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THE LITERATURE OF DISILLUSION

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I

I HAVE heard frequent complaint that the years since the Armistice have yielded no imaginative masterpiece of war literature. By which is meant, I suppose, no tale of adventure equal to the *Odyssey*, no drama of pity like Euripides' *Trojan Women*, no philosophic projection of the fate of man on the height of Œdipus the King or Hamlet the Dane. This is one of the minor disenchantments of the disillusioned period in which we are now living.

I am not sure that we should have recognized such a masterpiece if it had appeared. For we are too close to the facts of the war as we have had them from the soldiers, from correspondents like Gibbs, from letter writers like Page, to be able to see in true perspective their imaginative interpretation. We are still so much under the sway of the overwhelming emotions aroused by the newspaper reports of the Marne and of Gallipoli that we are not quite open-minded toward their treatment in fiction. Art cannot in such a case compete with its raw materials.

This is from the side of the reader. The difficulties for the writer are still greater. An artist, we glibly repeat, must not stand too near his subject. The psychological reasons for this have not yet been fully explored. Generally it is suggested that material, to be convertible into art, must go through some process of maturing. We used to say that the aloofness necessary for re-

creation could not be attained until memory had played upon it, exercising a selective function, time itself inducing a kind of chemical change. To put the same idea in more up-to-date terms, we now assert that raw material cannot be used to advantage until it has been assimilated in the subconsciousness of the artist, and, perhaps, of the community.

It is by some such theory that we explain why *War and Peace* and *The Dynasts* were not written within ten years of Waterloo. That this has held true of our own history, Bliss Perry attests in discussing the books that immediately succeeded the Civil War. 'The significant American literature of the first decade after the close of the War,' he writes, 'is not in the books dealing directly with themes involved in the War itself.' The best men went elsewhere for their subjects. Thus, although some genius may arise tomorrow and knock this hypothesis into a cocked hat, the experience of the past seems to indicate that we had no business to expect as early as this a direct revelation of the war in the form of supreme art; and the chances are that we shall not very soon get one.

Mechanically, the war — especially the war-casualty — has been useful, too useful, to novelists in turning a dangerous corner of the plot, or in getting rid of a character (always a more difficult feat than introducing one) in order to percipitate the denouement. Some of them have also yielded to the temptation to draw on the great common fund of war emotion for the purpose of reinforcing their own private professional affairs. Others, like Miss Cather in *One of Ours*, have made a legitimate, though many feel ill-advised, use of war experience. On the whole, it has certainly hurt more

plots than it has helped.

Yet the general reaction to the war appears to be the motive behind most of the literature we have been reading that has any sort of vitality. Indirectly, if not directly, it is influencing choice of material and manner of approach. About some of these moods which the war has given dominion over our present literature, and about the way in which they have worked out, I should like to speculate.

The most obvious and the most pervasive is the sense of frustration. This is doubly powerful because it controls, though in different degrees, both readers and writers, combatants and noncombatants. The one thing on which thoughtful men to-day seem agreed is that the achievements of the peace have in many ways belied the sacrifices of the war. The last five years have seen an acute spiritual deflation. Most of us who had not been previously so affected were swept off our feet by the terrible spring of 1918 into an apocalyptic state in which an intense idealism mounted to meet the tragedy of the last great Allied retreat. 'Will the Germans get to Amiens?' I remember hearing one man ask another five years ago this month. 'No,' was the reply, 'though I don't know why I think that — unless it's what you call Faith.' You don't hear people to-day talking in that key of current events. Looking backward, we see that the ideals on which we set our wills were unattainable; but the shock of a realistic peace was none the less great for all that. And the defeat of those high hopes has left the minds of many men in the condition that poets have described as a 'waste land,' or, still better, a 'scarred acre' on which, it seems, the grass will never grow again.

