

# Writers Without Vision

Mr. Alfred Noyes the poet and critic, contributes a very notable and all too rare type of article to the Fortnightly Review for July. It should have been given first place instead of certain opaque political articles. Its title, "Acceptances," gives no indication of the insight and vigour of the writer. All should read it, and those who feel the flail about their shoulders should pay heed to the reason why it is used so lustily.

### Outgrown Literary Garments

Mr. Noyes' article is a most vigorous protest against the "ritual of irreverence," the littleness of men, and especially little literary men, in dealing with the great things of life. Here are some of the points Mr. Noyes makes:

"The great enlargement of the fields of human thought during the last century has had one serious consequence which, though commonly disregarded at the moment may yet be a disastrous one, in the view of posterity, for much of our modern literature. Art is long, and life is now not only brief, but very broad also, and astonishingly quick in movement and growth.

"The age has outgrown its literary garments; not so much in poetry, as has been suggested—for poetry has always and necessarily dealt broadly with a more permanent subject-matter, the all-enfolding skies of life—but it has outgrown its literature in a hundred other directions. If the robe is drawn up to cover the shoulders, the knees are left bare. If we consider the feet, the head and the heart suffer.

"The old completeness of view, the old single-hearted synthesis which saw the complex world in its essential unity, saw it steadily and saw it whole, man as a soul and a body, life and death as a march to immortality, and the universe as a miracle with a single meaning, all that white light of vision has been broken up into a thousand prismatic and shifting reflections. We are in danger of losing the white light, not because it is no longer there, but because the age has grown so vast that we cannot co-ordinate its multifarious and multi-colored rays. Analysis has gone so far that we are in danger of intellectual disintegration. It is time to make some synthesis, or we shall find ourselves wandering through a world without meaning.

### Books That Wobble

"There are certain possessions of ours, certain heirlooms that we must accept from the past or perish. Our reactions and our rushes after novelty mattered very little while we accepted these. There are, perhaps, not very many, but there are certainly some essential and traditional acceptances which form the 'masterlight of all our seeing,' and are the first postulates of our civilization, the basic element, these postulates, our recent literature has been in the habit of accepting tacitly for the purpose of making books which could not otherwise be made at all, and, at the same time, rejecting them and forgetting them in its rush after novelties which, unless they could be brought into harmony with those broad primary postulates, it was the business of literature to wave aside as chimerical and false. By this simultaneous acceptance and rejection modern works of superficial brilliancy are turned into complex and complete examples of logical fallacy.

### Need for Religion

"We do not want to be fettered by the past, but we may be very sure that we cannot each make the world over again for himself, and that there is no possible progress in cutting ourselves adrift from the past, any more than there would be in losing our individual memory. 'If there were no God we should have to make one,' said the French revolutionists; and so extraordinary in its effects is the modern vagueness, the modern loss of memory, of tradition, with regard to the fundamental principles which were once safely left to the keeping of a great historical religion, so completely have the masses of men broken free from its great and ennobling, ay, and profound philosophical system, that our intellectuals may well cry 'halt,' and ask themselves if they have done right in encouraging a great nation to drop the substance of historical Christianity. Certainly, if our religion be superannuated, there is need, and urgent need, of something to take its place.

### Christianity Accepts

"Darwin had hardly published his 'Origin of Species' before his work was assimilated in the vast system of Christianity, brought into relation with it, into unity with it, not as evolution now, but as redemption. A few years hence his originality will be as fully incorporated, we had almost said swallowed up, in Christianity, as the astronomical originality of Galileo. But it is the Christians who will be able to cry, 'It moves!' For Christianity accepts, accepts, accepts. She demands greater tests than those of secular science, but when they have been made she makes her synthesis. Her strength is this—that her fundamental acceptances are simply those that are necessary to all men in one form or another, that her last entrenchment is, indeed, an unshakable rock; in short, that the first four words of her Bible are these: In the beginning, God. Whatever else there may be to accept, winged men in Mars, or elephants with silver tusks in Martaban, she has only to bring them into relation with that.

### A Jumpy Literature

"Our individual habit at the present day, and especially in literature, is to seize on a novel presentation of the problem and jump at an evasion of the one little difficulty with cries of 'give us a religion of pure beauty and joy.' We drop the substance, the reality, both of our own immediate world and of the Eter-

nal, by forgetting to make any synthesis at all. We lose sight of our first acceptance amidst the multitude of details, and abandon our last entrenchment to the cynic.

