

tion of the activities of the Department of Justice under A. Mitchell Palmer.

These present dangers to liberty are amply covered by "Let Freedom Ring." In contrast to Mr. Swift's book, this might have been entitled "How We Lost Our Liberties." In its six chapters Mr. Hayes narrates as many salient incidents of his legal career on behalf of freedom in various aspects. Nothing could better illustrate the practical difficulties of upholding the liberties whose development was traced by Mr. Swift, or show that the embodiment of a principle in the Constitution is worth little in the absence of adequate remedies against its violators. A pessimistic preface contrasts the ideals of the Founders with recent acts of suppression, and the body of the book supplies abundant concrete reasons for mental disturbance on the part of those who cherish our national liberties.

The first chapter, "Freedom of Education," is an amusing account of the Scopes trial at Dayton, Tennessee, in which Mr. Hayes was one of the counsel for the defense. Despite the gravity of the issue, the impression left by this day to day record is chiefly comic. One wonders whether the important contests for liberty in the past were also characterized by so much triviality and undignified altercation, which have disappeared in the telling. Only the testimony of the scientific experts and the argument of Dudley Field Malone seem worthy of the occasion. It may have been good fun for Darrow to make Bryan ridiculous by his long examination, but it was hardly the way to persuade devout Southerners of the value of toleration. Doubtless Tennessee and other states will be reluctant to repeat the Dayton spectacle, so that another prosecution for evolutionary teaching is unlikely, but until a spirit of tolerance is spread among those in control of education they can easily restrict scientific instruction by more subtle methods, such as the elimination of text-books which mention Darwin and the refusal to promote instructors who question the accuracy of Genesis.

The chapter ends with an argument against the reading of the Bible in the public schools. There is force to the objection so long as considerable sections of the community oppose such reading, but it is to be hoped that we may all agree on some plan which will avoid sectarian controversy and at the same time enable children to become familiar with some of the most magnificent prose in our language and with an account of human aspiration which is unmatched in all literature.

The best chapter in the book, on "Freedom of Speech and Assemblage," narrates Mr. Hayes's audacious success in holding a union meeting in a closed town in the Pennsylvania soft-coal fields. He turned the tables on the mine-owners by adopting their own methods. He had the coal and iron police who illegally deported him from Vintondale arrested and convicted for assault and battery, and obtained an injunction against the company and the police forbidding interference with meetings on land belonging to the union. "Freedom of Residence" deals with the disturbing problem of the purchase of a house in a white neighborhood by negroes, and "Freedom of Opinion" recounts the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, leaving us to regret more than ever that, where there was so much doubt as to guilt, the way was not kept open to rectify the convictions in the future if ever it is generally felt that the men were innocent or unfairly tried.

The two remaining chapters on the interesting and difficult questions of "Freedom of the Press" and "Freedom of the Stage" centre around the suppression of the *American Mercury* in Boston and the banning of "The Captive" in New York. Formerly the people of the United States had a fairly uniform conception of what was obscene, which made it possible to draw the line of illegality in a manner generally acceptable, but the present wide variations of opinion render the task much harder and increase the importance of finding a suitable method of control. There are two vital requisites for a proper method to determine whether a book or a play be considered obscene. First, the decision should be made by qualified persons. As to this, there are roughly three possibilities. (1) A permanent censor, who may conceivably be selected on the basis of literary training and ability, but who is only too liable to undertake the task because of a morbid preoccupation with vice which renders him unduly sensitive to its existence where ordinary mortals would not be worried, and who in any event