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It is natural that writers should wish to share this mood of frustration. As if we who did not actually see the fighting with the physical sight were not sufficiently disillusioned, eyewitnesses must further disenchant us. The incompetence and unworthiness of staff officers and others in authority at the front (on which Tolstoy had something to say in *War and Peace*), Philip Gibbs has illustrated for us in unforgettable scenes from the censored pages of his notebooks; while the younger men, like Dos Passos in *Three Soldiers*, dwelling chiefly on the hardships and mistreatment of the rank and file, have incidentally lowered our opinion of their efficiency and devotion. The authors of *The Undertaker's Garland* in their picture of the brutalized life of the trenches, have spared us no detail, down to the six obscene postcards in the dead soldier's pocket. 'My pen falls from my hand,' wrote Voltaire, 'when I see how men have treated men.' This is not the reflex which the sight of the atrocious facts of war has had upon the authors of our war stories.

Mr. C. E. Montague, with less device and more effectiveness, has turned the power of his pen chiefly against the noncombatants, the 'dogfish' who took the war profits and sought an ignoble peace. His *Disenchantment* is the disenchantment of the ex-soldier who returned after four years to a civilian world as full of lust and hate as ever, and found that he had fought all but in vain. So now each side knows the worst of the other. The noncombatants who read *Three Soldiers* may conclude that those who got to the front were exclusively preoccupied with physical discomfort and sexual desire, while the ex-service men may learn from *Disenchantment* the

lower depths of civilian greed.

By his indictment of the profiteers — the crowd who, unlike King David, did not fear to drink 'the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives' — Mr. Montague has served humanity. Yet the force of his thrust is somewhat broken by his failure to take account of the disillusionment of the noncombatants, and their suffering. Over against his instances must be set the common tragedy of Claude's mother in *One of Ours;* and such stories as I heard in a little English village, of an old farmer, the father of ten sons, of whom seven were killed in France. 'He could n't seem to think of his living sons,' so they told me. 'He would always be thinking of the seven who were killed, and he'd go off into fits calling their names; and one day he went into a terrible fit, and cut his throat, thinking of his seven sons that were killed.'

In part, the revulsion of feeling that such books as these depict was to be expected. Under pressure of war emotion we did undoubtedly idealize one another, — at least, all those on one side, — and we sometimes forgot to judge men's motives on the basis of our accumulated knowledge of human nature. The rebound to self-criticism and cynicism had to come. But another element has entered in during these last five years. 'Happy is he who suffers and knows why,' says one of Claudel's dying heroines. With the spectacle of the peace before them, and its aftermath in Europe, some men no longer see why they suffered.

Certainly the most striking dramatization of this depth of confusion and bitterness is Mr. Eliot's *The Waste Land.* As if by flashes of lightning it reveals the wreck of the storm. For this effect it is clear that the author has consciously striven — indeed he refers

to his work as 'my ruins.' The poem is written in what is called the Expressionist manner — a manner peculiarly adapted to the present temper. It does not present the social order in a series of concentric circles, as in Dante, with the individual passing from one to the other in mathematical succession; or as a wall against which the individual dashes himself, — usually in vain, — as in Tolstoy or Ibsen. It rather presents his mind, or his mood, as the centre around which the world gyrates wildly, and with which it makes few contacts, and those chiefly enigmatic. To students of psychology the method of procedure in *The Waste Land* must be highly significant. Impressions, fragments of experience, memories of other men's writings, drift through the author's consciousness at the bidding of the subconsciousness. There is little attempt at completion of any one pattern out of the mass of details and allusions, or at logical climax. But the parts move with a certain rhythm, — the rhythm of daydreams, — and, dream-fashion, resolve one into another and so achieve a whole. It is mood more than idea that gives the poem its unity. And that mood is black. It is as bitter as gall; not only with a personal bitterness, but also with the bitterness of a man facing a world devastated by a war for a peace without ideals. The humor — for it has humor — is sordid, grotesque. Yet even in the barren ugliness of *The Waste Land* there is redeeming grace. After quoting a bit from that most delightful of all spring poems, the 'Pervigilium Veneris,' and two other lines equally fine, Mr. Eliot seems content to rest his case — 'These fragments,' he writes, 'I have shored against my ruins.'