"Whole volumes that stand high on the present-day roll of fame are vitiated by this self-annihilating habit. Turn the pages of almost any of our modern pessimistic writers, poets and novelists, and it is almost safe to say that the more nearly they approach to greatness the more certain they are to destroy the value of their work by a fault which is as inartistic as it is illogical, for artistic form is impossible without logic; and harmony—if not rhyme—is impossible without reason. Harmony, in fact, is itself a subtle kind of orderly logic, the mathematics of beauty.

### Avoiding the Solemn Music

"Our pessimists are shutting their eyes to the joy of the world and bidding us abuse an eyeless Blunderer. Our materialists deny us room for the soul, and then write a lyrical love-chapter in which—unless words are quite meaningless—they see the angels of God ascending and descending. Our idealists declare the glory of God, and then refuse His kingdom in heaven, earth, or the waters under the earth. With the exception of the very few works in prose which were produced in some accord with Christianity, almost the only prose creative work of recent years which is of a harmonious and logical form throughout is to be found among books that avoid the 'solemn music' altogether, books like 'Treasure Island,' where the author possesses himself, is at unity with himself, and runs no risk of floundering in deep waters. But surely this is to a certain extent a condemnation. For we do, and must, accept the test of the solemn music. Without it there is no art—no great art, at any rate.

### An Unifying View of Life

"It is necessary for us to have once more that unifying view of life the loss of which—as Professor Caird says—'has made knowledge a thing for specialists who have lost the sense of totality, the sense of the value of their particular studies in relation to the whole; it has made action feeble and wayward by depriving men of the conviction that there is any great critical aim to be achieved by it.'

"Our work in this dawning twentieth century will be to find that dominating critical position," says one of the most brilliant of the younger thinkers in Germany, 'is the whole salvation of man, and all social work is without foundation if it be not inspired and directed from thence.' It cannot be found by cutting ourselves adrift from all the past, or by individualistic anarchy.

### What We Do Not Want

"We do not want an ungoverned government, a godless and meaningless world, pessimistic aestheticism, free love, or any of the other self-contradictory schemes which, if a large part of our recent literature and drama means anything, it certainly does suggest that we want. We want a government, a religion, beauty, love and the laws of love, 'whose service is perfect freedom.' But let us affirm once more that the age of a truth is not its refutation, that licence is not liberty, and that there is no freedom without certain submissions. Nothing is more admirable than the right spirit of generous rebellion. But at the present day it is necessary to be sure that we are not deceived by the mere name of 'rebellion.'

"When every schoolgirl lisps her contempt of the 'Early Victorian' era and of the 'Philistines,' who are in a sudden and strange minority; when a crowd of undergraduates assembles to hear Mr. Shaw proclaim that no man who looks upon Christ as the highest ideal is worth working with; when an utterance which is at least an unwarrantable assault upon some of the loftiest and noblest spirits of our times, and something of an insult to the most sacred of our dead, is made within the time-honored walls of Cambridge University, for the edification doubtless of some of the sons of those who simply and straightforwardly hold a high faith; when—and I say this weighing every word—some of these men, who do not understand this epoch of the Almighty Jest, this tyranny of ignoble laughter, may be stabbed in the back by so foul a blow, and are not healed by the explanation that if a dog should vomit upon their sacraments it is nothing but blague; when all the intellectual snobs of Suburbia have hastened to make their peace with these things lest you should think them, too, 'Philistines' or 'lacking in humor,' it is surely time for a chivalrous revolt against this conventional unconventionality, this Philistine 'Artyness—they have coined the word themselves—this ritual of irreverence this dogmatic lawlessness, this extraordinary idea of theirs that they are all lonely and glorious 'rebels.'

### Self-Styled Rebels

"The lonely idealists, the lonely rebels, at the present day, are not to be found among the crowds of self-styled 'rebels' who drift before every wind of fashion and every puff of opinion. Names are not the only constant things in this universe. The real rebels, in the great and honorable sense, are to be found accepting—to the astonishment of their 'advanced' friends, and, from a lonely point of view, a solitary height—accepting the gifts of their fathers, and sometimes, not without a need for courage, kneeling to their fathers' God."

### THE CURSE ON RUBBER.

Last Monday week the International Rubber Exhibition was opened at the Agricultural Hall. Sir Henry Blake, who presided at the ceremony, in welcoming Lord Selborne, boasted that, though the output of rubber now realized £85,000,000, only the fringe of the in-

dustry had as yet been touched. We can well believe that the acclaim and the boasting were justified. Astonishing as the growth of many industries and inventions have been, we doubt if anything in this generation has surpassed rubber.

