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THE INNOCENTS ABROAD

Mr. Van Doren concluded with his second lecture on American Literature. In contrast with the first, where he considered it largely from the view of Europeans, he chose to consider it this time as an American, examining his own world. The lecture was chiefly historical since the literature itself falls into an historical pattern, but it falls into a number of genera and it will be presented here in that light.

To begin with, there was the Discovery, an event unparalleled in history, either before or after. From the geographical side alone it was an immense prize; The Ghost Went West, to garble Hegel with a recent movie, in the person of Columbus, and found a continent greater than Europe in size and potential richness. The literature begins with the Journals of Columbus, and we know the discovery is not over, for it went on and still continues; there were endless roads to travel and endless things to see—endless things to find out. So there is the literature of the Frontier, of the West, of Texas, of California and the gold rush, and in later times, the T.V.A. and the New Deal. There was the Indian, "Who's Untutored Mind Sees God in the Clouds and Hears Him in the Wind," and who, being somewhat resentful of the white man's invasion, provoked a series of books on Indian Captivities; here was found the savage incarnate. Later on came the Leather Stocking Tales of Fenimore Cooper, which earned for that writer an international reputation and which every boy still reads, although Cooper's stories of the noble savages were resented by the public after the last, cruel battles, and subsequent writers such as Mark Twain portray the Indian as dirty, ignorant and contemptible. He was, by that time, having risen to untold heights of savagery and degradation through generous applications of rifles, whiskey, and dispossession. Newer and soberer researches such as the Government Survey indicate the Indian as being both philosophical and wise; he was devoutly religious and where his poetry was prayer, his philosophy was ritual. Besides the Indian there was the pioneer of whom men made legends: Kit Carson, Lewis and Clark, Wild Bill Hickock, Buffalo Bill, and Davy Crockett, who boasted that he could dive deeper, swim farther and come up drier than any man alive. Through all of these writings there is the persistent theme of discovery and newness, with consequent heroes; always there is the relentless pushing west and north, through the wilderness, across the prairies to the mountains, and down from the mountains to the sea. A desire to go places and see new things has always moved Americans, and Seymour Dunbar's "History of American Travel" is a classic of its kind in its description of the result.

After the Discovery there followed Experiment. Americans have always loved invention and novelty and they idolize the ingenious in such enterprises; but if the desire is for novelty it is not for real originality, and as such is probably not a healthy one. The love for Experiment is exemplified in the writings of Melville, Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne, whose "Scarlet Letter" is the story of a man who tried the experiment of living precisely as he pleased—and failed. In later times we have Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser, who began what has come to be called the Naturalism of American Literature. Their books, and those of practically everyone else who has followed, are distinguished by two characteristics: they speak of persons who are conditioned and without free will, made for better or worse by their society, and they try to tell us things we have not heard before. An example is Caldwell's "Tobacco Road," where we are impressed by the "authenticity" of misery; the book would be trivial if it were not about "real people," and that is its condemnation. When the Naturalists try to explain themselves they fare a bit worse; Steinbeck cheapened an otherwise excellent novel, "The Grapes of Wrath," by frequent, though short, chapters of philosophical interludes which served only to make the reader wish to omit them and get on with the story. Books today must be authentic, their sources correct, their subjects novel, and such terms are symbolic of poor understanding. Americans have either forgotten or they never knew that good literature talks about the same things over and over again; only it talks about universal, unconditioned things—love and death, tragedy and life, man and the universe—and if Americans really believe such thnigs no longer worth talking about they will never write anything worth a nickel. But if we are always seeking new ideas and new theories, it is because we have no tradi-

tion and no gods to steady us; we have no religion and no past, only something like a religion in something like a past. American writers who are aware of the fact for the most part consider themselves failures, and the list of them includes Melville, Henry Adams, Hawthorne, and Mark Twain.

Next there is the Humor. Humor is said to be bounded by national limits, but we like to think that American humorists have been among the best. One of the best examinations of this is in Constance Rourke's "American Heroes," in which she includes as humorists even Emerson and Henry James, and she speaks of humor as "that which is prior to wit." Perhaps the greatest of them all, Mark Twain, the man who brought the Mississippi East, is a vast stream of wise humor. In his conversation and speeches, which he used to give all over the country, he was unparalleled, and the magnificent dinners he sponsored at the old Hotel Delmonico in New York were usually graced with a delightful lecture. There was Artemus Ward, deserving of immortality by the one statement alone: "Today I visited the tomb of the late lamented Shakespeare; it is a great success." Besides Twain and Ward there is Ring Lardner: God alone knows how many hours one could spend laughing over his stories and "plays," and the question of whether he is a great writer or not is put aside while we have the pleasure of reading him. Now there are White and Thurber, made famous in The New Yorker and by their own books, whose humor is acid but nonetheless effective. And although the lecturer didn't mention him, we ought not to forget Don Marquis.

So much is our literature: our novels, plays, essays, philosophy, our religion and our love, our thoughts and aspirations. None of it is good enough. Mr. Van Doren gave us, as Americans, some advice before leaving the platform; advice that is probably a translation into his terms of Mr. Buchanan's Advice to Young Men Concerning Prisms, which stated, in effect, that for ten years or so we ought to look for a prism through which to view the world. When we have found it we will have learned to live; Mr. Van Doren would say we will have learned to die. Both require an understanding of the tragedy of life and death, of our semi-immortality. For the knowledge that we have for a few years is immortal and unchangeable; our bodies are evil and corrupt and must pass away. For a time, the whole world, whether we are Aristotelians or Kantians, is at our fingertips; then it is gone, to be revived in us only by myths. As Americans we must recognize that the world is at our fingertips, but that it will not always be there, at least in any physical way. We must reach out and take it while we have the chance, that is, we must become a great people, and when we realize that greatness is only for a time we wil' write eloquently of the tragedy. If we do not reach, if we do not take the Pascalian leap, we will tumble on the edge forever, and like the leaves, turn red and fall.

