, oats, wool, apples, milk, wheat, and corn saved or added to our supplies by the skilled efforts of its thousands of agents, with the unconcealed implication that larger appropriations could be used, makes a stated and indifferent audience for praise of hunger-fighters. The digger of roots, the gatherer of seeds and grains, and the producer of crops receives no more strident acclaim today than he did in the yesterdays of a thousand centuries.

The author places himself in a posture of formal adoration of the modern hunger fighters who use the methods or results of biological and physical sciences in breeding and growing crops and domestic animals and in controlling the diseases and parasites which lessen their yield. The record of effort of something like a score of workers, living and dead, are used in exemplification of the theme. The personalities and motivation of these scientists are so crudely sketched that they are not recognizable by the reviewer who has had the advantage of personal contact with nearly all of them. Their actual accomplishments, however, are not over-drawn; indeed this would be difficult to do.

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Mark Carleton who found the hardy durum wheat on the steppes of Asia and introduced it to the dry and cold fields of the Great Plains and Northwest, Mackay and the Saunders who bred and selected varieties for the Dominion, are fitly eulogized in terms which might be as justly applied to a score of their contemporaries. The work of Dorset in the determination of the nature and prevention of hog cholera, and of Mohler, Loeffler, and Lake who contend with other plagues, is likewise celebrated.

The food basis of American culture was primarily that of maize and the grain from this plant is still produced in larger quantity than that of the recently introduced wheat. The major movement in the epic of the American corn plant had taken place long before the time of Columbus and Cortez. The deducible history of maize after its grain attracted notice as a human food on southern Mexican highlands, its dissemination northward to the Dakotas and into South America involving the selection of special varieties for each new set of soil and climatic conditions, is in itself an epitome of the domestication of plants by man. Comparatively little, from the point of view of the naturalist, has been done with this grain in the last five hundred years. So great is the annual crop, however, that any little advance in culture or breeding may increase yields by millions of bushels. The accomplishments of workers in the cornfield include so many separate contributions of supplementary value that formal evaluation is difficult.

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The author has properly stressed the fact that satisfaction of hunger and physical welfare are not to be compassed by the furnishment or consumption of food to a certain necessary total amount of units of energy or calories. Out of the murk of our dietary ignorance there have emerged the vitamins of several categories which are indispensable to the action of living matter and for the construction of new protoplasm. Some of these little known substances seem to carry effects of sunlight and their action may be duplicated by direct exposure to the sun's rays.

In this connection are mentioned S. M. Babcock as the "father of vitamins," Hart, McCollum, and Steenbock, the experimenter, who trapped both vitamins and sunlight. Then, too, the workers, Goldberger, Sydenstricker, and others, who connected the dreaded pellagra with dietary deficiencies, are described.

Not much has been said about the eternal struggle

for food from which no escape may be visioned. At no time does the race have a surplus which would suffice for a year. In this we have not gone far beyond the savage tribe which existed through the winter on stored nuts and seeds, or the squirrels with their adequate hoard of acorns.

In the possibility of the quadruple increase of the population of the world now predicted the real issue will depend upon the number of acres of tillable land necessary for the maintenance of one person. It is notable that in America there are still required 2.6 acres of tillable land for each unit of human population; in Great Britain the ratio is 2.5 acres per capita, while in Denmark with the most intensive use of land in vegetable growing and dairy farming the area has not been reduced below 1.8 acres. It would not be easy to forecast the developments of agricultural science by which the United States might make every pair of its 437 million possible tillable acres support one person in an increase to a total of 218 million people.

One of the most alluring recreations of modern geographers is the forecasting of human populations; by the estimates most in vogue at the moment, of the 8,000 millions of the future some 1,500 or 2,000 millions are to find a living in North America. If food or energy is to be obtained by agriculture or by the action of the green leaves of cultivated plants these figures are grotesquely large; if the scientific researches now being carried on in a score of laboratories for trapping of sunlight and using its energy as power for combining simple substances into others suitable as food are successful in any measure, these figures would be entirely without meaning.



WYNDHAM LEWIS  
Author of "The Childermass"

## Psychology and Medicine

THE NEUROTIC PERSONALITY. By R. G. GORDON, M. D. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1928. \$3.75.