At the opposite pole from *The Waste Land* in all externals of subject and

design stand A. E. Housman's *Last Poems*, shot through as they are with that spirit of epigrammatic beauty which we call Greek. Yet at philosophical bottom they are not far from Mr. Eliot's mood. Pessimism is, to be sure, no new phase with the author of 'The Shropshire Lad,' bred of war or peace. And not many of the poems in this volume — only a fourth, according to the Introduction — belong to our period. But Mr. Housman's measure has always been a matter of quality rather than quantity; and a darker shadow falls across those pages that seem to come from the spring of 1922 than is to be found in his earlier work — so that those who read them cannot but 'fasten their hands upon their hearts.'

This sense of frustration has, of course, produced its obverse. How to get out of the narrow house — as full of spiritual sickness and squalor as Evelyn Scott's novel of that name. The sheer drive of feeling has compelled both readers and writers to find a way. It has driven us to take what may be called the long view of life. In order to endure the present, we have had to go far back in history for a new perspective, a fresh basis of generalization — back to 'the trailing past' that Whitman in a more confident hour bade us leave to 'the singers of yesterday.' In the war years we were faced with an undreamed recrudescence of physical savagery, which still persists in sublimated forms. Novel interpretations of history and science and psychology, which would in some manner account for all this and at the same time point the road to the future, became a necessity of the popular mind.

This necessity has been variously and copiously met. For the English-speak-

ing world by the 'Outlines' of Wells and Van Loon and Thompson, still going through new editions, and the Outlines by Drinkwater and Orpen recently completed; by histories of civilization in the United States and elsewhere; by Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, and Mumford's *Story of Utopias*, and Robinson's *Mind in the Making*; and more significantly, perhaps, by the many volumes on Primitive Man and the layman's edition of *The Golden Bough*. Diverse as these works are in intention and approach, they exude a general odor of optimism, which is what we as the disenchanted war-victors require. Their common implication seems to be that, if we understand the long and difficult road we have come by to this present Slough of Despond, we shall once more take heart and dig ourselves out. The least positive voice in this group is that of the churchman, Dean Inge, whose phrase 'the superstition of progress' suggests the complexion of his thought. Similarly, Spengler's drift is indicated by his title, *Der Untergany des Abendlandes* — the Downfall of the Western World. His work is said to have achieved a popularity in Central Europe comparable with that of Wells's 'Outline' with us. Naturally the defeated nation derives satisfaction from the thought that all civilization has crashed with it.

But many readers crave something more than the cold comfort of philosophized history and science. All of us at times feel the need of books that are a little more personal and less cosmic. And this need has been supplied, in a degree, by the memoirs of the period just before the war, now being produced in quantity. The year 1914, like 1789, marked the abrupt end of an era. To the imagination it was a

full-stop in history. Thus it is an obvious vantage-point from which to look back upon the pleasant days before yesterday.

'They who did not live before 1789,' Talleyrand once wistfully remarked, 'knew not the sweetness of life.' It is with a similar wistfulness that men turn to-day to the leisurely reminiscences of the Edwardian régime, as to an Age of Innocence happily untroubled with our troubles. We can enjoy the delightful flavor of Blunt's 'Diary' without worrying our heads about all the political and social problems in which it abounds, because the world's account with them has closed, or has been entered on a fresh page. And so with the fat volumes of biography and autobiography, of letters and records, of persons in all walks of life, from the Kaiser to Harry Kemp, and from Mrs. Asquith to Mrs. Fields, which each publishing year brings forth.