runs the risk of becoming bureaucratic and arbitrary. (2) A jury, which has the distinct advantage of representing the standards of the community at large and the disadvantages that its members may be unfamiliar with literature and that its verdict usually comes after much expense has been incurred by the publisher or producer. (3) The prosecuting officials and the police, who exhibit the drawbacks of a censor without his advantage of special training for the work, yet who, as Mr. Hayes vividly shows, now possess the actual control over books in Boston and plays in New York. Secondly, the decision should come as soon as possible, so that the publisher or bookseller or producer may know where he stands before great expense has been incurred and may test the legality of the book or play without subjecting himself to severe punishment. Censorship meets this requisite much better than an ordinary criminal prosecution, which necessitates the commission of a possible crime. Especially objectionable is the New York padlocking law for theatres, for the producer must ascertain his rights in a doubtful case by putting on the play and then, if the verdict goes against him, must lose his profits for the rest of the season. Rather than run such a tremendous risk, he will withdraw the play on the least hint from the district attorney's office, which thus becomes the final judge of dramatic morals. Mr. Hayes's account of "The Captive" shows the great difficulty of obtaining a judicial decision on the decency of such a questioned play. Perhaps the best method would be a law allowing a producer, publisher, or other interested person to initiate proceedings by which the work could be submitted to a jury before publication or performance; an adverse decision would incur no penalty so long as the work was withdrawn.

"Let Freedom Ring" is not a systematic treatise on such problems, but as an interesting collection of raw material, it has much value.



The Middletown Murder

By ROBERT FROST

JACK hitched into his sky blue bob
And drove away to the lumber job.

A week was what he had aimed to stay,
And here he was back inside of a day.

Kate came to the door to ask him why.
"To give you another kiss goodbye."

The gun he took to the woods for meat
Came out from under his blanket seat.

Kate tried to laugh at him. "You go long,
And don't be silly. Is something wrong?"

They stood and looked at each other hard,
Kate plainly blocking the door on guard.

Suddenly Jack began to shout:
"I know who's in there. So come on out!"

If someone extra was there with Kate,
He wasn't to be brought out by hate.

(Some people are best brought out by love.
The others you have to drag or shove.)

Then suddenly something frightened Jack,
And sent him shouting around in back.

"Hey, no you don't you goddam snide,
None of your tricks on me," he cried.

Kate cut across the house inside,
Leaving the door of the kitchen wide.

Now three of them choked the door emerging;
You couldn't tell which was pulling or urging.

"In a killer's choice like this of three,
There's some can't tell which it should be;
But I'll soon show you it won't be me.

"You have been my friend; you have eaten my salt;
But this was eating my sugar, Walt.

"The joke's on me for trusting a whore.
Wouldn't it make a rifle roar?"

"To pro-long life and humor Kate
I'll give you a start as far as the gate."

He looked at a button along his gun,
But kept from shooting and told him, "Run!"

The first shot fired was over Walt's head.
He still was running; he wasn't dead.

The second shot went by one arm,
The third by the other, and did no harm.

The fourth, and next to the last, was low.
Walt felt it under him ploughing snow.

He thought, "I'm running in luck to-day,
I'm getting away—I'm getting away."

Just what to Jack would be meat and drink
To have the galloping bastard think.

All four misses were only art.
The fifth shot fired went through the heart.

The fifth was the bullet that stained his shirt,
And dove him into the snow and dirt.

We call that "bounding a man all round
Before locating his principal town."

"Now, back to your keeping house," Jack said.
"I guess you'd better go make the bed."

"No first you'd better put up your hair.
After that's done we'll see what's fair."

He pulled her in and shut the door,
And wouldn't let her look out any more.

Kate didn't know what the law would say
To a man for killing a man that way.

She hated to be the death of two.
But what was a woman going to do?

Be ready for when the sheriff came,
And say Jack wasn't the one to blame?

The least you could always do was lie
To hurry the day of trouble by;

And it wouldn't be long before you were glad
Of the worst young day you ever had,

It was so much better than any old.
But my, the sheriff would probably scold.

All the sheriff said was, "Cousin Kate,
You're the prettiest black haired girl in the state."

(The township numbered a couple of dozen,
And most of them called each other cousin.)

"I suppose you were born to have your fun,
But in doing to these two what you've done,

"If you wanted to get the good one jailed,
The bad one murdered, you haven't failed.

"I'll do it as gently as I can,
But cousin, I've come to take your man.

"Let it be a lesson to you for life:
Next time you marry, be a wife."

Someone lying stiff in the road
Like a cordwood stick from a farmer's load.

