

*The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Collected Poems, Selected Poems, Lolly Willowses, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After The Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Maze, Some World Far From Ours and 'Stay Corydon, Thou Swain', Elinor Barley, A Moral Ending, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in The Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and The Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, Selected Stories, Somerset, Jane Austen, T.H.White, A Biography, Letters, The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Collected Poems, Selected Poems, Lolly Willowses, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After The Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Maze, Some World Far From Ours and 'Stay Corydon, Thou Swain', Elinor Barley, A Moral Ending, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in The Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and The Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, Selected Stories, Somerset, Jane Austen, T.H.White, A Biography, Letters, The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Collected Poems, Selected Poems, Lolly Willowses, Mr Fortune's*

## *The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society Newsletter Number Twelve*

*Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After The Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Maze, Some World Far From Ours and 'Stay Corydon, Thou Swain', Elinor Barley, A Moral Ending, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in The Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and The Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, Selected Stories, Somerset, Jane Austen, T.H.White, A Biography, Letters, The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King*

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Sylvia Townsend Warner @ Susanna Pinney

The Society's own website is online at  
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NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWELVE

Welcome to the twelfth number of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Newsletter. As well as a mixture of writings by and about her, plus a story by Valentine Ackland, the Newsletter contains details of the annual May Bank Holiday event.

Thanks for their contributions go to Rosemary Sykes and Graham Pechey, Peter Tolhurst, Morine Krissdotir, R.N.R. Peers – and especially to Jay Barksdale for his fruitful researches in the New York Public Library.

*Judith Stinton*

SUBSCRIPTIONS: a reminder

If you haven't yet paid for 2006, please send your subscription to Judith Bond, 26 Portwey Close, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8RF. UK members £10, overseas members \$20. Cheques should be made payable to the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society.

SEPTEMBER WEEKEND, 2005

Sylvia's guide to Somerset places Montacute in what she describes as that county's 'Côte d'Or', and she paints a golden picture of the village; it is, she writes, 'all the colours of a honeycomb'. Arriving there in warm early-autumn sunshine, we really could not do other than concur. Even the friendly cat who insisted on joining our party for morning coffee at the King's Arms was a marmalade one, sharing the 'tawny colouring' of the local Ham Hill stone. After exploring the church and churchyard, we visited Montacute house, Sylvia's 'Elizabethan house *pur sang*'. Today the house has added royal

blood, much in evidence with the National Portrait Gallery's magnificent display of portraits: a succession of monarchs lining the walls of one room, as well as Jacobean and Elizabethan worthies in and around the long gallery.

After Montacute we crested Ham Hill, source of that aureate stone. Stopping to look down over the surrounding countryside, we were assailed by sounds of shouts and church bells hinting at typical Saturday-afternoon pursuits, matches of more than one kind: football and weddings. The wedding (singular) turned out to be at our next stop, Martock church, which Sylvia epitomizes as 'an allegory of sacred and profane love'. We admired the exquisite timber roof before heading off for Muchelney. Sylvia found the ruined abbey here 'merged in a group of barns and ricks'; we found it thronging with historical re-enactors. Curiously, Sylvia does not mention Muchelney's church with ferocious 'hunkypunks' (gargoyles) on the outside and the most worldly-looking angels painted on the inside of the roof. Picture seventeenth-century men of fashion with tumbling locks, revealing hairy chests, displaying scrolls—the early-modern equivalent of speech balloons—with the earnest injunction: 'Come ye hither'.

More angels awaited us in Huish Episcopi church, this time painted by Edward Burne-Jones—beautiful as the others, but less direct and verbal in their appeal. The church boasts what Sylvia characterizes as 'the loveliest of all the doctrinal Somerset church towers'. She does not, however, mention the local legend recounted in Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson's new book *The Lore of the Land* (Penguin, 2005). It seems this tower was designed by an apprentice to the master builder responsible for its counterpart at Kingsbury Episcopi, and that this achievement on his pupil's part so upset the master builder, who felt his own tower to be less astonishing, that he threw himself off Huish tower (another version has it that the master threw the apprentice off). From Huish Episcopi we drove to

Langport, passing under the extraordinary hanging chapel which arches over the road. Sylvia recommends Langport churchyard as 'a good place from which to survey the floods'. Even without the prospect of floodwater, this is a marvellous vantage-point. Safely back in Dorchester, we were treated to a buffet supper by Eileen Johnson and greatly entertained by her cat, Hattie.