—C.V.D.
—J.V.D.

TWO POEMS

Mentally dull she was, and o the singing
flies and beetles of her dehydrated
summer, when she asked for peace, asking;

We found her in the meadow because we loved her
damp eyes and slick eyes, eyes
round and round, and moving her square hips,
pressing flat the flowers under her tread,
she tramped the summer days derelict,
perhaps needing medicine, and drifting;

But her lips were and her breasts were thick
round as round as eyes, eyes not resting,
looking but not seeing: so we found her.

She was having a dull summer, and we,

drew diagonals through her heart like a tree.

Ron 13

I don't now remember the numbers of the fleets,
Or of the armies, names of divisions, the generals;
The admirals I forget already, and the sweepers;
The islands I can't remember: green, ephemeral,

Forgotten; though still reminded I don't remember
M types of ship, Q types of enemy:
Kinds of friend; then; there was a dancer;
Her name was some Spanish, like the wind, but then I

Didn't know her, though I danced some with her;
But I've lost the touch, lost the war-contacts,
Lost the historical pluperfector
Of the good redblooded factual account,

But I remember the buNav number
Of one squadron, though I forget the officer.

—John Sanborn.

Of a Lecture About a Treatise on Climbing Mountains

In his lecture last Friday, Mr. Barr made a gallant and, on the whole, rather successful effort to expound in an hour and a half the ideas set forth by Arnold Toynbee in the first three volumes of his work, "A STUDY OF HISTORY." We shall not attempt to recount in detail the lecture as Mr. Barr gave it, but rather to give what seem to us to be the more important facts of the lecture, with such comment as seems appropriate.

Toynbee's work is the most recent effort of man to answer the question of his origin and his destiny by the study of History. Toynbee's answer to these questions is contained in an image, the image of the mountain of time. This is a steep, virtually perpendicular slope, jagged with occasional shelfs, ledges, crevices, etc., on which we see men representing the societies of all ages. Some are lying on ledges, still in death, some are clinging to the naked rock, their whole strength expended in maintaining their hold, while some few still climb feebly toward the next ledge. The total number who have attempted the ascent is uncounted, for there are few of which there is any trace left to count. Of those which are still visible twenty-one reached a height sufficient to warrant our calling them civilizations.

These are:

1. The Egyptian
2. The Andian (Inca)
3. The Sinic (Yellow River)
4. The Minoan
5. The Sumeric
6. The Mayan
7. The Indic (Brahmin)
8. The Hittite
9. The Syriac
10. The Hellenic
11. The Western
12. The Orthodox Christian (Russian)
13. The Orthodox Christian (Balkan)
14. The Far Eastern (China)
15. The Far Eastern (Korea & Japan)
16. The Arabic
17. The Hindu
18. The Babylonian
19. The Ucetec
20. The Mexic
21. The Iranic

These are connected to one another in various ways, the most interesting of which (to Westerners at least) is that of the Universal Church. For Toynbee thinks that the Western culture was born out of Hellenic by the Roman Catholic Church. The Religion itself is, in these cases, that of the internal Proletariat, the downtrodden masses of the old, decaying civilization which is taken over by the external Proletariat, the barbarian tribes on the fringe of the decaying civilization. These tribes break in the Universal Empire which the old Civilization has become, are converted to the Universal Church, and become the New Civilization.

In addition to these complete civilizations Toynbee discovers several abortive attempts. Of these the star example is the Irish, which was killed by the Western just as it was making good progress. It was in some ways akin to the Greek Orthodox, and, as it, like the Orthodox and the Western, came from the Hellenic Universal Church, the Western Culture may here be accused of fratracide. The whole business of whether the damage done to outsiders by an expanding civilization is justified seems to be passed over with a shudder.

Besides the Civilization which "made it," and those which started but failed, there are the Eskimo, (too cold), the Nomad, (today), both of whom faced too big a job, and the Polynesian, which got off too easily.

This leads us to Toynbee's answer to the Question, "How does a civilization come about?" It is implicit in the image of the Mountain, and is contained in the phrase, "Challenge and Response." A group of men living in a primitive society meet an obstacle, either natural or human. If they are crushed by it, nothing happens; if they respond to the challenge, they are soon confronted with another, and so on. The example here is Egypt. Tonbee thinks that during the Ice Age the Sahara was a fertile plain in which lived tribes of hunters. Then as the Glaciers retreated, the plain gradually dried up. Some of the hunters went south and west to the Sudan, where they continued as before. Some, however, went east into a wild tangle of swamp and jungle along the river Nile. Clearing this was the first challenge which led to the rise of the Egyptiac Civilization.

There are two obvious points for an attack on Toynbee's theory. The first question, which was thoroughly belabored in the question period is, "Is the Catalog of Civilizations complete?" For instance, is the Egyptiac Civilization really one, or is it divided by the Hyksos period? Are not the Babylonian and Sumerian Civilization parts of one continuous development? Is the Provencile culture a civilization? What happened to the great Kymer-Thai culture of the lower Orient? Is it really part of the Indic? Isn't the culture of the Niger and Sengal valleys another Ireland?

The only tests given by Toynbee as to whether a social unit is a civilization are: (1) The devolpment of art, religion, science, etc., and (2) the ability to maintain itself against other civilizations.