And over him like a frightened dunce
A guide post pointed all ways at once.

No curious crowd had gathered yet,
But a rural letter-box choir quartette

That stood in drift at the crossroads corner.
They had human names like Stark and Warner.

But more like ghouls than men they stood,
As much as singing that bad was good.

The BOWLING GREEN

The Curtain

AT this very moment, as I sit down to write, (twenty minutes past eight p. m.) someone is probably looking through the peephole. Someone, while the stage is being set for the first act and the prop-list is checked over, is undoubtedly stealing a glimpse through that little eyelet in the curtain to see what the house looks like. If you are attentive to details and happen to sit where you can remark that small orifice, you will see that the old painted canvas is faintly stained just round it. That is due, I suppose, to the moisture on the anxious brows of generations of managers as they peered hopefully or fearfully through and mentally estimated the take.

I wish I could tell you more about that curtain. Theatre curtains might well be thematic for an essay on the arts in general; they would excellently symbolize the necessity, true in every department, of having some dividing line of illusion which conceals from the world what is not intended to be seen; or if seen, not acknowledged. That is the kind of floral farrago that everyone enjoys writing, and is easiest to write. But I am thinking chiefly of one particular curtain, very dear to me—that in the old Rialto Theatre in Hoboken.

I wish again that I could tell you more about it. The difficulty is that I am short-sighted, and rarely get a chance to have a good look at it. For of course it is only down during performances, at which times it is not seemly for a myopic manager to go boldly down the middle aisle and study it. It has been described as a "bastard Alma Tadema," which is fairly (though not completely) accurate. At any rate it is precisely in the mode of thirty or forty years ago when the supreme requisite of a theatre curtain was that it should tell a story. The question is, what story does it tell? There is a lady sitting on a throne above a flight of marble steps. At the bottom of these steps, considerably unclad, another lady is spread out in an attitude of shame or supplication. There are still other damsels standing about; and I think (as well as I have been able to discern, in moments of agitation) a suggestion of classic cypress trees. The suppliant and unclad lady has a multitude of auburn hair which is dishevelled beneath her prone and comely person. If it were a contemporary painting I might be tempted to believe that she represents the Muse of Hollywood, now terrified by movietone developments, beseeching the Muse of Old Comedy to grant pardon for her sins.

There is a legend in Hoboken that this famous old curtain illustrates an episode in Tennyson's *Princess*. *The Princess* is a poem which, considered as narrative, I have never been patient enough to grasp; though like anyone in his senses I relish its magnificent interpolations of epigram and lyric. It was so promptly accepted, I believe, as effective propaganda for the New Womanhood that ladies hardly paused long enough to observe how jocundly Tennyson chaffed them here and there in the poem. What better description has ever been given of a certain kind of excitable feminine handwriting—

In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East.

It is exquisitely humorous to consider this Tennysonian and feminist curtain used during the years of the old Rialto's decadence to intermission the rumpish charms of Hoboken burlesque shows.

But if this jolly old canvas illustrates *The Princess*, as alleged, still I am too short-sighted to identify which special episode of the poem is conveyed. Is it the passage where someone is told

Marsh-divers shall croak thee, sister,

or is it the scene where behind the Princess stand

Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women blowzed with health.

That indeed would be accurate enough for the days of the burlesque wheel. Or does it represent

Half naked as if caught at once from bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child; and on the left,
Her round white shoulders shaken with the sobs,
Melissa knelt—

But whatever phase of *The Princess* that canvas may portray, I leave to more accomplished Tennysonians to divine—hoping only that the manager, peering through his peephole, may not have occasion to murmur the most famous of *The Princess's* lyrics—

Tiers, idle tiers, I know not what they mean.

