

L I T E R A R Y . . .

Gourmand's Ghost

Into the Gym,
Occasionally, at eight,
But only on D. G. D. S. nights,
Which was formerly the D. M. D. S.
(The Glee-Club, you know.)
The Ghost of Gourmand comes in, late,
And sits him low in regal state,
And sneers. . . .
Remembering the old days.

In comes Zipper, of past renown,
("Ze Dream of Love was a Zing of Beauty.")
Early, of course, and bounces round,
Flitting and flying, here and there,
Airing his views—with matchless tact—
Congratulating, thanking, bowing;
He was once President also—
In the old days.

The artistes giggle, directors leer,
Conductors beam when Zipper is there;
He talks aesthetics with aesthetic pianists—
With matchless tact—
Tells them all how good they'll be:
(Mutual Admiration, and all that)
And the curtain rises,
As in the old days.

Enter the critics, hard-faced critics,
Lean critics, the Princes of Mecca,
And (the balloon deflates) it comes;
And Zipper sees suddenly, lurking in the curtains,
Clutching a celestial typewriter,
The Ghost of Snortin' Gourmand.
Coldly it points a frigid finger,
Accurate, withal, and tears down illusions,
Illustrates error. . . .
("Ze Dream of Love was a Zing of Beauty? ? ?").
Just like the old days.

Zipper writes in haste to the Editor,
Complains of Gymnasium poltergeisten. . . .
Zipper writes a thesis to the Foreign Office
Demanding—with matchless tact—
Deportation of immoral ghosts
(critical and otherwise) and memorizes
The Exorcism Rites; his letter
Arrives at the Gazette office
On the crest of a strong wind,
(Behind which is Zipper).

Twelve hundred words (How long, Oh Lord?)
But Masticated, Chewed, and Bitten Short,
(Constructive criticism—Ha!)
A mere four hundred words reaches posterity.
But he bows, smiles, and thanks them all,
With matchless tact. . . .

I have a vision of a small man bowing,
Thanking someone, and justifying someone,
Throwing his weight (considerable) with desperate energy
Upon an assignment, seeking therein a Gourmand,
Thirsting for a Gourmand, a solid Gourmand,
A Gourmand he can sit upon with ponderous gravity,
The genuine article now, alas, no more:
And I see the ghost of Snortin' Gourmand
Lurking in the curtains, sneering, critical,
Remembering the old days. . . .

ANON

Objection

Shortly before the death of William Wordsworth, my mortal self, I was considerably cheered by the thought that at least my demise would afford my writings the opportunity of being appraised in an unbiased manner rather than in the usual, for that day, Wordsworth-is-a-radical-an-must-be-squelched style of the self-appointed critics.

I was wrong. True, I was placed on a pedestal by the academicians, but not to be revered as the prognosticator of a new era in letters, but rather to be ridiculed and subjected to the abuse of those learned men, the instructors of English Literature.

Note that I condemn the instructors and not the students. Your true student, seeking knowledge, delves into the intricacies of my poems in a search for beauty of thought and style, a certain word-dimension, and inspiration to carry on the unrewarding work of poesy. On the other hand, the instructor, having assimilated his quota of literature as ordered for him by the Un-

iversity, turns to his own mind for knowledge and falls by the literary wayside. Thus, having no further incentive to create poetry and encompassed by the boundaries of a limited intelligence, he becomes an instructor, a professor, in the hope that he may be able to help the students, the new literates, and in the pack discover and assist, some brilliant mind (on earth to-day there still are these) in its ascent.

How good! How altruistic! How pathetic. — — — Mistake me not! I have adopted no "holier-than-thou" attitude to the efforts of these men to assist their followers. To the contrary, I admire their spirit. But the utter tripe

that is passed on under the guise of profound wisdom by these honest, thinking men would make an Angel shed its wings, if we, up here, were affected by the errors of mortal men. (And we are not, thank God.)