II

Another complex left behind by the war and still unresolved is the obsession of abnormal psychology. I do not mean to say that there was no such obsession visible in our literature before — far from it. But the war vastly extended its scope and authority. This was inevitable. For war itself is a pathological state of society; and so is the readjustment to a world at peace but the poorer by millions of souls and by the loss of four years of healthy living. Hardly in a generation can the effects of the shock be expected to pass away. Thus surrounded by abnormal conditions without, men's minds have turned inward upon themselves and fixed upon primitive 'instincts' at the core of being, with sex as a centre. In this introspection they have been abetted by the rising school of Freu-

dians and other psychoanalysts.

The forms this obsession has taken in literature hardly need to be enumerated. They constitute nearly all the 'new' fiction, poetry, and drama that has been written in the last five years. Yet their great diversity should be noticed; and their wide range, from Proust's enormous evocation, *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, in five parts, the first part alone in the English translation filling two volumes, Joyce's *Ulysses*, almost as difficult to lovers of humanistic fiction as a medical report, Lawrence's *Women in Love*, and Anderson's *Many Marriages*, surely as single-minded as a scientific paper in its concern with one function, to Hergesheimer's *Cytherea*, O'Neill's *Diff'rent*, and Rebecca West's *The Judge*.

And another thing should be noticed — the fact that this imaginative literature of twisted subconsciousness has engaged a large majority of the finer minds among the young writers. Not all take it quite seriously. Aldous Huxley and Cabell play with it wittily. Some, like Virginia Woolf and May Sinclair and Clemence Dane, perform all manner of brilliant experiments with it. On the readers' side of the fence it is noticeable that those who rail against books of this sort will seldom bother about anything else. As a matter of fact, there has been lately little else to bother about, if one must have material with any vitality.

In the rapprochement between science and literature that has come about, as the term indicates, in this psychoanalytical art, the scientists have surely met the writers more than halfway. Indeed, in many instances the scientists have invaded the territory of literature ruthlessly, and the result has been devastating. With one learned professor declaring that 'Personality is

a characteristic of the nervous system'; another regarding it as 'a body-mind complex dominated by the internal secretions,' and dismissing a recent play with the fillip that it is 'a study of libido variation, with endocrine variation, at two stages of the inner chemical life'; and with all the psychoanalyst doctors chorusing that the professional interpretation of dreams is the golden key to the secrets of personal experience, it is small wonder that mere novelists have been somewhat intimidated, and that they have sought the protection of an alliance with one scientific group or another.

A quaint suggestion of the new collaboration is to be found in a newspaper account I read the other day of a well-known American author and his bacteriologist friend in the London apartment in which they are now living. The reporter pictures our author as striding restlessly up and down the room, pouring forth a copious monologue. 'The bacteriologist,' he writes, 'an impassive fellow by comparison, sits on the floor beside the fireplace reading, to be interrupted whenever the author wants a correct scientific term, which is about once every 25 seconds.' Perhaps this is suggestive of the way novelists of the future may be imagined as going about their business.

We have heard a good deal lately about the break-up of the novel — or its breakdown, according as the speaker approves or disapproves the endless amount of experimentation now in process. However this may be, science is for the moment the prism upon which the refraction is taking place. It has made of the older realist tradition a thing of many colors. The new realists are dividing into groups, following the groupings of psychologists

and biologists. Lawrence and Joyce, Anderson and Rebecca West, lead the Freudian company, though each has an individual application of psychoanalysis. They are all introspectionists of a modern type, taking literally the line that 'we are such stuff as dreams are made on.'

In *Babbitt* and *Main Street*, Sinclair Lewis stands boldly for an opposing school — the behaviorists, who advocate 'study not of our own self, but of our neighbor's behavior.' Others take as a point of departure Berman's theory of the glands as the regulators of personality; among these Mrs. Atherton with *Black Oxen* has come most recently into the limelight. We have not yet arrived at the physico-chemical novel, though it was brilliantly forecast as long ago as Butler's *Erewhon*, in which the question is raised whether or not 'every sensation is not chemical and mechanical in its operation . . . whether there be not a molecular action of thought whence a dynamic theory of the passions shall be deducible? Whether, strictly speaking, we should not ask what kind of levers a man is made of rather than what is his temperament.' In this as in some other speculations Butler was far ahead of his time, and indeed a little ahead of ours. But perhaps there will be a day when the physical chemists will be able to count the atoms in the human body and give us their atomic numbers — and so make an end of all our literary guesswork.