* * *

Hoboken, like many another faubourg adjacent to proud cities, has been much misunderstood. "The very convenient, but unlovely city of Hoboken," says my old friend the 1898 Rand McNally Guide to New York which is one of my favorite antiquarian works. But I wish I could take Messrs. Rand and McNally for a stroll along Hudson Street, Hoboken, some sunny autumn afternoon; past those comfortable old Teuton hotels, across the little park which was once the famous Elysian Fields, up to the airy parnassus of Castle Stevens. There, in the tower of that astonishing old mansion, is what I assert to be the most spectacular eyrie in Greater New York: the pensive citadel where Dr. H. N. Davis, the new president of Stevens Institute, works late at night on his plans for the future of that fine college and looks abroad over the most remarkable panorama in modern civilization. The view of New York from Brooklyn Heights is fairly well-known; how much less we hear of the wider synopsis from Castle Stevens. It is interesting to be told, since we concern ourselves just now with the drama, that the first open-air play ever performed in America was given on the campus of Stevens. The college is a scientific school, and (to quote our *Princess* again) mostly occupied with "the hard-grained Muses of the cube and square," but therefore all the more hospitable to the tenderer arts in its moments of relaxation. There, as you ramble about the grounds, you may ponder on the vision of American life which is spread out before those young men who are studying to be the engineers and builders of the future. Dr. Davis and I were imagining the superb amphitheatre which the Stevens cliff seems to have been intended to suggest—a theatre where the whole of Manhattan would serve as cyclorama—and we agreed that such a scheme would take us at least a hundred years to work out.

So, in that quiet air, there seems to be no desperate hurry. That tranquil and prosperous residential region behind Castle Stevens, only half an hour from down-town by tube or ferry, remains (by the happy accident of unprestige) unspoiled by the rent *schieber* and the social alpinist. In such a neighborhood, which we used to describe jocularly as Behind the Bayonne, did these enamored zealots set up their antics behind the painting of Lord Tennyson's legend. What gorgeous names—Hoboken, Weehawken, Communipaw! And a lover of print may be excused for enthusiasm over the town called Gutenberg. In the cliff beneath Castle Stevens there was once a natural grotto known as the Sibyl's Cave. It was famous as cool cellarage for beer barrels. Neither the beer nor the sibyls have wholly deserted Hoboken.

These, then, are the sort of things the manager thinks about as he looks hopefully through the peephole in the curtain. How important it is for every artist, of whatever métier, to have somewhere a secret chink through which, unsuspected, he can gaze out on the enormous world—On second thoughts, not yet convinced whether the curtain really does portray Tennyson, I offer a prize of two orchestra seats for the best letter giving your own impressions of that romantic old canvas.

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The following noteworthy communication has been received from London and is here filed in the minutes:

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE THREE HOURS FOR LUNCH CLUB:

SIRS:—

Word of your adventure in Hoboken has reached us in London, and this latest demonstration of your corporate activity has a peculiar flavor of delight for us. Your success enables us to write. In a moment we shall make that statement clear; let us first express our congratulations and esteem.

Sirs, we are the Brothers Club. Among our tally we can number some who have been able to write as individuals, upon the individual gallantries of members of your Club. We have a Bone, a Tomlinson, a Morley with us, all undistinguished by their initials, and we are just as proud of them as our rules will allow. They may have written severally, at one time or another. But never until this moment have we, as a body, considered it legitimate to express our admiration of your collective actions. We almost wrote

when you acquired the *Tusitala*. We did not quite get round to doing it; we were not sure we should be justified. But now, sirs, we feel safe.

We are the Brothers Club; that is, we are the Vocal Members of it, the champions of unnumbered others, who are linked by one established qualification. To be a member of our Club one must be known, one must, indeed, be tolerably widely known—not as one's self, but as the brother of someone more famous. Society, slow to aid many projects, favors ours. Society is, indeed, our election committee. And Society works simply and effectively. The moment one is labelled "brother of so-and-so"; the moment one is called upon to answer, in reply to "Are you such-an-one?", "No, I'm his brother"—that moment makes him one of Us.

At first, sirs, we were a defensive league. We came together to hold indignation meetings. We raised Cain. He was our first member. We honored him—he struck for freedom. But those were the turbulent beginnings; we have been mellowing since then. We have sorted things out now, and recognize within our ranks two spiritual divisions. There is the Right Wing, sir, the Brothers; and the Left, the Younger Brothers. The Younger Brothers are undisciplined; some, indeed, retain hope. But the Brothers are those of any age who know the worst, and patiently consolidate it. In them is our real strength.