Thus the provencile is not a civilization, even if you admit that the religions and artistic difference were sufficient to make it so, for it failed to survive. Some of the others pose more difficult problems. The second great question to be asked, is the old one of causation. Is Toynbee's answer good, and how far does it go? Oswald Spengler, in the second volume of his "Decline of the West," expends a considerable portion of his immense store of invective against "English Type, Evolutionary Causality" in history. This type of causality, of which Darwin is the leading example, postulates the slow change of life forms to meet changing conditions. Spengler believes in "form fulfilment," that is, that forms of life appear, increase, decline, and are succeeded by new forms. As evidence he offers the facts that before the diluvial age there were no forms resembling man, during and since that age, the man form has been substantially the same. Similarly, there are no civilizations before the Ice Age. Such forms originate in a sudden "Wandlung" (mutation), the cause of which is a mystery to us.

We are not certain whether or not Toynbee is one of these English Evolutionaries. There is certainly a trace of them in "Challenge and Response," in so far as this is based on the changing conditions. The saving clause seems to be the not unusual one of the presence of a God. As this is another way of saying mystery, the two systems tend to the same blank wall, "how did the form Civilization come to be?" To put it in another manner, a challenge is a change of condition, response is adaptation to the new condition.

The main interest in Toynbee, as in any other Philosophy of History is in what conclusions may be drawn with regard to our future. In Spengler there is only one possible answer. A Civilization has a life cycle just as does a plant. It is born, it grows and develops, flowered, it remains only to die gracefully.

In Toynbee, on the other hand, things are much less certain. A civilization is born, rises from challenge to challenge until it reaches the one final challenge, Political unity. Here the challenge though finally overcome is so strong as to completely exhaust the powers of the Civilization. After that it falls on the ledge of unity and awaits its end, or less poeticaly, waits to be destroyed by less exhausted neighbors. Our civilization has reached the stage where Unity is a necessity. The World Wars I and II have all the earmarks of what in other civilization was the beginning of the end. Perhaps they were the end, perhaps not. In any event, it is virtually certain that No. III would do the trick. No civilization has ever achieved its final unity by peaceful means, but there is nothing in the theory of "Challenge and Response" to prevent one from so doing. It is Toynbee's hope that Western Culture was not killed in 1914, nor in 1939, and that we will meet the heretofore "final" challenge with full response, and enough reserve energy to scale new heights.

—Morgan.

CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL

A problem usually faces anyone reviewing amateur performances at St. John's of how to be honestly critical yet sufficiently grateful and polite. For, as it must always be remembered, these performances are gratuitous, and usually the only manifestation of sustained interest in a Fine Art among us. But a facil and satisfactory solution to the problem is simply to take the performance at its full worth, considering only the facts of the music and musicianship undiluted by patronizing sentiments. After all, fear set aside, the best show of appreciation for the Chamber Music Recital is the serious and sincere criticism we are willing to give it.

Mrs. Benac is an old friend through Chamber Music performances of the last several years. She has always been our stand-by violinist, but in the Mozart A Major Sonata her playing had not, for the most part, the polish I recall in those past recitals. I qualified with for the most part because I did not mean to include the last movement. The difficulty seemed to be a technical one—too light bowing in the fast passages destroying the tone —rather than faulty phrasing. In the last movement, however, Mrs. Benac launched her best style: vigorous bowing, rich tone and clear, even variations of volume. The piano part, played by Mr. William Buchanan, was too loud, but the fault might have been due partly to the piano being opened too wide. I disagree, moreover, with Mr. Buchanan's percussive interpretation of many passages that seemed to me lyrical. I realize that this is done to keep Mozart from sounding sentimental and romantic, but it can be accomplished, dubious though the purpose may be, while still preserving more legato playing in passages which obviously call for it. The tempo of the piece, though perhaps slightly slow, was consistent and violin and piano stayed together except for some of the first movement. I think, however, that these criticisms are very minor compared to the excellent musicianship of both Mr. Buchanan and Mrs. Benac. In a real sense their performance did justice to the work, no mean achievement.

I had never heard the Hindemith Sonata before and I must already break my rough shell of detachment to voice the gratitude due Mr. Abrahamson and Mr. Goldstein for bringing us such a superb piece of music. I liked the performance very much too, and although Mr. Goldstein's tone could have been a little sharper, (I understand he had a bad cold), he has a fine sense of phrasing and a feeling for the complicated rythms. Mr. Abrahamsons' performance was the finest of the afternoon. One felt he had perfect control over his playing at every moment; there was no uneasiness in listening to him, which cannot be said for any of the other musicians. Like the Mozart, it was the last movement I thought particularly well played by both flute and piano,—as thrilling and poetic a climax as I have ever heard in a Chamber work.

The Mozart Sonata in C Major for four hands, although thoroughly enjoyable in Messrs. Fraker and Benedict's treatment, nevertheless was marred by a serious fault. Here the musicians seemed to be vying with one another, pressing each other almost petulantly. I refer, of course, to their playing only and not to their mental attitudes about which I am ignorant. The antagonism might have been merely a conscious interpretation of the four-hand sonata, but in any case I disagree with the method. Mr. Fraker, whose keyboard dexterity is wonderful, used a percussive treatment reminiscent of Mr. Buchanan's performance and also of harpsichord playing. (Yet in that particular style it was certainly fine playing.) Mr. Benedict produced more temperate sounds, bearing further witness to my feeling that he possesses an excellent "Mozart touch."

Haggin, the model for all self-assured young critics, puts the Bach G Major Sonata for Flute, Violin and Figured Bass in his list of the composer's "unimportant or uninteresting works." Although for the most part reliable, I think he overstates a bit in this case. But even if this stately little work is unimportant compared to Bach's greatest sonatas, it is hardly uninteresting. Mrs. Benac was in better form than for the Mozart, Mr. Goldstein's tone seemed clearer than before and Mr. Ablow completed the trio with a restrained treatment of the piano part. Too restrained, however, for he held back the pace Mr. Goldstein began with, maintaining a sluggish tempo throughout the piece. However, having heard from Mr. Abrahamson that this was Mr. Ablow's first attempt at ensemble playing, his performance is little short of phenomenal.

