

her 'curtains, cushions and gimcracks', and has the studio improvised by Felix attached. The Actons' differs from the Wentworths' in being just such a one as the Baroness would have liked to possess: it is the appropriate dwelling of a cultivated and wealthy man who knows the larger world and who—a point for the reader's appreciation if not for the Baroness's—has yet decided to remain an American.

Rich as *The Europeans* is in symbolic and poetic interest, deep and close as is its organization as fable and dramatic poem, it can still be read straightforwardly as novel of manners and social comedy. This may help to explain why its distinction has escaped notice. Jane Austen's novels are known as novels of manners, and, high as her conventional reputation stands, the qualities that make her a great artist have commonly been ignored. Her name comes up naturally and properly here. For in *The Europeans* it is pretty clearly from Jane Austen that James descends; what he offers is a development in the line of *Emma* and *Persuasion*.

F. R. LEAVIS.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Gentlemen,

I am most reluctant to trespass again on your valuable space, but the last paragraph of Mr. Davies' letter calls for a further explanation.

The title poem of the *Farewell and Welcome* volume contains a number of fossils from other poems published and unpublished. Lines 17-21 of *Fulfilment is not in Waiting* were written in 1939; certain lines of *Distance has Magic* appeared in a poem written in the autumn of 1939 and published in *Seven* some time in 1940; lines 1-10 of *Freedom lies in Acceptance* were written in the autumn of 1941. The whole section *Distance has Magic* was finished in its final form in the spring of 1941; I believe that Dr. Leavis received a copy of it in the summer of 1941<sup>1</sup> and it was published in the Swedish periodical *Ars* in 1941.

I have preferred to regard *Farewell and Welcome* as a single poem in five sections (the sub-title, 'A sequence of poems', given in *Scrutiny* for Summer 1942 was not authorized by me), and as the whole poem was not finished until June-July 1942, I thought it unnecessary to clutter up a short prefatory note with the details given above.

The *Scrutiny* version of the poem was slightly altered in the 1945 edition and again in *Selected Poems*.

Yours faithfully,

RONALD BOTTRALL.

PALAZZO BORGHESE, ROME.  
3rd June, 1948.

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<sup>1</sup>I have no record, so cannot volunteer corroboration.—F.R.L.

# COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

## A NOTE ON INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN THE U.S.A.

The peculiarly exposed position, culturally speaking, of America gives an added interest to any news of intellectual life there. Most European reporters, however, concentrate on the 'machine' aspects of American civilization and are chiefly concerned to bring out contrasts with conditions in Europe. We are consequently singularly ill-informed about what corresponds in New York, say, to the literary world (in the more respectable sense) of London or Paris. This is a reason for welcoming what Mlle. Simone de Beauvoir has to say (in *Les Temps Modernes*, December, 1947) about her visit to the U.S.A. in 1947. She went to New York from Paris (where she is a prominent figure in literary circles) eager, in spite of her imperfect command of the language, to make contacts with her 'opposite numbers' in New York.

The editor of a left-wing review told her with a smile that there was nothing worth seeing in New York, no good films, no good books. Apart from Faulkner, there were no living novelists worth reading. He advised her to study the 'classics' of the American tradition and expressed irritation at the French enthusiasm over third-rate sensational American writers. Mlle. de Beauvoir had ample opportunity to confirm that this attitude to literature was not an isolated reaction. She was later invited to a literary party where among the crowds who attended and the abundance of drinks ('encore plus d'alcool que de gens') she was introduced to someone described to her as the most intelligent man in America. She found herself surrounded by a group of writers belonging to yet another advanced left-wing review who (perhaps under the influence of the cocktails) spoke to her in an aggressive tone apparently quite unknown in Parisian literary circles. Their opinions about the relative value of contemporary American novelists were in substance those of the editor of the other review. Some of the heat of the discussion was generated by political differences. These writers, she reports, hated Stalinism with a passion known only to those who had once been Stalinists themselves.

Their chief complaint was of the hard lot of the American intellectual. Their review had a circulation of ten thousand, but what was that in comparison with the millions of the total population? Their feeling of isolation as a group was intensified by the lack of friendships among fellow-writers. Mlle. de Beauvoir's informants further explained that it was extremely difficult to make an honest living as a writer. That conditions are likely to grow worse is one of the conclusions that may be drawn from a *New Directions* pamphlet, *The Fate of Writing in America*, by J. T.