

## Literary Gossip

by  
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The decadent novel, to borrow a line from Havelock Ellis's excuse for J. K. Huysmans' "Against the Grain," is a novel decomposed to the extent that "the whole gives away to the chapter, the chapter gives away to the page, and the page to the sentence. The Word is Ultimate." (And then even some of the Words give away!)

Now, for the benefit of the audience, we will translate Huysmans' great novel concerning the soulful ennui of an aesthetical mattoid, with the idea of showing the relationship of Decadence to Rottenness. Forsooth:

"Against the Brain: a novel of the Ultimate Word."

Poor Jean grew up. But he had struggled so pleasantly through the nauseous odium of scruples, chlorosis, anaemia etc., that by the time he was fully grown he had quite the appearance of the dilettanti, and was a literary connoisseur with an extreme fineness of taste. He early showed his stupidity by his preference for Latin rather than Greek, and formed a profound attachment to those Latin authors who reminded him most of his lack of Greek. His father and mother having died of several strange maladies he was left alone to enjoy life hindered only by a bathycolpian and down-reaching ennui—an ennui so self-absorbing that he could not help but think. No sooner was one thought out of his head, than—Presto! he was thinking of another. It was terrible.

### Book II

To satisfy his deep aesthetical sense he built himself a house with pink and orange bed rooms. But even this had no attraction. His soul was more profound. Accordingly he bought a pet turtle and paved its back with precious stones. Somehow the turtle reminded him that once he had had a tooth pulled, and then, after he had had a nightmare, the darn turtle died. His death proved to be a great disappointment, as he was a young turtle.

### Book III

Exotic flowers jarred the concinnity of his gracefully balanced aesthetical sense, gave him nightmares, and reminded him of whole congeries of weak women. He thought of taking a bath, and once walked around the room for exercise but this was too stupid. Instead he spent days smelling a great variety of perfumes, and got a terrible bounce out of tickling his throat with numerous liquors. Here was satisfaction for the soul in these subtle sensations caused by changing from brandy to the many derivatives of Sherry! But this specializations of taste had its draw backs. He noted with horror that he was losing his taste for cheese and onions.

### Book IV

The climax comes. The poor man looked into the mirror. Horrors! The act almost killed him. His doctors were summoned, and they told him the worst. He must leave his profound aesthetical contemplations or go insane. He left. Insanity was no new experience for poor Jean. Life is cruel.

A healthy portrait of the whole modern decadent movement from a rather superior angle is found in Carl Van Vechten's "The Blind Bow Boy". Harold—a silver flamingo—graduates from college, he is introduced into "the world"—"the world" meaning everything unnatural that he had heard about. The author takes the opportunity to parade the products of the "world" before the amused reader. One finds everything from the demi-poucœaux to the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cranked. Here is an author who is laughing at Decadents—who are laughing at life. Yet, from a different point of view, Van Vechten can be taken for a decadent himself.

A rhetorical innovation sanctions the omission of all quotation marks from the book.

Now to assume with Havelock that "Against the Grain" is illustrative of the "modern" decadence is to assume that New York is some 40 years behind Paris. This would only be a pleasure to a Frenchman. And besides, there are certain differ-

ences between the "old" and the "new" Decadents which the English Spartan has not noticed.

Huygens' one theme, as Huneker has noted, is the The Strangling Ennui—with variations, of course. He is bored with life itself. The modern decadents, like Aldous Huxley with his "Crome Yellow", "Liberation", "Mortal Coils" (all in the library), are only amused with the idea of living. The modern decadents have transferred the irony of the old into healthy satire. Instead of imitating Baudelaire they imitate each other, and laugh in strange circles about this amusing function of the human race—existence. They stop living, these Decadents, in order to enjoy "life".

Say, by the way, the Constable edition of Herman Melville has arrived. The poor books are sticking their blue backs out from the library shelves without a name in 'em. There's some missing. And "Clar-el", possibly, isn't in the bunch.

And also among the current event: (1) Young Herbert Howe has devised a brand new system of philosophy and is wondering whether he has enough nerve to present it, gratis, to the philosophy club; and, (2) the American Mercury has appeared without startling the campus, and gives great promise of becoming the cat's meow.