Sunday saw us complementing our earlier visit to Reynolds Stone's house (see *Newsletter* 10) with a visit to West Tisbury, Wiltshire, and to the house of the loving custodian of his work and memory: his son, Humphrey. The sight of a sign on the approach to the house bearing the legend 'Compton Marbling' fooled us into thinking that this was a hamlet missed by the omniscient Ordnance Survey until we were told that what Mr Stone's wife Solveig very skilfully did with books and assorted stationery was described by the second of those two words! Over coffee and cakes served by Mrs Stone, her husband spoke movingly and sensitively about his father, before conducting us on a tour not only of the house—where some of Stone's paintings cast new light on his better-known engravings—but also of the farm buildings now converted to other purposes: namely, as the headquarters of Mr Stone's imprint (he is a distinguished book designer and publisher); as the shop displaying the marbled items; and as an archive of Stone memorabilia. Conversion from agricultural use has been the fate also of the granary mounted on brick piers; but the great brick dovecote remains as it was, its only latterday use being for summer parties held by Mr Stone's daughters.

We carried the festive vision he conjured up of lit candles in the scores of nesting places with us to our lunch at Fonthill Gifford where we sat on old pews at scrubbed tables and thought once again of Sylvia's remark about the sacred and the profane. The day ended with tea in Higher Odcombe at the house of Dr. Morine Krissdottir and a visit to the churchyard—another notable view-site—where we tried to edit out buildings that would not have been there when

Sylvia visited the spot in 1949 and commented 'Odcombe churchyard has just such views as I remembered. I lay on a flat stone in company with several grasshoppers for some time.'

We had a wonderful time and would like to thank Mr and Mrs Stone, Dr Krissdottir and Eileen Johnson (plus Hattie) for their hospitality. Our thanks also go to the committee for organizing such a successful weekend.

*Graham Pechey and Rosemary Sykes*

### **MINUTES OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER SOCIETY**

Held on Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2005 at the Dorset County Museum at 10am.

Present: Stephen Mottram, Eileen Johnson, Judith Bond, Judith Stinton, Rosemary Sykes, Richard Searle, Dianne Bithrey, Helen Sutherland, Annie Rhodes, David Miller and Anne Torday Gulden.

1. Apologies were received from Beryl Miller, Richard Burleigh, Win Johnson, Peter Tolhurst, Graham Pechey, Lesley Clargo and Judith Fielding.
2. The minutes of the last AGM were approved and signed.
3. Chairman's report: Stephen thanked the Committee for their continued hard work for the Society, without which it could not function. The last year had been successful in many ways, the Society having grown to 127 members, the increase over the year being largely due to the website.
4. Treasurer's Report: Judith presented the balance sheet for the year. This showed a balance of £2242 in the bank. She thanked Judith Stinton and Peter Tolhurst for keeping printing costs down – they always constitute our greatest expenditure. The advent of digital printing has also brought costs down. The updating of the website had

- cost £151, which was relatively cheap. We have also earned the princely sum of £4.50 from Amazon, which has come via our website!
5. Membership Officer's Report: Judith reported that the membership stands at 127, though there were 20 outstanding renewals. The subject of life membership was raised. Stephen explained the pros and cons of the scheme, its main drawback being that life membership funds need to be managed separately from other income, and this would reduce the amount of available moneys for other routine costs. It would be more sensible to consider these matters at a future date, when the subject of the annual subscription was being considered. (It has remained at £10 since the Society started.)
  6. Programme for the year: Judith Stinton reported that plans were at an early stage as yet, but that Somerset, or one part thereof, would be our destination for the September 2005 meeting.
  6. Any Other Business: Judith Bond had received an enquiry about an STW short story called 'Ghosts'. No one could recall such a story, So all were requested to report any sightings to Judith.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.50am.

### **SPRING WEEKEND, APRIL 28 - 30, 2006**

Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>

7.30pm. Meet for meal at Taste, close to the junction of Trinity Street and High West Street, Dorchester (opposite Argos). If you would like to attend, please let Stephen Mottram know by April 15<sup>th</sup>, so that we can reserve a table. His number is 01271 379402 (mobile 07891282922).

Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>

10.00am. A.G.M.

The Sixth Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place in the Library of the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester, by kind permission of the Director, at 10.00am on Saturday 29th April 2006 .

## AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. The minutes of the 2005 AGM
3. Matters arising.
4. Chairman's report.
5. Treasurer's report.
6. Membership Officer's report.
7. Programme for the rest of 2006.
8. AOB.

Resolutions for discussion at the AGM must be received in writing by the Secretary at least one month before the meeting, and must include proposer and seconder.

11am. Talk in the Library by Mary Jacobs. 'Sylvia Townsend Warner, Political Disclosure and the Fable'. (The paper will deal principally with *The Cat's Cradle-Book*, but will also make brief reference to *Summer Will Show* and *After the Death of Don Juan*.) Mary Jacobs is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Plymouth - and an STW enthusiast of thirty years' standing.

