

There is no pretense of great knowledge, but there is the shining wisdom of a modest, sly-humored woman who can say on Holy Night:

How stupendous this thing:  
To sit in a ring  
Of candlelight furled,  
And beyond—  
A black world.

\* \* \*

**H**OLGER LUNDBERGH is a bilingual poet, who spends much of his day writing, reading, and translating Swedish prose and for relaxation writes English verse of a reasonably high standard. His opening poem, "Word Business," is full of conversational lines which disguise and then gradually unveil the poet's problem of communication. Not new to the American literary scene, Lundbergh has contributed verse to our magazines for at least twenty years. He was a friend of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, and the poem "Ellerslie," dedicated to them, is one of his better pieces. It begins:

It was winter then. A tall, metallic night,  
Brittle as ekkshell, keen as a sharpened plow  
Lifted over the house and the bare, black trees,  
And the silent river. It is summer now . . .

Lundbergh has a deft talent in rhyme, and a puckish gift in his humorous and satiric verse, but it is the few serious poems in this book which warrant attention. The conversation pieces fray off into spindrift, but we can admire his vignette of the "Old Men" of New York fumbling with umbrellas and eyeglasses, suffering traffic fright, mending buttons, puttering endlessly, and drinking coffee . . .

Old men, proud in their loneliness,  
Lonely in their pride.

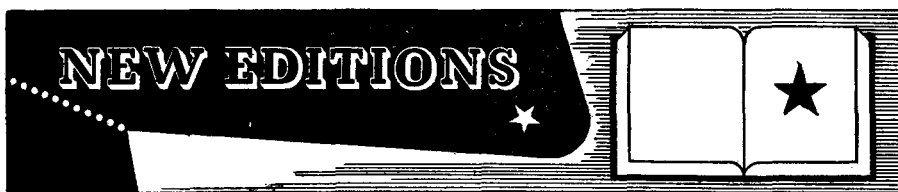
## *The Bull's Eye*

By Margaret Bartlett

**I** SWEAR by my thigh I am fathomless  
as a white sky whiter  
with stars in darkness than  
is death or terror or moonlight,  
and more alive.

I swear by my soul I am equal  
to the anger in a bull's eye  
and by my feet that I  
can dance him level with a firefly,  
the handsome beast.

I swear by my hand I know power  
sweeter than sword in arbiter  
and rose, but I swear by my own  
that I know red without blood  
in a bull's heart.



**R**EADERS who are interested in varieties of critical practice will find several diverse examples of the art in four recently published volumes: "Enemies of Promise" (Macmillan, \$4), by Cyril Connolly; "A Chilmarm Miscellany" (Dutton, \$4), by Van Wyck Brooks; Edmund Wilson's "The Triple Thinkers" (Oxford, \$4); and "Walter Pater: Selected Works" (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, \$5), edited with an introduction by Richard Aldington.

Speaking broadly, Mr. Connolly is an impressionistic, entertaining observer of the contemporary literary scene, well-read in several languages, who is capable of shrewd judgments and sharp critical thrusts; and who manages, rather remarkably, to combine in his auctorial character a certain elegance of attitude with a good deal of mental untidiness. Mr. Brooks, in his studies of American literary and cultural history—which are well represented in the present miscellany—has become more and more immersed in the thoughts and words of other writers, more and more saturated with them, and increasingly dependent on them; with the result that his work has steadily diminished in strictly critical content, while becoming an elaborate reconstruction of things past—a colorful and at times brilliant patchwork, so ingeniously and harmoniously put together that one hardly notices the maker's stitches, and is more aware of the prevailing uniformity of mood and tone than of technique. Mr. Wilson is by all odds the most serious, most penetrating, most resourceful, and most robust of the three living critics in our group; he is an investigator who seeks neither comfort nor refuge in easy generalizations, and he is at his best when dealing determinedly with complex and self-contradictory subjects. Walter Pater, finally, was a connoisseur and collector, whose art of living consisted in exposing himself to as many manifestations of beauty as possible, who colored the objects of his passionate contemplation with the hues of his own nature and imagination, and whose experience of beauty begat new beauties, as these experiences were lovingly recorded and related in studied, luminous, and polished prose.