"Fifty years ago it was hardly known, except as a kind of gum for erasing pencil marks; now it is turned to incalculable uses, from feeding bottles to motor tyres. Without it modern locomotion and modern life could hardly be imagined. It is the basis of innumerable companies; it creates the biggest booms on the stock markets; it enters into the high finance of nations, and directs the policy of imperial development. Certainly, if utility and commercial success are grounds for pride, the Agricultural Hall has reason to be proud of its present exhibition, and we are not surprised that on its advertisements we find the motto written, 'There is nothing like rubber.'

The writer then goes on to mention the horrors which accompany the getting of rubber by one of the rubber companies. He has a report in which "floggings that strip the flesh off men and women, who either die under the torture or are left to rot till their wounds swarm with maggots, and are then shot to end the stench. We read of children tied to trees as marks for rifles, or dashed against walls for sport. We read of living victims suspended over lighted fires, or wrapped in clothes saturated with kerosene and then kindled. We read of mutilations of every limb, of murdered corpses flung to pet dogs to eat, of violations so atrocious that the crimes of ordinary lust seem venial in comparison.

"About one-tenth of Great Britain's income is derived from foreign investments, and of that amount a large fraction comes from rubber and other tropical produce. Who knows what concentration of human misery that sum represents? Who knows, and who cares? Certainly, finance cares little. We sometimes think of slavery as a thing of the past. We pride ourselves on our country's emancipation a century ago, or we think the atrocious system died on the plains of Gettysburg. It is not true. The problem of slavery is still before us. Of all the great problems in the world, there is none more urgent.

"Speaking at a Welsh chapel in London, Mr. Lloyd George said that if the Christian Church were destroyed, the country would be turned into a burnt-up wilderness. Well, we have seen a vast heathen land converted into what has rightly been called a Devil's Paradise under a nominally Christian Government, Christian directors, and Christian agents. And, we ask, what feeling but execration have those tormented Indians for the name of Christianity, or with what thought but terror does the idea of the white man's civilization inspire them in their anguish?"

### GREEN WATERS OF THE NILE.

The "green water" of the Nile is quite a different thing from the green water of the ocean. About April 15th the Nile begins its annual rise and a month later the effect is felt at Khartoum. A very curious phenomenon accompanies this increase in the appearance of the "green water." For a long time it was believed that the colour came from the swamps of the upper Nile lying isolated and stagnant under the tropical sun and polluting the waters with decaying vegetable matter. With the spring rise this fetid water was supposed to be swept into the streams to make its appearance in Egypt. Within recent times, however, this theory has been abandoned. Now, we are advised, the green water is caused by the presence of innumerable numbers of microscopic algae, offensive to the taste and smell. They originate away up in the tributaries and are carried to the Nile, where under the hot sun and in the clear water they increase with amazing rapidity, forming columns from 250 to 500 miles in length. The weeds continue to grow, die, and decay until the turbid flood waters put them to an end, for they cannot exist except in clear water.

### PALESTINIAN FERTILITY.

In Palestine, on its sand surfaces, as on its chalk hills, trees flourish and bear fruit in an extraordinarily short time. The eucalyptus, for example, in three or four years reaches a height and girth which elsewhere requires eight or ten, and when cut off at a height of two metres it develops to the full again. It is a common thing to find great olive and fig trees growing among the rocks. The best oranges in the European market are from the land which is sand, yet fetches now the highest price for orange culture. There is a jesting phrase among Jewish colonists as to Palestinian fertility: "If you put stick an umbrella in the soil you will next year get a crop of them." The orange trees bear fruit two months before those of Italy and Spain. Jewish nurserymen are developing marked skill in grafting. Orange culture has now spread from the coast into Samaria. But the olive forestry is most promising. By 1912 the Jewish people will own, according to an authority, in Palestine some 60,000 olive and fruit trees.

### NO GOOD.

A motorist who had been scorching on a country road was brought before a justice of the peace who had fined him before.

"You have been out with that machine again, have you?" demanded the justice. "Frightening horses again, eh? Why don't you get a flying machine if you want to beat time and be eccentric?"

"It would be no good," wearily replied the prisoner. "You would arrest me for frightening the birds."—Royal Magazine.

