

# COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

## EDITORIAL NOTE

With this number *Scrutiny* reaches the middle of its fifth year, and we think it will be agreed that it has done so without any lowering of standards and without falling uncondonably short of the inaugural undertaking. That it performs an important function we are encouraged to believe by the recognition it has won wherever English is read. It has become an institution, and has provided the stimulus for the founding of at least two other serious periodicals. But sales are far from commensurate with influence—or circulation: one copy goes through many pairs of hands. Not that we regret such patronage as we enjoy from libraries and public reading-rooms: on the contrary we urge sympathizers to take every opportunity they may find of persuading such institutions to subscribe to *Scrutiny*. But we need too the fullest personal support of individual sympathizers. There are many who do not realize the difference, from our point of view, between the casual purchase of separate numbers and the steady assured support that can be counted on beforehand.

We need, then, more subscriptions, and the conversion of some of the goodwill *Scrutiny* enjoys into more active support. And we shall be grateful for propagandist efforts.

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We have to express our warmest thanks to a supporter who recently gave a welcome £3 in aid of *Scrutiny* finances.

T. S. ELIOT, 1925 - 1935

*COLLECTED POEMS 1909-1935, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 7/6 net).*

This new volume is an opportunity, not for a review—for 'The Poetry of T. S. Eliot' begins to have the intimidating sound of a Tripos question—but for asking whether anything in the development of the poetry accounts for the change in attitude that has made Mr. Eliot's work less *chic* now than it was ten years ago. Perhaps the ten years are a sufficient explanation—obvious changes in fashionable feeling have helped to make the sort-of-communist poets popular. But on the other hand it may be that these poets gratify some taste that Mr. Eliot also gratified in his earlier work but not in his later. If so it is surely a taste for evocations of the sense of protest that our circumstances set up in us; for it seems likely that at the present time it is expressions of protest in some form or other that most readily gain a poet popular sympathy. And up to *The Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men* this protest—whether distressed, disgusted, or ironical—was still the dominant note of Mr. Eliot's work, through all the subtlety and sensitiveness of the forms it took. Yet already in these two poems the suggestion was creeping in that the sufferers were also failures. We are the hollow men, but there are, besides,

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom

And in all the later work the stress tends to fall on the regret or suffering that arises from our own choices or our inherent limitations, or on the resignation that they make necessary. Without at the moment trying to define the change more closely one can point out certain characteristics of the later work which are likely to displease those who create the fashions of taste in poetry to-day, and which also contrast with Mr. Eliot's earlier work. First it is true that in some of the poems (most obviously in the Choruses from *The Rock*) there are denunciation and preaching, both of which people like just now. But there is a vital difference between the denunciation here and that, say, in *The Dog Beneath the Skin*: Mr. Eliot doesn't invite you to step across a dividing