In addition to his reflections on literary figures of the utilitarian Twen-

ties and the socially-minded Thirties, upon Mandarin prose, poetry, realism, and popular style, Mr. Connolly writes the story of his school days, an intimate story which we may value for what it tells us of the author of "The Unquiet Grave" and "The Condemned Playground," but which is embarrassing in some of its confessional moments. Mr. Brooks's studies of periods and individuals are augmented by "Notes from a Journal," which open windows into the author's mind and contain such sage reflections as: "A writer is important not by the amount of territory he enters or claims, but by the amount he colonizes. Tolstoy and Balzac fill all the space they occupy. They do not merely lie, like Milton's Satan, full many a rood prone on the flood." Mr. Wilson's papers—illuminatingly concerned with such subjects as the ambiguities of Henry James, A. E. Housman's Latin scholarship, John Jay Chapman's life and letters, Bernard Shaw's tangled skein of ideas and qualities, Ben Jonson's comedies, Pushkin, and the nature of poetry—are enriched by two items of a different sort: a most amusing account of a visit to Paul Elmer More, and a memoir of a school teacher, Mr. Rolfe, which is, delightfully, a model of its kind. And Pater's "Selected Works" give us not only the essayist of "Appreciations," "The Renaissance," and "Imaginary Portraits," but also, in full panoply, the author of "Marius"—that unique prose fiction which George Moore once paid a dubious compliment by declaring that in it the English language lay in state.

Criticism of another variety will be found in "America in Perspective" (Pelican Mentor, 35¢), in which Henry Steele Commager has collected foreign views of the United States, from those of Crèvecoeur and Tocqueville down to Roussy de Sales' and Denis W. Brogan's. And a peculiarly American phenomenon—the "criminal" law firm of Howe & Hummel—is entertainingly preserved in memory by Richard H. Rovere's "The Magnificent Shysters" (Grosset, \$1) . . . "The Comedies of William Congreve," "Tristram Shandy," Disraeli's "Coningsby," and Nimrod's "Life of a Sportsman" (an old favorite of mine) are all sound additions to John Lehman's Chiltern Library.

—BEN RAY REDMAN.

*The Saturday Review*

took years to work through the comparative safety of adolescence, and only showed the beginning of emotional maturity in that fragment of "Weir of Hermiston," in which a young man who has openly defied his father falls in love with a woman whom he knows that his father would forbid him. At which point Stevenson died.

With Samuel Butler we find ourselves in the midst of bristling oddities and ambiguities; confronted by a character complex enough to reward the best efforts of peering curiosity. Mr. Cole gives a good account of himself in his investigation of the strange duck who was known to his contemporaries as "Erewhon" Butler, a curious, cranky writer who had produced, besides his successful satire, a strangely mixed collection of books, in which he almost always appeared to be saying something wilfully perverse." And that was just what he was doing, as often as not, for his whole thinking, writing life was an ever-widening revolt against authority of all kinds; a revolt founded on resentment against the paternal authority which had once, among other things, gulled him in the matter of revealed religion. But Mr. Cole makes a good point when he insists that the rebel against so many Victorian institutions himself remained a Victorian to the last, and another when he draws attention to the fact that the roaring lion of the written word was a hare in action. Indeed, generally speaking, it is hard to see how Mr. Cole could have done a better job, in so few pages, of analyzing Butler's difficult character, explaining the interrelationship of his life and work.

Mr. Cole's book is a guide that can be trusted by any reader. Mr. Furbank's book, on the other hand, is for readers who know Butler well, who can bring the weight of their own knowledge to bear on the critic's ideas and assertions. It offers many valuable insights—as when Mr. Furbank declares that "it is the whole nature of Butler's theories which takes them out of competition with the theories which they are intended to oppose."

However the sum of Mr. Furbank's study remains, for me at least, both muddled and obscure. Nor am I even sure of his intentions. He sets up as a champion of Butler against his detractors, but his performance makes one ask who will defend Butler against his defender. And, among other uncertainties, the reader is left wondering just how much Mr. Furbank means to imply by his final juxtaposition of Butler and Wilde.