Their theories, conceived in misunderstanding and born of no will to create are presented to, or rather forced upon, the younger minds in a grating, repetitious manner which can lead only to rebellion. You know how tender skin would react to too-frequent applications of a strong salve? Thus the young brain reacts to continuous dunning. So, logically, any possibility of the appearance of a bright new star on the literary horizon, under the present academic system, seems precluded.

If you have grasped the import of my little composition up to this point, you will have reached one of two conclusions. You are either convinced that I am a fool, or you have attained a rare plane of pessimism. The degree to which I am a fool, I leave to you; but the pessimistic literary attitude I must deplore. All hope is not lost by any means, for the mediocrity of the tutorial brain is tempered by a desire to teach and a realization that infallibility is not general.

I note that in the mad scramble to have everything filed, tagged, and pigeon-holed for ready reference, I have been classified as a "romanticist". This broad classification of all persons who poured out their hearts in poetic metre so that all the world might understand is, I suppose, necessary. This I will not protest. But I feel I must raise a dissenting voice to a certain opinion which is foisted upon the student body by the university hierarchy. The statement to which I point the scornful finger is that favourite of English teachers which I see in so many scholarly writings, "Wordsworth's communions with God through nature reached a point of mysticism." What epic foolishness.

"Mysticism"! I see that your dictionaries delineate it as the act of seeking direct communication with God by self-surrender or contemplation. Merlin was a mystic. Am I then to be compared to a second-rate mediaeval witch-doctor?

Perhaps it would be well for me to explain a few basic truths, premises if you will, upon which my written thoughts were founded. I did not as is generally supposed, seek communion with God through nature. Is it too difficult to grasp that intuitively like you I admired beauty. Each day when I look down on your world I see youths whistling (An expression of admiration I'm led to believe) at pretty girls; men and women spending gruelling hours in gardens in order to assist flowers in their growing; houses bedecked with the blossoms of these same flowers; parks laid out symmetrically in the midst of noisy city streets; houses painted; portraits painted; faces painted. All these are expressions of genuine and general human admiration of beautiful things! Is this mysticism? If it is, then I stand before you, guilty and condemned.

But if you are with me in the belief that this admiration of pleasing objects, acts, and thoughts is a normal reaction like sleeping, eating, and mating, then perhaps you may yet be able to understand me.

Have you never seen or heard some manifestation of beauty

which came so near to perfection (Though you wouldn't recognize perfection if you saw it) that you were filled with the realization of something other than human agency behind its inception? Of course you have! Even the unfortunate individuals tucked away in your local imbecillum know and appreciate true beauty. But do we call this inherent taste for pretty things "Mysticism"?

I know that none of these arguments will ever convince the professorial clique that I am not a mystic (or mysticist, the same thing) for their addle-pated predecessors told them it was so.

It is out of the welter of present-day dogmatism, seeking a new outlet in defiance of the dictatorial precepts of University literature, that the short-of-the-mark scribblings of such writers as Dorothy Thompson and Ogden Nash have come. They, I am sure, know that their bastardized poem-forms are not art, nor are they beauty; but they must feel as I do that this new puttering of theirs is preferable to the maudlin mush turned out by their girls'-school contemporaries. The fact that their poems have reached paper-covered popularity only serves to prove that the reading public is anxious for a new departure, no matter how radical it may be. Will it be good poetry or simple slush? I leave that to you.

Have you caught the message in this, my cry from the ever-ever land? Do you discern in these words some truisms, a breath of the true nature of things poetical which has escaped the mortar-boarded high-priests? Surely you can see that all this prattle and learned talk of mine is merely a sugar-coated statement of fact? The fact that I, being not different, but akin, to you, have written on commonplace, it happens-every-day subjects. My poems were not romanticist's ramblings nor mysticist's meanderings—they were an ordinary man's thoughts.

Perhaps you may feel that I have failed to adequately present

my disinclination to accept the fetishes of modern critics. That is for you to decide, and it is of little importance. If my writing is weak, it is because poetry, not prose, is my proper medium of expression. Being only spiritual and not physical, I am unable to write so that you may read, and as the youth through whose agency

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