The time has not yet come for any oracular judgment about the effect of the new science upon the new literature; but so far it is impossible to escape the impression that, although it has reinvigorated it, it has not made our fiction more readable. Even among

zealous followers of changing literary fashions, out of ten people who talk about *Ulysses* and *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* nine have probably not read either quite through. I am among the nine. Indeed, the less the appearance of scientific content, the pleasanter is the effect. *Wintry Peacock* is certainly more readable than *Women in Love*, as *The Judge* is more readable than *Ulysses*, and the first half of *The Judge* is more readable than the second. Like the facts of history the facts of science, it would seem, cannot be of great service to literature until they have suffered a twofold process of assimilation by the subconsciousness of writer and community. Nor will modern higher physiology be fully available for fiction until it has been related to knowledge that has already been assimilated. It must have occurred to most readers that many of the alleged new psychological equations in our novels are in reality classic. Some have been used over and over again by writers as far back as Shakespeare, or Sophocles, or the recorders of the earliest folk-myths. Probably the Freudians did not tell Shakespeare anything that he did not know, when they psychoanalyzed Lady Macbeth. Nor could they tell Wagner much about Kundry. A considerable part of recent psychology — at least of what filters into fiction — seems to me largely a matter of restatement. Therein also lies a good deal of its charm for the novelists. One can have an interesting time pouring old wine into new bottles. It would be as amusing as a game to rewrite in the modern style the themes of the books of other centuries dealing with abnormality — *Wuthering Heights*, for instance. And, conversely, to think what Fielding would make of *Many Marriages*.

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'It is all very estimable, no doubt,' remarks one of Aldous Huxley's male characters about the modern literary treatment of sex. 'But still I for one should like to see mingled with this scientific ardor a little more of the jovial spirit of Rabelais and Chaucer.' —'I entirely disagree with you,' retorts the girl to whom he is speaking. 'Sex is n't a laughing matter; it 's serious.'

Nearly everything is serious to novelists to-day. In fact, some of their work seems to be over-serious, and verges so closely on the ludicrous that a critic writing about it cannot help being fearful of appearing a bit foolish. Humor is pretty generally lacking in our scientific fiction. Probably it would be truer to say that it is pretty generally suppressed, for there are signs that some contemporary writers have more of it than they are willing to display. Joyce, for example, seems in totality a rather humorless novelist; yet there is in *The Portrait of the Young Man as an Artist* an interlude so comic that one feels the more keenly through all the sombre remainder of the volume the absence of this quality. One might guess that some writers are denying free play to their mother-wit out of deference to the high seriousness with which they take their new rôles, in the manner of a very young man in love. Incidentally it is interesting to have to suspect people of suppression who are constantly preaching the danger of unfulfilled desires. Of course, fundamentally this general absence of humor has also something to do with war — a suggestion that I should like to return to later.

III

But a still more serious matter, so far as readability goes, than the failure

of humor in our fiction with scientific leanings is the failure of geniality. And this may, I think, be very definitely set down to strain — the effort involved in handling new materials which, in turn, seem ever to demand new forms. Such continual experimentation in untried mediums is necessarily harrowing. For the psychoanalytical novelist there exists to-day no inn of tranquillity where he can take his ease with his art. He is tied to the onerous routine of the laboratory. And geniality does not and cannot be expected to result. It is the lack of this quality above all others that has prevented much of the most brilliant recent work from appealing to a very wide public.