*The thrilling story of a man  
who has spent his life*

*in sailing ships*

*from Australian barques*

*to Swedish clippers,*

*from Dutch*

*schooners to*

*Arab dhows.*



# ALAN VILLIERS'

## THE SET OF THE SAILS

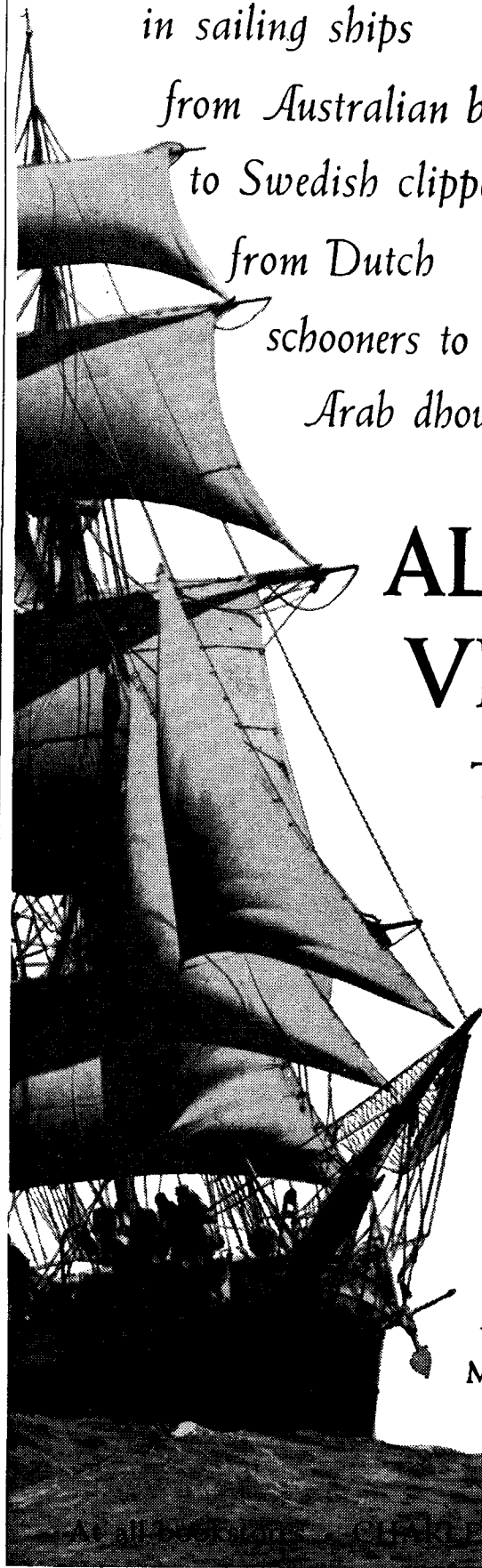
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# THE FINE ARTS