For those who as yet don't know it, to Mr. Abrahamson goes the full credit of organizing the recital. One hopes he will not hold back, but give us more of the same, for he seems the only one among us both capable and willing to organize such performances. St. John's musicians should seek him, however, not wait, with destructive modesty, to be asked.

—Eugene V. Thau.

A PART OF THE FOREST

A city with an exemplary dramatic season would offer revivals as diverse as new plays and musicals, we should see, among others, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* often and *Hamlet* played by at least two actors.

Commonplace seasons, on the other hand, would satiate our appetites for the most popular of Shakespeare's plays and we should remain oblivious to the defects as well as to the merit of his other work. Theatre seasons in New York are neither exemplary nor commonplace. Donald Wolfit's presentation of *King Lear* was his one challenge to a commonplace season; for the rest, he and his visiting English actors were content to present plays that Broadway, because of its fealty to hybrid productions, had reason to require. *As You Like It* has been performed there twice in the past fifteen years and each of these productions played for two weeks; *The Merchant of Venice* was produced last by Fritz Lieber in 1931. However much figures on high school performances of these plays might attempt to persuade me that the playwrights and actors in New York had absorbed and mastered these elementary comedies in the impressionism and vigor of their adolesence, I should be dishonest if I did not confess a failure to note in that city either an approach to the open comic spirit of the plays or a jot of evidence that such plays could be acted there with any ease. I assume every school boy knows *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* as "beautifully constructed" plays, perfect of their kind, that any pedant wil assure him he is right about. I also assume that Shylock does not frighten the actor, that Portia, if she is not mistaken for Stella Dallas after the style of Helen Hayes, is a part playable by a high school sophomore, and that Rosalind "is to the actress what Hamlet is to the actor—a part in which reasonable presentability being granted, failure is hardly possible."

Bernard Shaw once said that Rosalind's popularity was due to three causes: "First, she only

speaks blank verse for a few minutes. Second, she only wears a skirt for a few minutes . . . Third, she makes love to the man instead of waiting for the man to make love to her." She was thus a sure success to the Elizabethans and so she is for us. Let me here and now celebrate my good taste and say that I am very fond of *As You Like It.* Rosalind has always been for me the one bearable extrovert in the history of the drama and she is the one heroine of Shakespeare I unreservedly admire. The Wolfit production of the play gave reason to supplement this idiot devotion. Rosalind Iden is a fine actress and not just because of her first name. Her capability for the role she was named for and the design with which she executed the part seem to me so exceptional that I search vainly for an equivalent in our theatre. Miss Iden is the only actress I know who can beguile without ingratiating her person or insinuating her offstage reputation. Her appearance is pecularily un-Anglo-Saxon, to judge by the other ladies in the Wolfit company. She is tall and blonde and the metropolitan critics notwithstanding, she is no sensation in tights. Her voice is strong and pleasant and ideal for comedy; she can declaim without being elocutionary. She addressed herself to the play and to the audience without cuteness, never as if to say that she was the most precious girl that ever breathed and weren't all these simple people adorable? Miss Iden appeared in all five of the plays in the Wolfit repertory and I find that after seeing her in all of them I cannot describe her as a personality. How much actresses should give of themselves in a part is defined by the playwright and it is clear that they must not betray themselves outside the limits of their play. Within each one of the plays, as Cordelia, Rosalind, Portia, Ophelia and Celia, Miss Iden betrayed herself appropriately, and the sum of these betrayals is evidence of her art, not of her breeding. A fact that exposes most of our present day actresses is that we don't care about watching them act as much as we'd like to take them out to dinner.

As You Like It is the one play of Shakespeare's that can be presented out of doors in the daytime. Only three short scenes are set indoors, amateurs and pastoral players here and in England frequently preform it in a natural setting and there is the story, in a novel, of its being played in the orangery of a French country house. Wolfit's presentation of the play had something like that story in mind. Settings were formal and stylyzed and convinced everyone that there would be no attempt to be authentically woody. The scenery was composed of groups of matching low screens backed by a plain dark curtain that were reversible for court and country, and props were reversible, too, alternately serving for love seat and tree stump. The front curtain was used only at intermission and at the end of the play. The "wooden O" that Shakespeare was later to complain of was not crammed, its confines were exaggerated to so great an extent that it was apparent that it would have been silly to try and overcome them. The set, in remarking its own limitations thus forced the audience to rely upon the play, an unfair advantage to have taken even with *As You Like It.* A bare stage would have been better. It would seem that where inadequacies in scenery might be supplied by ample reference in the text, scenery of the type Wolfit used would be proper, but for *As You Like It* a preciousness and never-never-land quality in the scenery anticipates and makes prematurely a judgment about the play. The scenery in effect sentimentalizes the mechanics of the Elizabethan theatre (e.g. the movie *Henry V*) and asks that the audience question the reality of the play the scenery complements. This is Jaques, not Shakespeare, and in the play itself there is quite enough of Jaques. During the play or after it is over we can doubt its reality, but not before the play has begun. The reversible screens were turned around by husky girls dressed as pages and at every scene change they bowed prettily.