Policeman—Did you see the number of the car that knocked you down, madam?  
Lady—No, but the woman in it wore a bee-hive hat, trimmed with pink chiffon. And her motor-coat was imitation fur!

# Edinburgh's Keys

The first ceremony to be observed when King George arrives in Edinburgh will be the formal presentation to His Majesty of the city keys by the Lord Provost and town council.

Considerable historic interest attaches both to these keys and to the sword and mace, the symbolical signs of the power vested in the corporation. The keys of the City of Edinburgh are two in number and are merely symbolical, not being intended to open any lock. They were made as far back as 1628 in order that they might be presented to Charles I. when he came to Scotland. These were troublesome times, however, and Charles found it impossible to leave the English part of his kingdom until 1632, when he visited Edinburgh and received the custody of the keys.

In the records of the city accounts there is an entry testifying to the keys having been made and that the price paid for them was £37 6s. 4d. Scots—or £3 odds according to the currency then in vogue. Attached to the keys is a long black and white ribbon, black and white being the colors of the city.

On the occasion of ceremonies like the one to be performed next week the keys are usually carried on cushion of crimson velvet decorated with Scottish thistles worked in gold. When not in use the keys repose in the safe of the City Chamberlain, who is responsible for their safe keeping.

### The Sword and Mace

The city sword and mace, used on all important ceremonial occasions, are even older than the keys. The mace was granted the Lord Provost of Edinburgh in 1609 by James VI., but does not seem to have been made until 1671, when it was completed by a goldsmith named Robertson, possibly a disciple of George Heriot, and certainly a member of the Guild of Goldsmiths. Like the keys, the mace is made of native silver, but is gilt over in addition.

On the top, surmounted by a ball and cross, there is cut out the thistle, the rose, the fleur-de-lis and the harp. On the outside edge of the top part there are four circles. In two of these circles the Castle of Edinburgh is depicted while in the remaining two are the letters "J. R.," divided by a crowned Scottish thistle.

Inside the arches forming the crown of the mace are the arms of King James. In the first and fourth grand quarters the lion rampant is placed. The second grand quarter is divided up as follows: First and four quartering, France; second and third, England. The third grand quarter is reserved for Ireland.

### THE BIRTHPLACE OF LACE

With no other industry is romance more closely interwoven than with that of lacemaking. The desire for beauty in attire is no doubt responsible for the production of this finest and most costly trimming which can be lavished upon dress. Two countries claim to be the birthplace of lace—Italy and Flanders—and in both many legends exist, more or less picturesque and improbable, to account for its origin. Venice has its story of the love-sick maiden who, in the absence of her sailor lover, gazed at the coral keepsake he had given to her until she came to imitate its slender branches with linen threads. A Flemish tradition has it that the Crusaders on their return from the Holy Land brought the invention of pillow lace to the low countries. The lacemakers of Bruges to this day credit Cupid with its origin, and tell you that the mischievous God of Love suggested the idea to a Flemish suitor at the sight of a cobweb on his sweetheart's apron. The earliest lacemaking consisted of the drawing of threads in fluen fabrics, and then dividing the existing threads into strands, and working over them various fanciful designs. By a simple process of evolution the existing threads came to be done away with, their places being taken by a pattern of threads laid on a parchment, and after the patterns had been connected and worked over, the parchment was cut away. This process was known as "punto in aria," the expressive term for lace worked with the needle point in the air, and was the origin of the priceless old point lace worked by Italian nuns, who spent long hours in the sunny convent gardens perfecting such fine work in filmy threads as must have meant premature blindness to many of them.—"The Romance of Lace," by Jessie J. Williams, in "The Woman at Home," for July.

### THE TENTH OF A SECOND

It is not possible to find a person who can correctly estimate the lapse of a single second. But, in these days of speeding motor cars, the exact time when each of two colliding vehicles must have occupied particular spots may be a matter of great importance. In a recent experiment (says "Popular Science") a car took nearly two seconds to stop after brakes were applied, and in that time moved 19 feet. So even fractions of a second are important. One can train himself to estimate even tenths of a second. Try it with a watch, and it will be found that it is just possible to count ten in the lapse of a single second. But one must count very fast to do it.

### FALLEN.

Little Willie: Say, pa, doesn't it get colder when the thermometer falls?  
Pa: Yes, my son.  
Little Willie: Well, ours has fallen.  
Pa: How fat?  
Little Willie: About five feet, and when it struck the porch floor it broke.

