

be misleading, however, if I did not add this one brief note:

Above all else the Nonpartisan League remains the instrument of a living faith for many of the hundreds of thousands of farmers who are its members. These men and women have seen enough anti-League literature, been warned by enough anti-League speakers, to suspect that the organization to which they belong is neither entirely efficient nor ideally democratic. Their faith has been severely tested. Doubtless they are convinced that the League has made mistakes. If they are still loyal it is because they believe it also has made progress. That is something, in their eyes, which the Democratic and Republican parties failed to do. For years those parties had their opportunity, in North Dakota, to support the radical program which a referendum twice adopted showed the farmers to be waiting for. Consistently they scorned that opportunity. The Nonpartisan League accepted it. The League was a party of revolt against existing conditions. Thousands of men and women were ready to accept it indiscriminatingly on that single score.

That indiscriminating support imposes upon leaders of the League a responsibility all the more severe. It is not a responsibility confined to the League in North Dakota. In states where it has no organization, among people only vaguely familiar with its program, the Nonpartisan League has become a symbol. It is a symbol of the challenger. Because it is a young force, because it disputes with more powerful forces their privilege of remaining static, it enlists the sympathy of all liberals yearning for a better day. The chief task of the Nonpartisan leaders is not so much the extension of their movement, as the preservation of its integrity. The League may never cross the borders of North Dakota. It may fail even to hold control of that one state, because powers too strong are allied against it. It will, despite that fact, remain a force long vital in American politics. It will have gone down fighting. But if its leaders fail because they listen to the call of power, they will destroy a useful thing. They will destroy a faith which the next new force will find it difficult to recover.

CHARLES MERZ.

Early Evening in April

A drift of fragrance down a lane of spring:
Peach trees and pear trees spill their pink-and-white;
The lavender mountains loom, and mutely fling
Bold arms to clasp and quell the sunset light . . .
An April spirit haunts the evening air, . . .
Wistful, and delicate and debonair.

RICHARD BURTON.

Coeducation and Spring

ON the whole the faculty take the institution of coeducation pretty calmly—most of the year. Of course, there are assistant professors—and their wives,—newly imported from eastern colleges which are for men only, like the lectures of certain medical specialists, or for women only, to whom the topic is nearly as fascinating as the dissection of the head of the department. And there was the grave Briton, with us only a year or two, who confidently informed me in a smoking car that not one in ten of the girls in the American high schools is a virgin. But the human mind soon becomes callous to any enormity, and the most piquant theme wears threadbare.

In the spring, however, this particular subject greens again with the grass on the campus. For then the lads and lasses stroll together, in innumerable couples, all about the town. Doubtless they have seen something of one another during the winter months—at dances, theatres, basket ball games, in the parlors of sororities and boarding houses—in classrooms and halls! But all those places (except the classrooms and halls) are more or less approved resorts for the congregation of the sexes, such as even the uncoeducated may frequent. This shameless “twosing” in the open air reveals anew to all the world the horror of free male and female companionship.

It is really disgusting—if you think so. Watch them saunter. That husky youth in a blue sweater with a numeral on it—his sideling swagger! And the girl—her mincing steps, the constant turning of her pretty head to flash her eyes at her companion, who receives these delectable lightnings with such complacent satisfaction. As we pass them you may hear—I was going to say, her “delicious” laugh. It is the correct word; any novelist will assure you you cannot dodge it. But this is no novel. Now this pair approaching us. The girl walks sedately, the lad too, their faces as serious as life itself. But their very earnestness condemns them.

And yet what would you, masters? “The world must be peopled.” The boys and the girls must get together. A perilous business, no doubt, and a bit disgusting certainly—if you have that kind of mind. But the poets have not thought of it in that way.

How can it best be managed? The most decorous scheme from one point of view is for the parents charily, at betrothal. But the countries in which that to make the match and introduce the youngsters, system obtains are not noted chiefly for their morality in the peculiarly Anglo-Saxon sense of the term. Then there is the plan approved of our own virtuous society, which makes the ballroom, the theater,

and the cabaret the garish, feverish hunting ground of Venus. But when I realize that the standard American marriage, so to speak, is made nowadays chiefly to the tune of the foxtrot I turn back to our campus strollers with lessened opprobrium.