John Wynyard played Jaques, the sad old wag, extremely well, most of the time speaking to the audience directly. This attitude received censure from some critics who were not honest enough to admit that they were bored to death with what Jaques had to say and didn't like Mr. Wynyard's assuming that they loved it; on the contrary, they suggested that the Pearls might best be directed to Olympus. The theory that comedy is all talk has excellent support in Jaques. I don't know what happens to the theory when Jaques is recognized as a jackass. Hazlitt notes that in *As You Like It* it "is not what is done, but what is said, that claims our attention." Rosalind is provokingly loquacious and talks herself into love. Jaques "does nothing." He talks and talks only to confirm his old bromides. The long unhappy development of the happy metaphor "All the world's a stage" is no less tedious a rant in the theatre than it is in print.

Donald Wolfit curiously elected to play Touchstone and acted him with more wit than is native to that character. Kempster Barnes' Orlando was his most credible impersonation. He speaks prose more easily than he speaks poetry, he did not capitalize on his appearance overmuch and since his acting is not a critical art, Orlando as played by him was simple without any self-reflection. Alexander Guage played the Good Old Duke as his playwright dictates; in the manner of the retired British colonel.

The one faultlessly staged scene in this production was Act V, Scene 2, where Shakespeare has made it impossible for the director to go wrong. Rosalind stood back-stage center, Silvius and Phebe were grouped near the footlights on the right of Rosalind and Orlando was stage-left. As they spoke the repititious lines of the scene it was plain that the talk was fabulous and yet Ganymede's last speech in the scene—". . . Tomorrow meet me all together. (To Phe.) I will marry you, if ever I marry woman, and I'll be married tomorrow. (To Orl.) I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfi'd man, and you shall be married tomorrow. (To Sil.) I will content you, if what pleases you content you, and you shall be married tomorrow . . ."—was spoken by Rosalind Iden in a straight and hearty style, with no coyness and with only the obvious gestures, so that the moralizing world of "good in everything" was for once vindicated without excessive sentimentality. The shepherds and Phebe and Audrey were not played as renegade circus clowns and were actually funny. Penelope Chandler's Celia provided interference and no relief to Rosalind's garrulousness. For Miss Iden's delivery of the Epilogue, which I defy any actress to speak with a proper mean between intimacy and vulgarity, I have a respect that borders on pride at her defiance of me.

2.

The Merchant of Venice is an earlier fantastic play. Granville-Barker calls it a fairy tale and says that there "is no more reality in Shylock's bond and the Lord of Belmont's will than in Jack in the Beanstalk." Shylock, however comes close to reality and to Mr. Van Doren he "is always strange to the play and outrageous . . ." He goes on to say that Shylock is no monster, that "gentlemen within the code are as harsh to Shylock as Shylock is to them." The place that the character has in a comedy that is pure fantasy must seem to compromise it. What happens is of course the exact opposite. The unreal Jessica and Lorenzo cancel Shylock out and after the Trial Scene he is forgotten. *The Merchant of Venice* is the easiest of all Shakespeare's plays to act because the plots and not the characters keep up the momentum. Here is the same business about the heroine playing a man. Just as we miss the double joke in modern production of *As You Like It,* the boy-Portia is played by actresses who take the woman Portia too seriously. Portia does not have the exuberance of Rosalind and must wait for the Trial Scene to show her real self. "The quality of mercy . . ." speech has become a piece of girl scout ethics in the schools and this usually tends to make Portia a prig. But Rosalind Iden understood the speech and did not adjust Portia to a misunderstanding of it. In the Trial Scene she was bluntly outspoken and said the speech openly, with courage and conviction. The scene did not pause for her auditors to soak up her humanity; it was manifest in the progress of the speech. Miss Iden's Portia was a witty girl and not a school mistress.

Of all the parts that Donald Wolfit plays in his repertory, Shylock is the part that best suits his natural voice. Eminently audible, the voice is hard and sometimes coarse and strident. Slight disguise subsequently makes it harsh and villianous. Wolfit is a strong, hating Shylock, who is also unrelenting in his woe at his daughter's escape. His delight in Antonio's ill luck collapes when Tubal reminds him of Jessica and Wolfit throws himself down on the ground before his house and cries her name. In the Trial Scene, as Shylock, defeated, leaves the stage, the words "I am not well," were spoken in a way that questioned the excuse and at Gratiano's taunt, Wolfit turned from the door and walked across the stage to Antonio and Bassanin to spit in their faces.

From the point of view of acting, *The Merchant of Venice* was all round the best of the Wolfit productions. The supernumeraries, though, were mechanical and if the costumes were gayly colored, the scenery was neutral brown and drab. The Trial Secene did not have the archways of the unit setting and with its three plain walls was repugnant to the eye. The direction was especially good in the Casket Scenes. I am certain that David Dodimead's Prince of Aragon is the best I shall ever see.

There is one respect in which the present New York theatre season can approach the spirit behind *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice;* the personality of Ingrid Bergman. Miss Bergman's on-stage presence in a quasitragic part this year has seduced the New York newspaper critics into an orgy of relief and thanks for her great personal charm. They have confused the issue by calling her a great actress. It is impossible not to note in the largesse of their devotion a panacea for their own frustration. This frustration is not for great acting, which they are in most cases insensitive to, but for comedy, pure and simple. Maxwell Anderson, in his play for Miss Bergman, has unwittingly satisfied a portion of the gap by requiring of her a portrayal of Joan of Arc that is not

far from Peter Pan. *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* are perhaps fairy tales and out of this world, but the charm of the plays and their characters does not rely upon a wit that had degenerated into the whimsy of a never-never land. Miss Bergman couldn't be whimsical if she tried and Mr. Anderson's play is a success because Ingrid Bergman can't be anything but genuine. Hollywood gives her less arty occasion to be so, but negatively she has embarrassed the Broadway playwrights. In the plays of Mr. Anderson and our other comic writers we know what to expect of our reflexes even if we don't know what to expect from the characters in the plays (after all, they come from 15th century France, Washington, Brooklyn and Glocka Morra). The writers of these plays are the audience: what they want is what the audience wants. Apparently the audience always wants the same thing and consequently we always have the same mixture. May I indulge in the language of the schools and call *As You Like It* the paradigm for the mixture? Elizabethan audiences also knew what they wanted and once in a while Shakespeare had to give it to them. In *As You Like It* the temptation to remark that he wanted other things too was irresistible: the title means that as we laugh the laugh is on us. Shakespeare's model hackwork came propitiously to New York. Much as we might think of the play we cannot admire it as we do the plays in which Shakespeare made his audience see what he wanted and taught some of them and us, in turn, what we deserve.