The city sword was presented to Edinburgh by Charles I. in 1627. The work on the sword is very fine, but in the opinion of those most competent to judge, is not quite equal to that on the mace. On the sheath are five silver bands, and these, it is noticeable from their color, are much newer than the other silver work on the sword. Indeed, the bands were added later to keep the velvet sheath from being completely worn away.

How the sword came to have a red velvet sheath is interesting. According to a decree of King James VI. of Scotland and I. of England, the sword carried before the Lord Provost of Edinburgh was always to be sheathed in velvet. Various theories have been put forward by learned historians as to the why and wherefore of this curious decree. One theory is that it was symbolical in character, and meant that justice should always be tempered with mercy. That as may be.

Another possible theory is that the very sight of a naked sword blade used to send gold shivers down the back of the good King James.

### Asserting Edinburgh's Rights

Edinburgh, it is interesting to note, is the only city in Scotland which has the right to petition in person the sovereign of these isles. Arising out of this ancient right a very amusing incident is told, but an incident none the less typical of Scottish independence. It appears that a few years ago Edinburgh sent its then Lord Provost and a number of councillors on a deputation to Queen Victoria. The worthy Lord Provost—who filled his high post admirably during his term of office—was about to march into the presence of his Queen headed by the sword and mace, when he was stopped by the horrified court officials.

The Lord Provost march into the presence of Her Majesty with a sword and mace! Surely not. The idea was unthinkable. Accordingly representations were made. The Lord Mayor of London, it seemed, never walked into the presence of majesty with a mace or a sword, so why should the Lord Provost of Edinburgh?

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh is alleged to have retorted that it did not matter tuppence a penny what the Lord Mayor of London did or did not; he, in any case, was not going into the presence of the Queen without the Edinburgh sword and mace.

And the sturdy Lord Provost of Edinburgh gained the day. It is even reported that the Queen greatly admired the sword and mace, and demanded that their history should be detailed to her. But it was a great triumph for the city of Edinburgh.

### BOYS AND THE KING

Details of the King's alleged daily life have been given to the world by a class of elementary school children who recently wrote an essay on "George V., King of England." The efforts of the children who are all about ten years of age, are printed in the Guardian. Here are some:

"The King has liver and bacon for his breakfast and he has his dinner at night, not like us. I think he has veal and lamb and thick gravie which is trimmed with parsley and is on a silver dish; after that he has apple pie, strawberries and cream; after that he has forty winks before he goes to the theatre."

"If the King invited me to tea I should expect to see all kinds of confectionary and jam, peaches, prooms and all kinds of fruit, but there is sumthing I should not like and that is cucumber and onions."

"If he invited me to diner I should expect to see a leg of mutton and onion sauce, haricot beans and potatoes and greens, they are all what I like. The breakfast and supper are the same as the tea and there is currant cake, plum loaf and plum and plain cake."

"In the morning the King goes walks up and down his garden path till his meals are again. Sometimes he passes his time away on his throne reading. He has some children who does not go to Sunday school so he spends his time singing hymns in the afternoon with them."

"The King rides about in a gold carriage every day and sleeps in a golden bed. He wears a satin suit, jewels as well, and has velvet shoes with silk flowers on them and gold brade. On Sunday he wears a crown on his head and some of his men bring him money; he gets wages every day which come to £200 every week."

"George 5th gets up at five in the morning and makes his laws up out of his head; he has to think about them a great deal before he writes them down some of his rules he gets out of books. He loves his country and does his duty he has a many knights to fight for him, they are very brave."

### ILLUMINATED EELS

Some time ago the Danish Government began, under the direction of its biological station at Copenhagen, an interesting effort to aid the fishermen of the Baltic by preventing the migration of eels from that sea into the ocean. The means employed is a "barrier of light," formed by placing 50 electric lamps along a submerged cable between the island of Fano and the coast of Funen. The effectiveness of such a barrier depends upon the fact that the eels migrate only during the dark hours. Accordingly, as soon as darkness begins in the season of migration, the lamps are illuminated, and thus a wall of light is interposed from which the eels recoil. A similar principle is said to have been employed from time immemorial by fishermen on certain parts of the coast of Italy.—From the Scientific American.

A very interesting in the shape of a dent of neglected we are told how the little waifs and cities has been w the West of Can state of affairs i other older and r rests with us to free from this bl condition of things ed children. The after all the thing There is not one who would not d along any work ment and happi the source of the ment and happi who would no conditions which these tender littl

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