The big reading public — and by this I do not mean the wholly undiscriminating public — has gone elsewhere. It has consoled itself in this country with the more humorous social satire of the Middle West and with the South Sea romances. The South Sea tales that I have read, barring one or two things of Somerset Maugham's, have not, pleasant as they are, interested me very deeply; and I do not believe that in itself this school of writers will interest anyone very much thirty years from now. But the work of Mr. O'Brien and his colleagues will continue to interest people as a psychological expression of our time — that is, because it has been for us a true literature of escape, from the war and the war-neuroses, including literary pathology. Fortunately for Mr. O'Brien, his Pacific Islands never became mixed up in the war. Writers who wanted to get away from the memories of the front — like Hall and Nordhoff — set sail as soon after it as they could for the South Seas, carrying a large public of

vicarious adventurers along with them. Fortunately, too, for their purposes, the Marquesans and a good many other Islanders have never been much involved in that thing called Western Civilization, which has done nothing but worry us since August 1914. From pictures of the organized savagery in Europe it has thus seemed a relief to turn to the naïve savagery of the East. The figure of the Noble Savage of the eighteenth century has been replaced in our South Sea literature by the figure of the Happy Savage — a creation not borne out, by the way, by the glimpse of the primitive mind one gets in *The Golden Bough*.

To a world harassed by every sort of doubt as to its technique in handling the 'instincts,' an impression has been conveyed that the natives of the Islands, especially where uncorrupted by contact with us, manage all such fundamentals better than we — particularly sex. Thus this region of the globe has taken on the glamour of a sort of lost Paradise. When the love-affairs of four young people in a smart comedy lately on in New York become hopelessly entangled with one another and the American conventions, someone suggests that the logical way out is emigration to the South Seas. To many people life, partly no doubt as a result of the war, has begun to seem too drab, too difficult here. So they sit down and read *Mystic Isles of the South Seas* or *Atolls of the Sun*.

Another region pleasantly dissociated from the scenes of bloodshed is our own Middle West, which has also been exploited during the last five years, though in a different fashion. It did not lend itself to romantic treatment, for it was too close to us to have glamour. Besides, it was too much a

part of our national life to escape the ruthless mood of self-flagellation which the war brought upon its participants. But it has proved a rich field for social satire; and it should be in the end a more productive field for permanent literature than the South Sea Islands, just because our writers are better equipped and trained to work it. The three who have cultivated its soil in this *genre* most notably — Sinclair Lewis, Zona Gale, and Sherwood Anderson — have all produced their greatest successes, which are likewise their most significant works, since 1914. All profited by the impetus that war psychology gave them as writers, and their public as readers, toward a reaction from nationalism, and from belief in the status quo, or, to put it in positive terms, toward criticism and satire. It is interesting to note in passing that their vogue has served to enhance the popularity of other writers in the same field, though not in the same tradition — Willa Cather, for example, who is not primarily a satirist and whose art had come to maturity before the present period.

It is further to be noticed that the one of the group who has the most abundant humor, Sinclair Lewis, has reached the widest public. Now humor is not logically a direct by-product of war, like irony and satire. Such humor as does immediately spring up is apt to be thwarted by a satirical purpose — as in Mr. Strachey's *Queen Victoria* and the plays of Karel Capek, and in the parodies with which our bookshops are now well stocked. Most of these satirical parodies, it is true, like the hits at the 'Outlines,' at Mrs. Asquith, and at the South Sea romance, by Donald Stewart, Captain Traprock, and others, are very good-natured,

and others, are very good-natured, though occasionally one comes on a bit of humor with a dangerous edge, like Montague's story of war decorations in *Fiery Particles*. Yet the public after a shocking struggle is naturally more insatiable than ever in its appetite for pure humor, and often must go back for it to an earlier time. As London audiences immediately after the Restoration had to return to the comedies of Jonson, so London audiences of today have had to return to the eighteenth-century *Beggar's Opera* for merriment on the stage. The minds of the leading playwrights — of Barrie and Shaw, Galsworthy and O'Neill, for instance — have been filled with other things. So the boisterous humor of *Babbitt* and *Main Street* came as a boon to the reading public; but although it has augmented their sales, it has not altogether obscured their primary function as social satires.

