

writers of 1840 to 1880. After all there is no opera like Lohengrin. My father was an orthodox Baptist minister. He was a good man and is with God. Now every day is Christmas. I am so far in agreement with Mr. Lyman Abbott that with the exception of Hell I practically never read Dante. I am bored by Purgatory and I find Paradise insufferably dull. To me there is no building at once so beautiful and so friendly as a cathedral. To-day the majority of good books in America are easy to hold; the ideal is dull paper and light weight. After all, there is. . .

MEDITATIONS

I do not resent the popular poets, novelists and story-writers of America; I resent the popular critics. For when I consider how much easier it is to find a decent attitude towards art than it is to produce decent art, then I realize precisely how inferior these critics are. If a sufficiently large fund were placed at my disposal, I should devote my life and genius to stamping out such pretty-boys. For this purpose I should employ both the pamphlet and the rat-biscuit.

* * *

IN my darkest moments the greatest solace was to contemplate the philosophy of Plato. It is possible to be thrilled purely by the force and beauty of ideas: viz., Plato's conception of the hierarchy of forms. However, the only modern application of Plato which seemed possible to me was a sort of dualism: in my thinking life to live only in the illusory world of Plato; in my active and walking life to live within the empiricism of the modern behaviorists. After all, in the finest poem I have ever written, a work of twenty-seven lines which occupied me for six months, nothing that I could call forth from Plato's system was of any aid to me.

* * *

I AM often accused of being amateurish or immature and I am proud to admit the charge. Nothing in literature is deadlier than the professional spirit. As for maturity, it is a quality of writers who have ceased to develop. Heywood Broun at thirty-four is more mature than Goethe when he died.

WALTER S. HANKEL