—F.M.

Dirge

The age of dim rebellion takes its cue
From tyrants known in hidden ways.
The tyrant smarts with undiscovered loss,
While subjects sulk in rule remaining.

Bondage fled, the child freedom born,
Yoke's release brings dreamed-of boundary,
Only soon to burst with swelling-sickness.
Again the perfect path is whole.

COLLEGE MEETING

The last three College Meetings have been among the best of the year. Spring seems to have brought an end to the sniffing stage of our relations with the new President and Dean, as well as to theirs with their offices. Then too, the vernal smells, colors, sounds, are wonderfully reassuring of our substantiality; it's good to feel ourselves more than the last wisps of a vanishing abstraction, to know ourselves more than the molted shell of an earlier spring's idea, to find ourselves with a life and body of our own. We can converse more easily together now.

In the last meeting before vacation, Mr. Neustadt suggested that we keep an eye cocked for the Ides of March, around when the winter's calm has often been more or less violently shattered here. Whether he had Spring or Caesar in mind we weren't sure, but he called this a time when St. Johnnies are wont to ride the seasonal swell to heights never dreamed of by nature; this is a time when all things become clearly possible to readers of the Great Books, and all sorts of strange things happen. Without doubting the effectiveness of the Dean's rhetoric, since not many of us heard him, it is difficult to tell whether the present relative calm (April 20) should be attributed to apathy or to sage restraint on the part of us latter day disciples; certainly it is an exciting Spring.

Week before last Mr. Keiffer gave an account of his trip with Mr. Neustadt to Pittsfield during vacation. They enjoyed several days with Mr. Barr and Mr. Buchanan, looking over the grounds at Stockbridge, and talking about many things. The President and Dean felt able to report to their predecessors that St. John's is having a good year; they in turn reported on the progress at Stockbridge. Mr. Keiffer then passed on to Harvard, for his first return in eighteen years, where, in conversations with an old friend and an old tutor, he found both feeling not too keen about the possibilities of Harvard's general education course as presently set up. Train service to and from Pittsfield is on the primitive side; it calls for carrying your own lunch, a pair of coveralls, and a compass.

Last week Mr. Keiffer commented first on the current crop of rumors, species latrina. It is quite true that some revisions of the program are under consideration; however, no NEW New Program is contemplated; our heritage will not be sold for a mess of pottage Also, if a group of sober middle aged citizens be seen about campus shortly, they will very likely be members of the board, not referees in bankruptcy; the sheriff is quite a distance from the door, and not even walking toward it at the moment. Furthermore, the policy of having tutors will be retained. All will be announced in due time; in the meantime we are invited by the administration to keep speculating, both as some sign of interest and as a possible source of suggestion. Mr. Keiffer talked next about one of the aspects of the problems some seniors are encountering in their first contacts with graduate schools. This problem is one of getting out of them what you want, which is usually considerably different from what they are set up to put into you, (even if they are willing). The specialization, the channelization, has become pretty rigid.

Attendance reached a several months' high of 40 at this last meeting; the average through the winter months hovered around 10 (attendance). Looking at it optimistically, that's an increase of 300%; candidly, it's still an increase of 15%. Somehow, in a sense, some way, it would be good if more of us went more often. Granted that Friday is a mundane day, 5:15 a prosaic hour, the gym a pointable place; still, College Meeting is a very special occasion. More than any other activity here it makes our whole more than the sum of its parts. If you never go, at least listen to the bell; you may hear it toll your acquiescence to the fashionable death.

—R.O.D.

To the Editor of the St. John's Collegian:

In seeing MGM's "The Beginning or the End," I witnessed an act criminally committed against the world politic. This violent accusation is not made, I hope, in satire or because of uncalloused adolescent sensitivity, but rather with sober seriousness and anger.

Hollywood very publically announced it was going to annex itself into the world in trying to make citizentry aware of the problem the atomic bomb's power presented. It immodestly stated it had something important to say. Not just provincial words to be conversed with in its own standards, but talk of universal human sounding.

We (the audience) were well experienced to hearing a picture called an epic miracle. Publicity told us that each picture was the first of its kind, the greatest, the most sure to win an oscar, the most thrilling, the most et cetera. Parasite movie magazines and columnists told us of the human side of each star, the number of their divorces and swimming pools, and their love for Chinese orchids. That all of this was untrue did not disturb us; it was all part of dishonest euphemism for words we knew and were scared of saying. They gave us women and situations immoral in a polite way.

But this time they had argued benevolence and righteousness. Further it was asserted that this was a subject one shouldn't lie about, and our ignorance of the bomb precluded our knowing if we wanted lies about it or not. And so we were convinced that Hollywood was going to speak the truth, and we were anxious to hear it.