12.30pm Lunch at the Red Lion, Winfrith, at the junction of the Wareham road (A352) and the road into Winfrith

7.00pm. Launch of *Dorset Stories of Sylvia Townsend Warner* at the Dorset County Museum, High West Street, Dorchester. This is one of the events of the Dorchester Festival. There will be readings from the book by Peter Tolhurst and Judith Stinton. Tickets available at the door. Copies of the book will be on sale.

9pm. Party at Shepherd's House in Chaldon (on the village green, by the phone box), courtesy of member Annie Rhodes, who is renting the house for the weekend.

## Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>

10.00am. Walk led by Stephen Mottram along the Five Marys above Chaldon Herring to Winfrith.

11am. Visit to STW's grave, with readings.

12.30pm. Lunch at the Sailor's Return, Chaldon Herring.

## BOOK NEWS

### Valentine Ackland

Members will be disappointed to hear that Frances Bingham's biography of Valentine Ackland, due for publication this Spring, will not now be appearing because the Women's Press has folded. Frances is currently looking for another publisher, and we hope she will be successful in her search.

In the meantime, the good news is that Carcanet Press are bringing out Frances Bingham's edition of V A's collected poems, *Journey from Winter: The Poetry Of Valentine Ackland*. This will be of particular interest to members as it contains the complete *Whether a Dove or Seagull*, a collection which has previously been very difficult to find.

### Dorset Stories of Sylvia Townsend Warner

published by Black Dog Books

### BOOK LAUNCH

Introductory talk and readings by local author Judith Stinton and publisher Peter Tolhurst Dorset County Museum, 29th April at 7.00pm.

Sylvia Townsend Warner spent the best years of her life in Dorset, from the time she first moved to Chaldon Herring in 1927 to her death in 1978. None of her novels is set in the county, but a significant number of her many short stories have a strong Dorset flavour. She was attracted to

Chaldon by the presence of the writer T F Powys, and the influence of his quirky allegorical stories is clearly discernible in her own early work. It was here too that she met her life-long companion Valentine Ackland, and ten years later the couple moved to a house beside the river at Frome Vauchurch on the outskirts of the large village of Maiden Newton. Most of the stories are set here or in Dorchester (Dumbridge) during the years of the Second World War. Warner's characters come from all walks of village life and are observed in stories that are elegant, original and witty. Collected together for the first time - and including a number not published before - they are Dorset 'to the life', beautifully illustrated with wood engravings by her Litton Cheney friend, Reynolds Stone.

### A Real Character - Mrs Hawley Edwards

There are not many people in Maiden Newton who remember Sylvia Townsend Warner - except as a suspected 'Commie' in danger of internment during the Second World War or, more interestingly since less well known, as a practising Quaker.

But there are still people who remember Sylvia and Valentine's closest neighbour, Mrs Hawley Edwards. Mrs Edwards, known to the village as 'Polly', lived in a collection of huts in the field opposite the entrance to Riverside. There were said to be four of these huts, log cabins each with a single purpose - bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and dining-room. There was also a garage on the other side of the bridge, chock-a-block with wine which had been left behind by Polly's errant husband. Since his departure, Polly had lived alone. Her only daughter lived far away in respectable Harrogate.

The detached garage was being slowly emptied. Polly 'liked a drink'. She also liked a cigarette. Her gardener recalls going to buy packets of Du Mauriers for her. She would fill her apron pocket with cigarettes and then light up the first one of the day. One match would suffice. She smoked continuously, lighting each succeeding cigarette from its predecessor.

Polly seldom went out. She refused to budge. Her gardener did her shopping, and her diet was enlivened by the brown trout she baited from the river - much to the fury of the village's 'river man'.

From the letters and diaries it would seem that Sylvia found her rather a nuisance - though in some ways their life styles were not dissimilar, they evidently had little in common. When Polly did venture forth she needed

lifts (the garage held only wine) and her hens could be troublesome. (In return for help she did in fact look after Sylvia and Valentine's pets, gave the couple plant cuttings and, on one horrifying occasion, a parcel of ox brains.)

Sylvia, however, treated Mrs Hawley Edwards more gently in fiction. In the short story 'Boors Carousing'. Polly becomes Miss Metcalf, an elderly spinster seeking assistance in the rescue of her rabbits from the flooding river. Her neighbour, Mr Kinloch - a portrait of Sylvia's writing self - helps her and resigns himself to taking her on, thereby embracing the humanity he has previously striven to avoid.

This story first appeared in *Museum of Cheats* in 1947. About five years later, Mrs Hawley Edwards was dead. One night, after a violent gale, the police came round to Polly's house to find her drowned. Fatally, she had refused to flee the flood, climbing on to the kitchen table instead. As the water levels rose, she drowned beneath them.

Apart from these few memories, there are no mementoes of Polly's life. A scrubby wood has sprung up along her section of the river bank, in which one cabin's footings and a few rafts of corrugated iron remain. The river, as ever, continues to flood.