## Oxforditis Is Rampant on University Campus

(Continued from page one)

tures which may be attended at the discretion of the students.

Since the entire student body is a thinking group, personal and organization discussions are common; are, perhaps, one of the most important educational factors.

Upon personal research, properly advised, and upon student discussion the system is based. When the scholar has completed his studies he goes before an examining board, not the instructors with whom he has studied, but men who have never seen him before. He is examined, not as to the extent of his knowledge—it is taken for granted that he has covered the field in which he is interested—but upon his ability to use this knowledge and upon his grasp of its significance.

With such a system a man has to think; the mere memorizer is lost.

It is this divergence in the nature of the institutions that is the basis for the assertion that European universities excel ours; it is due to this divergence that the average American college senior is rated abroad as the intellectual equal of the average Oxford freshman. And it is due to this difference, this apparent superiority, that agitation has been started in this country for a different type of higher education, patterned, perhaps, after the plan of England.

**Oregana Art Work Worked in Browns**

(Continued from page one)

able, for each is working on that part in which he is interested. Material and exact scenes from the 12th Century period are being thoroughly investigated by the art students so that the true Norman atmosphere is expressed in every detail.

On the dedication page below the photograph, is the etched drawing of a queen bestowing the rank of knighthood on a courtier symbolizing the conferring of honor in that century.

The type of lettering used is the type preceding the Old English and Gothic style. Throughout the administration section hand-lettering from the days of the Normans is effectively employed instead of the usual printing. Even the body type with large ornate initial capitals is chosen from old style type.

The 1924 Oregana will be a book of individuality. And when once one has entered the portals of its pages, he will be lost in the beauty of those pages reflecting an age of Norman romance and love of adventure. And after all, is it not romance and love of adventure and change—that continuous variation expelling monotony—that the college man and woman of today enjoy?

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## Memories of Wagner Told

## Historical Piano Restored

Just a year ago at this time, Richard Wagner's own piano was brought to this country by Robert H. Prosser, formerly of Eugene. He discovered the instrument in the drawing room of an old music teacher in Berlin, while serving overseas as an American soldier.

In a letter to Mrs. P. L. Campbell, shortly after the piano had been brought to America, Mr. Prosser said, "My finding the piano resulted from hearing about it from acquaintances I made while overseas. When conditions were more settled I started a thorough investigation; it finally took me more than two and a half years to get it out of Germany."

On December 21 of last year, a memorial concert was held in the studios of William Knabe and company in honor of the official introduction into the United States of Wagner's piano, presented to him by King Ludwig II, of Bavaria, 58 years before.

For 48 years the piano had stood in the little salon of Theobald Guenther, who had taught the children of Bechstein, the manufacturer of the piano. In 1874 Bechstein secured the instrument from Wagner, and offered it to his children's teacher.

In a reprint from the Musical Courier, the story of the old piano and of Wagner's association with it is told. "Of the turning point in Wagner's life the old piano stands today as a silent witness," the article states. "Simultaneously with its final coat of varnish, a boy king came on the throne of Bavaria."

Three years before, the story explains, the young king, at the age of 15, had heard "Lohengrin," by Wagner, then termed the "mad composer." The young king ordered

his secretary, Pfeistermeister, to find the composer. Wagner was then fleeing from creditors, in a state of utter discouragement. When Pfeistermeister finally traced the disheartened composer, Wagner refused to see him, believing the king's messenger to be only another creditor.

Finally, the romantic story develops, Pfeistermeister gave Wagner a ring from the king, and a message urging him to finish the "Ring" with the royal treasury to draw upon. From that time on, the so-called "mad composer" was able to turn his dreams into musical realities.

At the same time that the composer was creating his immortal music, he was living "the great human romance that the world has forgiven because of its beauty." Wagner loved Cosima, the daughter of Liszt, and the wife of Von Bulow. The story tells, "Liszt implored his daughter and bitterly condemned Wagner. Von Bulow cried out, 'I cannot kill the master. If he were anyone else he would have been dead long ago.' But Wagner and Cosima loved and loved triumphed, the music drama emerged in perfect completeness."