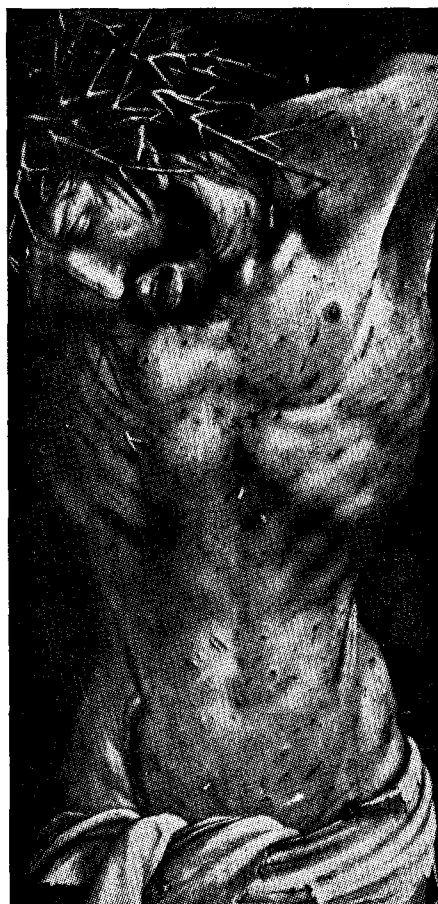
## GRUENEWALD AND THE MODERNS

ONE of the most emphatic charges now brought against modern artists is that they ignore the pictorial traditions of the far past. In fact we are urged to believe that contemporary painters are stuck on a merry-go-round, Cézanne its starter and Picasso the brass ring, good for another ride on the same monotonous circuit. Perhaps the charge is true of a few neophytes who rush from art school to the 57th Street midway, over-rehearsed and emotionally unprepared for revolutionary techniques. With dedicated professional artists, however, the case is different, and I cannot think of a single important figure of whom the accusation is just. Of course, there are many painters of settled vision who no longer look at their predecessors' work, but go their own way, self-nourished. There are many more who are periodically strengthened by past accomplishments in their medium. The theory that these men spend all their time examining contemporary art is false. Nor do they concentrate on post-impressionist developments, as sometimes claimed. At the Metropolitan Museum or the Louvre, one is as likely to find them standing before a Dosso Dossi or a Cranach as before a Renoir. The Metropolitan itself could prove modern artists' catholicity of taste if it would hold an exhibition of contemporary pictures showing the specific influence of the Museum's resources—the Max Weber canvas of a lecture he heard there on Giotto, for example, or Peter Blume's "Light of the World," in which appear the Metropolitan's models of Notre Dame cathedral and of the machine used to erect "Cleopatra's Needle" in Central Park. By means of such an exhibition the Museum could display the past not as a bulwark against the present, but as the latter's source of momentum. It could, but will it?

I was thinking about this matter the other day while reading one of H. Bittner & Company's distinguished publications—Gruenewald's "Drawings."\* For Gruenewald is a case in point. It might be assumed that he would have had little effect on modern painting. His masterpiece, the Isen-

heim Altar, which was commissioned in 1508-09, is at Colmar, an Alsatian town seldom visited by tourists. Moreover, even among art historians Gruenewald until quite lately was held in secondary esteem compared to his Italian contemporaries of the early sixteenth century or to his countryman and acquaintance Albrecht Dürer. Yet somehow over the past thirty years Gruenewald has come to assume for a number of living painters the sort of importance accorded to El Greco earlier in our century. Around 1920 he began to be revered by his heirs in modern Germany, especially Otto Dix and the other mordant realists of the "New Objectivity." More recently his influence has spread to other lands, and may now be felt in the capitals of the Western world.

Let me cite a few examples. In 1932 Picasso completed a group of drawings based on Gruenewald's "Crucifixion," the central theme of the Isen-



—From Gruenewald's "Drawings."  
"Crucifixion."

heim Altar (see cut). Very probably this was the starting point for an upsurge of interest in the German master among modern painters outside his native land. Picasso's enthusiasm must have been highly infectious, not only because of his commanding position, but because his taste for Gruenewald's emotional violence contrasted severely with his earlier predilection, as an abstractionist, for such masters of formal calculation as Ingres, Seurat, and Cézanne. At any rate, Gruenewald's influence has grown rapidly since the Picasso drawings appeared. In England the impact of the Isenheim "Crucifixion" is evident in Graham Sutherland's recent painting of the same subject for the Church of St. Matthew in the Midlands; it is traceable as well in a remarkable series of pictures, collectively entitled "The Man at the Microphones," by Francis Bacon—one of the most vigorous personalities of postwar European painting. In New York a few years ago the young Chilean-American painter Matta Echaurren made major changes in his style after studying the turning, twisting forms of the hands in the Isenheim figures of the Virgin and saints. At roughly the same date German-born Max Ernst, now an American citizen, won a film producer's competition for a painting on the "Temptation of St. Anthony" theme; his prize-winning entry is related to Gruenewald's image of St. Anthony tortured by evil spirits.

What is perhaps most astonishing about the rise of Gruenewald's influence among modern painters is that to this day only a few of the latter can have seen the original Altar at Colmar; I would guess that Max Ernst alone of the artists just mentioned may possibly have done so. For a long time, however, a number of magnificent photographs of the Isenheim Altar were on view in the window of a bookshop near the Left Bank cafe Deux Magots, where many of the leading painters of the interwar era assembled each afternoon. In 1936 these or comparable photographs were published in a folio by *Cahiers d'Art*, a magazine whose activities were followed closely by advanced artists. Thus after an interval of 400 years a masterwork reached a new and powerful audience through a window display or through a book of plates; in either case through reproductions.

SUCH a process of semination must seem odd if not heretical to art historians, since for them a study of original materials is an essential of research and understanding. Yet what counts among painters is the ability to make creative rather than exact

\*THE DRAWINGS OF MATHIS GOTHART NITHART CALLED GRUENEWALD. Edited, with critical notes, by Guido Schoenberger. New York: H. Bittner & Co. 1948 64 pp. \$12.50.