We aim now to avoid strife. Our motto is, as it has been for years, the best is the friend of the good. We are ourselves the champions of the second-rate. It is, for instance, the custom of our meetings to pass round repartee which never was quite crushing. Dear John Wordsworth—how we remember him! There was, as you recall, a dinner, at which a lady leaned across to John and asked, "And do you write, Mr. Wordsworth, as well as your brother?" He replied: "No, madame, not nearly as well." Loyal and yet reckless John—such wit, you see, is dangerous. Too much of it would have made him known for his own sake; we should have lost a member. But John had room to play in. The more celebrated is one's *nominee*, the more license is given one. You see the point, sir. If the fame of one's brother declines, loyalty to our tradition shuts us up.

To our most perfect members, it would be unthinkable to run the risk of expulsion; yet we are energetic, sir, and within our limit, we wish to live. So it is we watch our nominees most closely. We fan their fame, which gives us life; if their fame sinks, we die, as inconspicuously as may be. We'll do the second-best we can; and really, sir, the record, as we look round, is inspiring. Jared, who was our oldest member—how well he knew how long he might live, and yet remain our good companion. Those seven years, by which Methuselah eclipsed him—how fortunate they were for us, who loved the not-quite-oldest man's white beard. Our youngest member now is Willie Coogan. One of our strongest intellects is Mycroft Holmes. But boasting, sir, is something we are sparing of. You may be more interested to know our troubles. We nearly split quite recently upon the Sitwells. We have sometimes to look upon a group as one, if they are uncongenial; sometimes we have to look upon one as a group, and make an honorary member of him. There are a number of subtle distinctions, which we practise. For though Society, as we have said, is our election committee, we have means of opening doors, when the committee does not please us. And we have means of shutting them; we do not wish to keep any who are not resigned enough to remain.

What we have said will show you something of the age and spread of our Club. We have given you an inkling of its past—of its beginning, of how it sobered down (the many brothers Joseph brought us were an aid in this), of its activity. In great times we are powerful. Napoleon, as you know, was much afraid of us. He tried to bribe his brothers from us by giving them kingdoms; but we had the stronger hold—they could take the bribes and yet remain with us. In narrow times, we are more circumscribed. We have been in durance for some years. Then, by the notable infusion which we have mentioned, it occurred to us to make ourselves, in a corporate way, consanguine with the Three Hours for Lunch Club. And ever since then we have watched you, perhaps more closely than you know. While you are silent, so, perforce, are we. But we rejoice when you are active, for that permits us to be vocal too. Pray keep it up, sir; we are backing the Rialto Theatre, in the hopes that it will give you added fame. You are working, sir, not for yourselves alone, but to preserve us from the threat we fear—the threat of derivative extinction. That thought should give you courage; and if you act accordingly, adding lustre to lustre, we, sir, shall follow in the shadow, pursuing our activities with nearly all our might.

We are, Sirs,

THE BROTHERS CLUB.

P.S. Please fittingly express our love to William Rose Benét.

* * *

Of the author of this manifesto we can only say, as is already being said in London of someone else, that he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

"A South German, who started as a bookseller, earns his living as a writer, would like to be a painter, and makes his home for preference in Italy—such is Hermann Hesse, one of the finest German prose-writers of the day," says the London *Observer*. "His new book, 'Betrachtungen' (S. Fischer) is a collection of essays written during twenty years, some of them war years. Hesse has important things to say—on music, travel, Dostoevsky, Jean Paul, oriental art, Jacob Boehme, Holderlin, and many other subjects, especially war."

The Last Question of All

ALL lines of thought about literature lead to one ultimate question. It lies at the end of more roads than Rome ever did. Why are we moved so strongly and so strangely as we are by certain simple groupings of a few ordinary words?