Cosima is called the heroine of the old piano. Wagner had experienced one unhappy marriage, and now Cosima inspired the master to pour out his soul on the instrument.

The concert, which introduced the historical instrument to America, was held just two weeks after its arrival in New York. Mr. Prosser said in his letter, "The concert turned out to be one of the big society events of the season.

Mr. Prosser, now living in New York, is still in possession of the piano.

climbed, and being nearer the center of things, the sightseer gets more a view of the surrounding country.

Those who have missed the opportunity of the climb will have to satisfy themselves with hearing the

## Stack Climbers Must Face Soot

"Many have climbed and none have fallen," might be a timely comment on the ambitious members of the student body who succeeded in ascending the new smokestack which is now playing its much appreciated part of keeping the student body warm during these frosty days.

More than one adventurous individual paid up his life insurance, took a long breath and made the ascent to the top. "The rungs imbedded in the brick were most capricious at times," said one freshman. "Each time the playful little thing pulled out an inch or two from the wall as I grasped it, I began to think how unyielding cement floors were to drop on from a height of 100 feet or so, whether the folks would miss me very much and how many sins I had committed which had been recorded by St. Peter."

The view from the top equals anything that can be seen from Spencer's Butte on a clear day, in the opinion of those who have

climbed, and being nearer the center of things, the sightseer gets more a view of the surrounding country.

Those who have missed the opportunity of the climb will have to satisfy themselves with hearing the

## This Modernism

Slowly, insidiously there has seeped into the church of the present day a new mental point of view. It is simply a reflection of the new mental habits of the age in which we live. It has been happily named Modernism, for it is just that—an absorption by the ministry and laity of the churches of Christendom of the modern view point.

It is capable of enriching and broadening the life of the churches. Indeed it has already done so. But incidentally yet quite inevitably this Modernism is out of sympathy with the ancient creeds and dogmatisms of the church, considered as an historic institution. It can, it is true, use the ancient creeds, expressing a theology based on antique assumptions of unique authority resident in the instituted church and the infallibility of the inspired Bible as the word of God, but Modernism can use all this only figuratively and symbolically, as the vesture for a modern faith for moderns.

The soloist at this service will be Lora Teschner, cellist.

There is a class in New Testament History led by Mrs. Vera Todd Crow for University women, and a class in philosophy, led by Mr. Eddy, both of which meet in the Manse at the hour of the Church School immediately following the Morning Service.

The church is located on East Eleventh Avenue at Ferry Street. The hour of Morning Service is 10:45 o'clock.

The men and women of the University are cordially invited to all the services of this church, which likes to describe itself as "The Little Church of the Human Spirit."

Fundamentalists have become milit-

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experiences of others from now on unless they wish to coat themselves with a liberal supply of good old chimney soot for the new heating plant is in action for the rest of the years, says Mr. Fisher, University superintendent of grounds.

### STUDENT ANNOUNCES ENGAGEMENT

The engagement of Lowell Angell, of Portland, a junior in the school of business administration, to Viola Thompson, also of Portland, who last term was a sophomore majoring in medicine, was announced Friday night at the Sigma Pi Tau fraternity. At present Miss Thompson is living in Portland, as she did not return to the campus this term. She is a member of Sigma Beta Phi sorority.

### REX

The inspiring contrast between traffic-crowded streets in New York and magnificent open spaces of mountainous Arizona are shown in a manner never before presented on the screen in "The Call of the Canyon," a Paramount picture adapted from Zane Grey's latest novel, which will be on view at the Rex theatre Monday for three days.

Featured in the cast are Richard Dix, Lois Wilson and Marjorie Daw.

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In most cases scowls are the direct result of eyestrain. Remove the strain and the scowl disappears. Other evidence of eyestrain and ocular muscular unbalance are pain in or over the eyes, on the top or back of the head, in the neck and between the shoulders, dizzy spells, indigestion, insomnia, inability to concentrate the mind; also, a tendency to develop goitre.

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