What was to be seen in "The Beginning or the End" was Hollywood's usual dissipated, chaotic spectacle. Its claims to competition with Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey was replete with the death scene of F.D.R.; a Rooseveltation of Harry S., showing him as an international Big Time Operator; the heroic death of a young atom bomb scientist whose married life was chaste because of his work; service life farce on the never-never level of General Staff; a confession of scholastic humbleness by one Albert Einstein, the long-haired; and then, as expected, the scenes of Flash Gordon laboratories looking like a slot machine with its ballet of blinking lights and ominous music. Notably absent was Mickey Mouse and his charming wife, Minnie.

This sounds funny, but our last laugh ought to be a Palliachian one, remember what we looked to the picture for.

What the bomb did at Nagasaki, and thus what it could do at other Nagasakis, and the answer to a "so what" about what the bomb could do, was answered in the last dying minutes of the picture. They were said by newsreels taken a few miles up, and by two women 15,000 miles away waiting for men who were on the more pleasant end of relations with the bomb. The movie's scientists constantly had dramatic outbursts of airing a guilty conscience, but what they were guilty of they never said, and we never learned. The atom bomb remained a well guarded secret in the picture.

We left the show with a more, rather than less, confused conception of the atomic bomb. The picture pushed it further from our understanding, made its image more shadowy. Hollywood offered to lead blind men across a dangerous intersection and then rolled us in a vacant lot. This act in itself is abhorring, the most shocking kind of malicious commercialism. No impunity ought to be accrued because of ignorance, for naiveness by such a weighty force is criminal. Hollywood presents a heavy argument for Plato's treatment of poets.

—R.C.F.

TWO POEMS

I
Eros

The Venus-smells rise
From the steaming plain
Of each our Armageddon
Where we raged so bravely
For a mutual death
Of lost identity—
Repudiated sign
Of battle's evil origin
Too long lingering
Where now her mean sway
Is given over done
To death our portion wandered
The cosmic kouros leads.

II
Two Commands

'Break heart'
Is a pompously sentimental
Spondee to echo
The Bard repeating
Whenwithwhatsoever concern
We find us standing
Near some exterior wreck
And desolation

But issued a suicidal
Wish for the rich
And poisoned blood
To flow freely off
Bearing a tide
O organic anguish
The phrase is acceptable
'Break heart.'

WONDER

Wide-eyed Greeks, who knew so well
How hard and strange man's end to tell;
They soared aloft on wonder's wings,
Brought back the news that nature sings.

DOUBT

Dark doubter plunged down skeptic's hole,
And joined the unrepentant mole.
They dug together 'till they spied,
The corpse of truth that long had died.

BELIEF

Believer's lot, a two-faced one,
Opinion's slave or saviour's son.
Conclusion's hard, can fix each way,
But highest stakes demand such pay.

SPORTS

Junior 3, with an inside track in the blazer race, started off the spring baseball season with an 8 to 2 victory over Junior-Senior 2B. The Juniors spotted the losers one run in the first inning, made by Bill Elliott, but in the fifth Gallup and Terry stole their way into home, and four more runs in the sixth clinched the game. Left fielder Bill Ross starred for the winners with three singles in four trips to the plate.

	R	H	E
Junior 3	8	10	1
Junior-Senior 2B	2	4	4

Battery: Bounds-Matteson; Nelson-Don Elliott

In the second game Junior-Senior 1A scored four runs in the first inning and had easy going for the rest of the game to overpower the Freshmen 8 to 4.

Junior-Senior 1A	8	7	5
Freshman	4	7	4

Battery: J. Van Doren-Stern; Thomas-York

In a wild game that saw the winning team come back from five and eight run deficits, Junior 3 edged out the Sophomores 16-15. Both teams scored seven runs in the first three innings, then the Sophomores pulled into the lead with five in the fourth and three more in the fifth. In the sixth inning the Juniors rallied with seven hits and as many runs to tie the score, sneaking one more across in the final inning to take the game.

Junior 3	16	14	7
Sophomores	15	10	1

Battery: Leffel-Matteson; Sherman-Schoolfield

Junior 3 chalked up its third straight win to down the Freshmen 13-2. The winners were never pressed.

Junior 3	13	8	3
Freshmen	2	4	11

Battery: Matteson-Bounds; Herrod-De Tullio

The two Junior-Senior combinations met in a game that saw both teams turning in excellent fielding performances, with the final count going to 1A by a 5-4 score. 1A got off to an early lead and a fifth inning rally by 2B was unable to bring in more than two runs.

Junior-Senior 1A	5	9	3
Junior-Senior 2B	4	9	1

Battery: Freeman-Stern; Bill Elliott-Don Elliott

Junior 3 ended the first round with a perfect record by downing Junior-Senior 1 by a 16 to 13 score. The Junior-Seniors stepped out to a seven run lead in the first two innings, but the Juniors came from behind once more to tally nine runs in the fourth inning off three hits and four critical errors.

Junior 3	16	10	5
Junior-Senior 1A	13	11	10

Team standings on April 27:

TEAM	W	L	Ave.
Junior 3	4	0	1.000
Junior-Senior 1A	3	1	.750
Sophomores	0	2	.000
Junior-Senior 2B	0	2	.000
Freshmen	0	2	.000