Bacon says that the nature of things is best seen in the smallest possible quantities of them. Take, then, some unit or atom of beautiful writing—a line of verse or a sentence of prose that has stirred you uncommonly. It may be Falstaff's "we have heard the chimes at midnight." Or

The tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world.

Or "visited all night by troops of stars," in Wordsworth's poem on Mont Blanc. How comes it that these special sequences of quite common words can take hold of you with a high hand, filling your mind and thrilling it with a poignant ecstasy, a delicious disquiet, akin to the restlessness and the raptures of lovers? When I was an idle boy going to school and discovered the lines, out of Scott,

But the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow
And the bittern sound his drum
Booming from the sedgy shallow,

they made me so drunk with delight that I had to walk up and down empty compartments of trains, saying them over and over again, as incapable as a blue-bottle either of sitting quiet or of ceasing to hum. The adult Stevenson would seem to have been bitten by much the same gadfly when first he read certain verses of Meredith's "Love in the Valley":

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
Wavy through the dusk lit by one large star.

He told Mr. Yeats how he went about whooping the heavenly stuff to the Dryads of the Riviera, "waking with it all the echoes of the hills about Hyères." Everybody must know the sensation. But how to account for it?

Of course you can easily go a small part of the way towards a full explanation. In the Meredith lines, for example, certain contributory lures and graces are obvious—the engaging "Sing a song o' sixpence," melody, the play that is made with a few picked consonants, winged and liquidly gliding, and the winning way the second line is retarded at its close by the three stressed monosyllables, like a well-mannered horse pulled up by a well-mannered rider. The Scott passage, too, has its taking devices of craftsmanship. There is the deftly managed consonantal chord of *bdf* pervading it, to its advantage. There is the drum-like beat of its main vowels, and the reedy hiss of the successive sibilants to help evoke the picture in the two last lines.

Such devices are not to be sniffed at. They help. They are like jewels and lace skilfully worn by a beautiful woman. But these are not the intrinsic and ultimate beauty of their wearer. The Venus of Melos had none; and some of the most lovely sentences ever written are almost as bare of any applied ornament, anything we can detach and define. The critical analyst has to throw up his hands, almost at once, when he tries to precipitate with his acids the charm of

Beauty falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath dimmed Helen's eyes

or of

She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies.

The context, of course, counts for something: every gem is the better for a fine setting. But no gem of the first water is made by its setting. These small splinters of perfection in the art of letters would still bewitch us if they had no context at all. As if to prove as much, Shakespeare struck off one of them—

Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
and left it contextless, to haunt the minds of poets

like one of the isolated granules of beauty surviving from the Greek Anthology. For it, too, has the essential gem-like quality—a kind of dazzling unreason, as it may seem at first sight—a power of taking you captive without giving you any materials for a presentable explanation of your surrender.

* * *

If we cannot say why we capitulate thus, we may at least try to fix and describe the sensations that visit us while the charm is at work.

For one thing, we are deeply excited. We are shaken or lifted out of our ordinary state of consciousness. Many of our faculties are, for the moment, enhanced. We feel keener perceptions coming into action within us. We are given the use of more than our normal stock of penetrative sympathy: we feel that we can enter into people's feelings, and understand the quality of their lives better than ever before.

Another effect of the drug is that, while it is acting strongly, the whole adventure of mankind upon the earth gains, in our sight, a new momentousness, precariousness, and beauty. The new and higher scale of power in ourselves seems to be challenged by an equal increase in the size of the objects on



C. E. MONTAGUE

which it is exercised. Living becomes a grander affair than we had ever thought.

A third effect on the mind is a powerful sense—authentic or illusory—of being in the presence of extraordinary possibilities. You feel as if new doors of understanding and delight were beginning to open around you. Some sort of mysterious liberation or empowerment seems to be approaching. You are assured, in an unaccountable way, that wonderful enlightenments, still unreceived, are on their way to you, like new stars that are nearing the point in space at which they will come within the range of our sight.

These sensations may not be defined or measured as closely as doctors measure a patient's temperature, his pulse, and his blood pressure. And yet they are worth describing, if only because you will find that you are also describing something else by the way. The nearer you get to saying just what you feel, when under the spell of great writing, the nearer are you, too, to defining the state of mind and heart in which great things are written.

