

WHEN LITERATURE GROWS NEUROTIC

Futurist School Composed Principally of Nervous Wrecks, Says Critic

JUSTIFY THEIR MADNESS

The neurotic school of art and letters likes to call itself "futurist." The future to which it unconsciously appeals is one in which, if we do not take care, we shall all be losing control of our nerves and shaking dementedly and throwing things about, says Wilson Pallett in Harper's Magazine. That future may be nearer than we dare realize. The more highly specialized literary fashions of the hour invite no such much of the neuropath and the alienist. They affect not art merely but civilization. The breakdown which they portend involves a good deal more than some few erratic cults and coteries in orange-curtained studios. It involves the nervous tissue of the current literature. It is not a revolt at all, save in a few narrow and special particulars, but a betrayal of society. It is the symptom of a disease which is both epidemic and endemic. Thus the present-day literary drift, whether or not it is intrinsically important, is worth a student's very serious consideration as an index of the popular consciousness. The crowd's mental and nervous state has been communicated to literature by a process analogous to electric induction, and is there registered with just enough exaggeration to emphasize and clarify the truth. It is not here possible to weigh the esthetic merits and demerits of futurist literature. Let these be what they may, there remains the importance of the newer cults as social symptoms of the common mind; and this affects us all, because it affects the body of which we are all members. No more conclusive reason could be offered for ascribing importance to even the wildest eccentricities of "futurism" in the arts. What we must try to read, obviously, is the relation of the symptom to the disease. And that

we can best do by analyzing briefly, first the essence of literary neuroticism, and then the neuroticism of the modern social organism at large.

These two connected realities of the moment, although they have come to the same destination, have reached it by two slightly different routes. Fundamentally, of course, the neuroticism of the artist and audience had its origin in the maddening complexity of modern affairs. Civilization has grown involved on our hands faster than our ability to administer it could grow; and as a result we are driven to the brink of hysteria, as a man is when harassed by more private worries than he knows how to cope with. When Mr. J. Smeaton Chase explains the imagists, futurists, cubists and their kind by saying that "Civilization has got on their nerves and they simply have to scream," he clearly implies that these highly specialized artists express what the intricate, articulate, crowd merely feels. But though the general feeling and the special expression do indeed hark back to the same fundamental cause, it is still true that that cause has operated in one way upon the artist and in another upon the common man. The great classes of society have succumbed to the actual physical conditions of modern life and to the nervous unrest which these conditions breed. The artist is even more sensitive to this general tension, and his balance would probably have been upset by it in any event; but the ostensible and immediate cause of his overwrought state is an insidious and false theory—a scrap of perverted science which he has invoked to dignify a weakness by parading it as a strength. So, while society is afflicted with a nervous panic of which it is barely conscious, and which it would resist if it could, the ultra-modern artist has been busy inventing a philosophy to prove that his own case of bad nerves is really quite normal. He has glorified his own debacle; he has used his intellect to justify the dissonance of it; he has frankly committed himself to the theory that pure neuroticism alone can be valid in modern art.

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OWN WILL GUIDED ANNE STILLMAN

Mother, Overjoyed, Tells How Daughter Arrived at Conclusions

New York, Sept. 28.—"When Anne decided, after long and deep thought, to support me in my unfortunate divorce with my husband it was not through any urging or coaxing of mine. It was the result of her independent and unflinching consideration of the merits of the case."

"I have always taught my children to think for themselves, and Anne applied this teaching in reaching this great decision. That Anne has decided to stand by me is in itself a cause of great happiness, but she has reached this conclusion entirely out of her own thought and her own judgment."

Thus Mrs. James A. Stillman began a discussion of the most recent development in the suit for divorce brought by her husband, then the wealthy head of the National City Bank. Since the publication of the testimony in the early hearings there has been much speculation as to how Anne stood in the quarrel between her parents.

Her brother "Bud" declared himself from the beginning a partisan of his mother and of his baby brother, Guy, whose legitimacy Mr. Stillman attacked at the start of his divorce suit. It was the result of her independent and unflinching consideration of the merits of the case.

Mrs. Stillman's jubilation over the

stand taken by Anne seemed to give her a feeling of friendship for the world at large, and a new confidence in her ultimate triumph in the struggle with her husband.

Slain in Fight With Officers
Rensselaer, Ind., Sept. 28.—Adam Schroeder, twenty-nine years, of Chicago, was shot and killed yesterday at a rooming house here in a clash with local and county officers. More than fifty shots were exchanged.

JAIL WOMAN FOR CONTEMPT
She Had Failed to Appear on Charge of Being a Scold
After failure to appear in court on six different occasions to answer the complaint of being a common scold, Catherine Zaretsky, of 631 Snyder avenue, was arrested on a bench warrant and committed to the County Prison yesterday for contempt of court. The sentence was imposed by Judge Knowles, sitting in the criminal branch of Municipal Court. Mrs. Zaretsky swooned when she was taken before the Judge. She was revived by Dr. Daly, a police surgeon. Beside committing the woman to the County Prison Judge Knowles ordered her \$500 bail forfeited.

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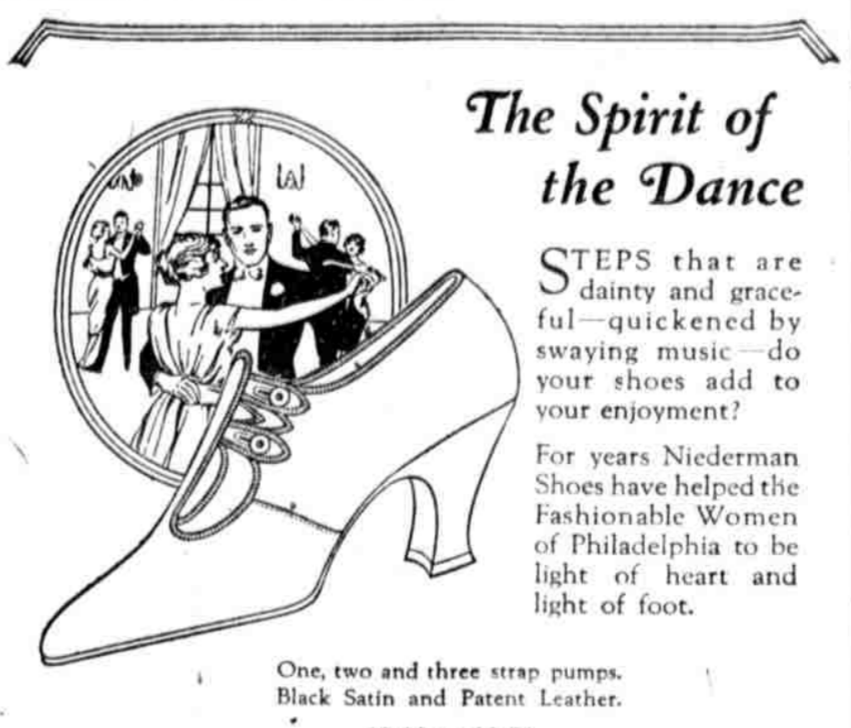


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