IV

Of another form of literature of escape that has felt the influence of the war by indirection — the fantastic romance — there is no need to speak at length, though some of the finest writing of our day has been done in this medium. I am thinking of the work of such men as Byrne and Cabell on our side, and Machen and de la Mare in England. Machen and Cabell had been writing fantasies of one sort or another for more than a decade; but not until the last five years can their work be said to have reached their predestined public — and books are never quite books until they are read. But Mr. de la Mare's ironical romance, *Memoirs of a Midget*, belongs body and soul to our time, and it is one of the few things

whose quality I feel sure later generations will envy us.

In these speculations about the influences of the war upon our literature, which I see working everywhere though often indirectly and often merely in acceleration of forces already released, I have had to roam rather far afield. It has been necessary, too, to speak of the war as still going on — or, perhaps I should say, of the peace as not yet achieved. Whatever the political facts may be, this is true so far as literature is concerned. It will be a long time, one may hazard, before we shall get to the end of psychological studies of readjustment to a changed world. The young writers should, of course, reach the end first, but for the moment they are in the most difficult situation of all.

Both in literature and outside of it the war created a precocious Younger Generation — too early matured by the shock and prolonged tragedy, as a child may be by the struggle of the slums. (Of one of their number Mr. Galsworthy has done a memorable portrait in *Loyalties*.) It is this group that has given us the books most definitely marked with the war neuroses, as well as the most characteristic accounts of war psychology. Its work has met with some severe criticism. 'It is morbid.' 'It is macabre.' 'It does n't get anywhere.'

To this the Younger Generation has sharply retorted: 'We have a right to be morbid. Life as we have seen it is macabre. Civilization is n't getting anywhere.' They have been charged with being irreligious, uninterested in spiritual things, and have not bothered about a reply. *Civilization in the United States* contained no chapter on religion. An advocate might answer for

them that, with the amount of fresh biological and psychological knowledge which they are being called on daily to digest, they can have very little energy left for theology, and it is no wonder that their talk for the moment is all of complexes and never of souls. Whether their introspection be spiritual or secular (and the distinction is rather a fine one), it probably engages too much of their time for their own good, as things are.

As for their work, I choose to think it will be a salutary thing for future generations to have for reference all the dramatizations of the war-reactions that can possibly manage to survive the rude usage of time, if only to illustrate the text of what four such years as 1914 to 1918 can do to youth. Anyone with imagination, it is true, might envisage all this without the aid of tales like *Three Soldiers*. But too many people are blind in the inward eye; and the race memory is notoriously short. The psychology of war has been too half-heartedly searched heretofore, and too tragically forgotten.

If we are troubled by our literature of disillusion, we can take some comfort from reflecting that our time has, after all, not yet produced anything so cynical as some of the choice specimens of the period following the Civil Wars in England. Also it is well to remember that the old physic could 'not minister to a mind diseased,' or 'pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,' or 'cleanse the stuff'd bosom of the perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart.' Thus for health's sake alone it may be well to give the modern method of uninhibited sense-expression a fair trial. From the standpoint of literature, which is the chief concern of this inquiry, there is no need to worry about the self-revelation

of the Younger Generation as long as it comes with so clear an impulse of truth and art as a recent sonnet of Miss Millay's, which ends: —

> That April should be shattered by a gust,
> That August should be leveled by a rain,
> I can endure, and that the lifted dust
> Of man should settle to the earth again;
> But that a dream can die, will be a thrust
> Between my ribs forever of hot pain.

In the mass of printed matter that owes its origin or direction to moods left by the war, there is a small body of such work that, one may be sure, will long outlast them; and a good deal. besides, of an empirical nature that is at least straightening the way to more permanent forms.