NOVUM ORGANUM

Mr. Wilburn in his lecture on the attack upon the syllogism in the renaissance, and the substitution of a new organon for science which resulted, made clear some of the reasons for a kind of incommensurability which is often felt to exist between the first two years of the program and the last two. The birth of the "modern" world took place in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries. In our time it has reached the as yet unsurpassed consummation of the two World wars, and there is promised an even more glorious apotheosis, or epiphany, of the scientific, liberal spirit in the not too distant furture. The scientists and philosophers who served as midwives for the delivery of this brave new world required a new method or organon. They felt that the old instruments of intellectual obstetrics, invented or discovered by Socrates and Aristotle, and known variously as dialectic, and syllogistic logic, had brought forth only metaphysical "wind eggs". It had proved of relatively little or no practical use and significance, in terms of the really important human ends of military, political, industrial, and economic power. Although men of this new age, of which we are the happy inheritors, thought of themselves as initiating a renaissance of classical antiquity, after the dark centuries of the age of Faith, it was notorious that even classical science had failed to produce the machines with which men might master nature, and one another. Classical science had been perverted from its true end by the metaphysical delusion of knowledge for its own sake, just as mediaeval superstitution had wasted its slender store of intellectual substance upon such profitless dreams as the ordering of the arts and sciences to the glory of God. The syllogism, instead of producing a science which would put into human hands the power of storming the gates of heaven itself, had led men only into the barren fields of scholasticism. There are no practical plans for steam engines, gasoline motors, atomic bombs, or technicolor motion pictures in all the thousands of pages in the Summa. Life was pretty crude in those old days. The old organon had deluded men into idle and impractical talk about "substantial forms", "essences", "final causes", and similar murky superstitions. A new organon was absolutely necessary.

It is true that mathematics, even in the dark ages before modern times, yielded a certainty which, as Descartes noticed, contrasted sharply with the morbid dialectical confusions and interminable quibbling of the schoolmen. But even the old mathematics had not achieved the power which a truly universal mathematics, not restricted to the narrow confines of the Aristotelian category of quantity, was to yield. It was clumsy, in its synthetic, geometrical form, requiring the tedious labour of thought, and recalling unpleasantly in its mode of reasoning and order of demonstration the sterile laws and forms of the old Organon. The old mathematics was like a powerful genii imprisoned in a bottle by some peripatetic sorceror, needing only to be set free by cartesian genius to become man's servant, capable of leading him to empire without limit. Freed, it becomes the Universal Algebra, invented definitively by Descartes in analytic geometry, and only dimly foreshadowed by Diophantus, the Pythagoreans, and the mediaeval algorists. This new liberated mathematics, "generalized" so that its elements are no longer magnitudes or numbers, but attain the exalted status of real variables empty of all specific meaning, is seen finally as one with the new logic. It was reserved to our own days to complete and perfect the new organon in this way, beginning with the algebra of classes

of Boole, and proceeding in an order of increasing generality and emptiness, to the real foundation of all mathematics and method, the calculus of propositions and of propositional functions of Whitehead and Russell. In this process, Aristotelian syllogistic logic is shown in its properly diminished proportions, as a small and trivial part of an enormously greater whole. This is the fulfillment of the dreams of Leibniz, who sought for a "universal characteristic", and of Ramon Lull, who in mediaeval darkness and gloom saw faint gleams of what he called the "Ars Magna". Ultimately, everything is to be exhibited in terms of that fundamental logical relationship, overlooked by Aristotle, disjunction, interpreted more liberally as not only either—or, but also both. Thus, as Mr. Wilburn pointed out, symbolic logicians have come to understand material implication in terms of the formula-p v q. This means that a false proposition implies any proposition, true or false, a true proposition is implied by any proposition, and, finally, a true proposition implies any true proposition (providing one knows any true propositions). Mr. Wilburn was perhaps a little skeptical of the possibility of deriving what is sometimes called logical "entailment", or formal inference as a connection of meanings, from material implication, but to most modern symbolic logicians this is merely a trivial detail scarcely worthy of notice, and one which will probably be solved at Harvard next Tuesday.

This powerful universal analysis (although it is curious that symbolic logic has yet to yield the practical results one confidently expects of it), when combined with a reformed technique of induction (whose foundations were laid by Francis Bacon, the author of Shakespeare), became what is now called by all right-minded people "Scientific Method". The S and the M are always capitalized, as a kind of symbolic indication of the spiritual act of genuflexion proper to respectable, well bred communicants in the New Church, the foundations for which were laid by the parallel movement called the "reformation". The new Church was called by Comte the "religion of humanity", and by others, "the religion of science".

There have, it is true, been scandalous examples of heresy, although for the most part the infidels have been few, and of little influence, and are promptly dealt with by the proper authorities. In this country the Faith has had remarkably little opposition, save in small centers of heresy like Annapolis, and, of course, among the ignorant and uncultivated mass of papists and obscurantists. It therefore becomes my painful duty to record that I found in Mr. Wilburn's lecture certain notes of doubt, and a skeptical tone which can only be harmful to the Faith among the young who were listening to his lecture.

The progress of heresy in respect to the very foundations of the modern world must naturally be resisted by all true humanists. It has been suggested even that the New Method itself is only a machine, designed to dispense with thinking. The proper answer in our new catechism to this charge is that of the 19th century positivists, who revealed to us that "thinking" in the old-pre-Scientific Method days, was really superstition. Any effort of thought to explain nature by the fiction of "causality" (especially those causes most inimical to Science, the so-called formal and final), rather than to describe sensations by the Method, is to be anthropomorphic, metaphysical, and at worst, religious. It is to imagine that, as Thales said, "all things are full of gods". We know now that they are empty of any internal principle of intelligibility whatever. A scientific description, showing the how and not the why, will enable us to predict and control the behaviour of nature and of our neighbor. With the extension of the Method into psychology and the social studies we have now learned that the old "dialectical" illusions were really only the sublimation of certain repressions, or the rationalization of certain unconscious desires. The new man who is about to evolve as a final triumph of the Method, if the race can hold out a few years longer, will be free of such childish repressions, and thereby free of the painful burden of thinking, which we have learned is nothing but a kind of speech reflex anyway. In the place of thinking, it will be sufficient only to use certain techniques of propaganda and advertising, following from the Method, which will guarantee those conditioned responses which best suit man for the new Totalitarian Age just dawning. O happy day!

Leonard Eslick