* * *

That state is not normal. It is not the state of each particular writer "at par." To do great things he has to be far above himself, however high his normal level of thought and feeling may be. Not of Oliver Goldsmith alone among writers might it be said that he "wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll." Nor need we suppose that Goldsmith himself did any injustice to the normal level of his mind when he failed to shine at the club in conversation with Reynolds and Burke. More probably the angelic music and wit of his best prose came to the birth when he was worked up to an extraordinary state of mental fertility and felicity. More often than not the great writer, or other great artist,

when seen and heard in the flesh, is a disappointing figure to innocent persons who seek his acquaintance under the old illusion that the living, breathing man must be greater than his work. Seek not to "see Shelley plain." He may be plain indeed. Tennyson could be a boor, and the inexpressive grunts of Turner are notorious.

And yet this state of pregnant excitement is not a mystery wholly concealed from ordinary people or absolutely excluded from their experience. Almost everyone must at some time or other have found how it feels to be utterly absorbed in the writing of a private letter—how you lose count of time and have no sense of disagreeable effort; how words of a strange rightness come easily into your head and apt quotations drift into your reach; how some scene that you describe becomes more and more amusing to yourself, in recollection, while you describe it; and how at the end you are rather tired and rather happy, and read the thing through and say to yourself that you would never have thought you could do it so well.

That common experience is not different in kind, but only in the degree of its intensity, from an onset of creative passion in a great imaginative artist. Where such an artist differs most widely from the common run of men and women is in his power of inducing that exceptional condition in himself and of working it up to a pitch that for the rest of us is quite unattainable. For most of his time he may seem, and indeed he may be, quite a dull man, a humorless egoist or a trumpeting bore. He may cut no figure at all among the wits and sages of a country house or a bar parlor. But, with a pen in his hand, he can "have a devil" at will, or at least some of the many times he wills it. In a way he is like a car with a quite commonplace basic speed but a remarkable power of acceleration. And in a way he is like those gifted fighting men in whom the manual exercise of combat means to light a wonderful fire in the blood. To them, battle brings ecstasy. They are ravished above pain and fear; and in that temporary trance of exemption from common checks upon fury, and of immunity from common maladies of the will, they can delightedly do and endure things preposterous or impossible in the eyes of cool common sense.

It is seldom that a great artist has anything new to say about life. The things that touch or amuse him are usually those by which the greatest number of ordinary people were touched and amused before him. The minds of Vergil and Sophocles, Shakespeare and Dante and Goethe seem in the main to have brooded over just those staple themes which elicit less memorable expressions of melancholy from Smith, Brown, and Jones—lost youth and severed friends and disappointed love and the consignment of beauty to dust and the frustration of hopes that once seemed too powerful ever to fail. If a great tragic writer were to arise in England to-day, it is likely that his musings on the perishable splendor of man's fate and the irreparableness of action would take the form most widely prevalent among the more sensitive portion of his countrymen—perhaps an afternoon sense of sad sunshine and overblown flowers, the outlived expectations of a melting empire on an earth that is rubbing its own features down and that moves always more and more slowly round a sun that is losing its heat. The theme would be commonplace. But when the great tragic writer had brooded upon it, then it would have gained the charm of a new and extraordinary intensity.

A great and available reserve of sheer intensity—intensity of perception and of emotion—it is in his possession of this that a great artist differs most deeply from his fellows. In no vague or rhetorical sense of the words, he sees and hears more intensely. Science tells us that what we call a sight or a sound is a product of two distinct forces. As waves break upon a sea-coast, certain undulatory movements that throb through the air break upon delicate shores in a man's eyes or ears. From the beach, so to speak, word is sent thereupon by a nerve to a special bureau of the brain; and, with this material in hand, the brain builds up for itself the song of a lark or the color and form of a rose in a world that, apart from this act of the brain, is utterly silent and dark. So there is no one rose or lark, perceived identically by