Reviewed by S. DANIEL HOUSE

**W**HEN we think of the pioneers of modern medicine, Charcot, Janet, Bernheim, Liébault, Breuer, Freud, Jung, Adler, Prince (to mention only the most conspicuous ones), we can't help wondering about the quaint paradox that had arisen to baffle the minds of the dynamic psychologists, academic and clinical. Medicine had built its theories and practices wholly upon organic assumptions concerning human nature in health and disease. The subtlest achievement of organic medicine, namely, neurology, had reached a state of perfection so minute as to render it the most admirable and the most useless of sciences. Therapeutically, organic neurology hadn't the remotest conception of the disharmonies and perturbing conflicts that rocked human beings to their psychoneurotic and psychotic depths. Evidently, the organic approach to human nature as a study in the disharmonies of personality was very limited indeed. Hence, the creative audacity of that small group of dynamic psychiatrists who reconceived medicine in terms drastically psychologic and functional. The emergence of the psychoanalytic technique put an end once for all to the vain boasts of the organicists that *materia medica* is sufficient unto itself and can dispense with psychological insight. The war provided the perfect demonstration of the failure of organic neurology and the astonishing triumph of psychoanalytic psychology

in understanding and solving the problems of neurotic breakdown ("shell-shock").

Thus medicine, which had leaned so long upon physiology, achieved its most brilliant triumphs by becoming unequivocally psychological. But psychology which had intertwined itself since its metaphysical beginning with mentalistic and relatively intangible assumptions suddenly decided to become nobly scientific by wooing physiology most shamelessly. Enter behaviorism, trailing clouds of scientific glory, exuberantly affirming its physiologic and most materialistic basis, and as raucously repudiating the purely psychological assumptions of the traditionally accredited "science of the soul."

A pretty state of things, forsooth! Behaviorism modestly assuring us that psychology as a real science was born in 1913 in the brain (the behaviorist is not burdened with a mind) of Dr. Watson when he definitely decided that the most perfect model for an adequate comprehension of human behavior was the laboratory study of the white rat, the *only* difference between men and other animals being language, all other differences and discrepancies in nature being generously canceled out of existence by the overwhelming necessity of finally putting psychology on a basis as reputedly scientific as that of physics. Bravo, Watson! the behavioristic bull in the introspectionist china shop. But lo! a mystery. Watson had failed to note that there were two varieties of introspection, one academic and absurd and sterile, against the authority of which he rebelled most persuasively (in laughing out of court Messrs. Titchener, Angell, Bentley, *et al.*), the other clinical and profound and fruitful, which he had thought highly of until he found shrewd reason for boosting the stocks of behaviorism by a competitor's assault upon a flourishing psychoanalysis.

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Psychology, traditionally mentalistic, seeking to rid itself of the asphyxiating burden of a self-enclosed, utterly vapid, and unmeaning introspectionism, crudely repudiating mind and consciousness and personality and idea and thinking, blindly ignoring a more fruitful and humanistic kind of introspection (self-analysis), seeking reputable status as a true science; while, on the other hand, medicine, traditionally materialistic and physiological, caught in a desperate *impasse* of descriptive accuracy and therapeutic futility, bravely breaking the bondage of old-fashioned scientific technique and enthusiastically creating the new medicine on the incredible basis of purely psychological concepts! And so matters stand at present. Two vital psychologies obsess the contemporary mind: psychoanalysis and behaviorism.

Dr. Gordon might be called a sane psychoanalyst (though the analysts who are more orthodox, i. e., more devoutly Freudian, are not to be labeled insane!). His medical philosophy is inspired by psychoanalytic discoveries but for all that he will not rest content with speculative assumption when he can reduce it to scientific hypothesis. Hence his drastic emphasis on physiological and neurological concepts, such as behavior patterns, cortical reintegration, facilitation and inhibition, conditioning, reflexes, reactions, engrams, etc. His discussion of the psychoneurotic modes of thinking and acting is very illuminating. The psychopathology of anxiety, hysteria, fear, obsession, sexual perturbation, is lucidly presented, with the aid of diagrams, as a branch of "Behaviorism."

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"The Neurotic Personality" represents a fine integration of the contributions more particularly of McDougall, Janet, Freud, Sherrington, Head, Watson, Pavlov, toward the profounder understanding of psychoneurotic behavior. Dr. Gordon's own view is expressed in such crisp observations and judgments as these: "We may, however, point out that neurosis essentially depends upon the disharmony in the proper integration of just these (emotional) dispositions. Of these sex is doubtless the most important, but the conflict between self-abasement and self-assertion is also of the very greatest influence in determining neurotic behavior." "We find that while the neurotic is capable of a great deal of prospective imagination; it is too often visionary and out of touch with reality. From this we see that it is in the realm of sentiment organization rather than in the higher development of cognition that the neurotic is at fault." "The difficulty in the neurotic's life is to adapt himself to circumstances both within and without himself. No doubt the intrapsychic difficulties are the more important, but