These boys and girls see one another in classes (horrible as it may seem), as well as on dancing floors. At all hours of the day—eight o'clock classes (on "the morning after"), eleven o'clock classes, four o'clock classes,—rather than merely at all hours of the night. And day after day, instead of only on Saturday evenings. They see one another in sweaters and shirtwaists, even oftener than in tails and evening gowns; and hear one another in recitations on sober subjects as well as in the banter of flirtation. They have such splendid opportunities to learn, the boys about the girls and the girls about the boys, which is a fool and a shirker, and which is intelligent, sound, and dependable.

And, mixing so freely, they meet so many of the perilous opposite sex. They come to have standards of comparison. They become less liable to be blinded by the glamor of mere sex difference.

Ah, you say, they lose their illusions! You are right. That is the exact point. They do. Some illusions, at least. Not too many—Mother Nature looks after that. Not enough for entire safety, of course. But the utterly fatuous blindness of the lad who has scarcely seen a girl, and the girl who has scarcely seen a man, for four years, many of them—most of them, perhaps—do lose.

Of course, they make love together. They write notes to one another—and most excellent practice in English composition it is! They discuss together all subjects in heaven and earth. They are, to a greater or less extent, unconsciously hunting for their mates. But where else in the world have they a better chance—or even as good a chance—to find a suitable mate, or to test that suitability in advance?

And so when my middle-aged business takes me in the evening, under the full moon of May, down the avenue of elms that is known as Lovers' Lane, and I encounter this procession of chattering or silent couples, I have learned to smile tolerantly, even tenderly. Certain lines of Browning's come, almost too patly, into my head:

Making love, say,—
The happier they!

Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,
With the beanflowers' boon,
And the blackbird's tune,
And May, and June!

MAX McCONN.

The Condition of English Literature

UNDOUBTEDLY, English literature is suffering from a reaction after the war. Where it should be most alive, there is a general lassitude most sensible; this lassitude is manifest, in the work of our writers under forty years of age, in two distinct and complementary forms. On the one hand we have a deliberately exaggerated literature of what the French used to call *aquoibonisme*, a literature based not merely on the conscious diagnosis of a malady of perception and will—if it were, it would at least be symptomatic of constitutional strength—but on a sickly combination of timorous, half-hearted analysis, and of pleasure in the surrender to inhibition. It might be mistaken to lay too much stress upon the insistence of immaturity upon its own uniqueness, because that is perennial, and the discovery that true artistic individuality is achieved only after an arduous effort to discipline a merely personal otherness is often long delayed. But the tinge of complacency in the extravagant indulgence of immediate sensation at the present day is too apparent to be neglected.

On the other hand we have, most obviously in poetry, a curious phenomenon which we may call "right-mindedness." It, too, I imagine, is in the main the outcome of a war reaction, for the lassitude of which the former literary tendency is the direct expression has been the common lot of all sensitive minds, *l'ennui commun à toute personne bien née*. "Right-mindedness" is, in essence, a clumsy method of exorcising the devil that walketh at noonday, the attempt to combat an insidious disease by assuming the outward behavior of a healthy man. Now, if this literary habit, of which there are alarming evidences, for instance, in the current volume of *Georgian Poetry*, were a deliberate and conscious convention, it, too, would be a sign of strength. For two reasons. Not only is it essential that the poet should remain conscious up to the extreme point where complete consciousness is no longer possible, and the mechanism of an artistic convention aids him in this; but the careful practice of a deliberate convention would sooner or later involve the general recognition of the fact that it is an indispensable part of the highest artistic achievement. That is almost completely forgotten nowadays, and by the "right-minded" most of all. Since these affect a kind of *bergerie*, nothing would be better fitted to stiffen their backbone than a consideration of the pastoral convention from Theocritus to Milton. But that is impossible for them, and, as a matter of fact, the "right-minded" ten-