### *Judith Stinton*

With thanks to Norman House and Brian Lemon.

('Boors Carousing' is one of the tales included in *Dorset Stories of Sylvia Townsend Warner*.)

### Weeds

Once I knew a garden - quite a large garden, too - whose owner requested me, out of my abundance, to spare her a little groundsel for her canary. I thought the request lacking in delicacy; but it started a train of thought. When we consider how much of the gardener's time is taken up with weeds - whether, like a professional gardener, he hoes them and turns them in, or whether, being an amateur, he tries to root them out - the sparing mention of weeds by those who write about their gardens seems hypocritical.

The tiresome aphorist who said that dirt was matter in the wrong place might have had something equally sage to say about weeds - though it is

difficult to think, off-hand, of a right place for such a plant as goose-grass or perhaps you call it cleavers.

Locality, undoubtedly, has something to do with it. The dandelion in the hedge is a praiseworthy creature enough, and it is a delight to children, who enjoy the way its sticky white juice turns black on the hands and face. But let the dandelion settle down to 'praise a lawn for growing green', and country gentlemen, during the months when they cannot carry a gun, will walk out with a dandelion spud.

Mare's-tail is another of these weeds by circumstance. A survival of the flora of the coal age, it is sufficiently aristocratic not to grow in every soil, and, when found by botanists and fossil-lovers, it is often greeted with scholarly enthusiasm. But interesting and queerly handsome as it is, with its stiff green bottle-brush, gardeners with whom it condescends to thrive greet it with ill words. Its roots, earth-coloured and ramifying, are almost invisible and break at a touch; and every fragment left in the ground will send up a shoot. There is no hope but in patient persecution, snapping off each head as it appears, and so gradually bleeding the roots to death. The same method will get rid of bracken (a plant of the same lineage) but it is a slow process and may take several years.

No amount of surface discouragement will abolish ground elder, bind-weed, or that grass which is called couch, twitch, or squitch - and what a wealth of exasperated loathing must have exploded in the naming of any plant *squitch!* Every dog knows the virtue of couch-grass, and every gardener its vices: its strangling growth, its banyan-like power of being able to root anew from the joints of its long tendrils, its rampong, spear-tipped roots which can burrow through the thickest clay. Ground elder is not so universal a pest; visitors from a happier world have even asked me the name of that 'pretty little plant'. I can see nothing pretty about it. Its green is insultingly bright and perky, and its pointed leaves recall the most fidgety ornaments of Revival Gothic.

Bind-weed, on the other hand, observes every canon of beauty and elegance, and to beauty and elegance the lesser bind-weed adds the most exquisite almond scent. Contemplating it I feel, I suppose, something almost identical with the mourning morality with which our great-grandparents contemplated the young ladies of the *demimonde*, sighing that anything so lovely should be so lost, and mixing with those sighs a brisk intention to keep it out of the grounds. When George Eliot wished to convey the sharpest insinuations of depravity she made a gentleman, in a fit of *delirium tremens*, cry out upon a siren whose arms were like 'grand white serpents'. The roots of the greater bind-weed are like grand white serpents also, with the

additional immorality of being branching serpents. As the tendrils twist and twine themselves about other plants, so do the roots twist and twine, till the victim is strangled above and below ground alike. During the summer the harbourers of bind-weed may as well resign themselves to admiring those candid angel-faced blossoms, those tresses of heart-shaped leaves, the grace of those murderous embraces; for to attack the assailant is to attack its victim also. In autumn there should be a thorough excavation, a disentangling of roots and a sifting of the soil to the depth of two foot or more. The resulting barow-load of serpents will be, so to speak, a sight for sore backs. Even so, there will be some left for the next summer. The bind-weed's roots go down to the pit. A quarryman told me that he had found them as much as six foot below the surface.

*Sylvia Townsend Warner*

**ONLY CONNECT... POETS, PAINTERS, SCULPTORS:**  
**FRIENDSHIPS AND SHARED PASSIONS 1929-1997**

by Walter Strachan, edited with an introduction by Geoffrey Strachan. 2005.

Jon Carpenter Publishing. ISBN 1-897766-95-5 hardback,  
1-897766-94-7 paperback

Following the reference in *Newsletter Number Eleven* may I elaborate a little on this book? Walter Strachan was far and away the most stimulating member of the teaching profession I had the good fortune to meet at any of the five schools and one university between 1937 and 1957. Ostensibly teaching me French and German he purposefully strayed far from the syllabus into English and French Literature, European contemporary art, calligraphy, typography, architecture, music; he took us to London galleries, cycled with us over Hertfordshire, Essex and into East Anglia visiting and sketching villages and churches; he would come into the class-room with his latest letter from Sylvia Townsend Warner, Nancy Cunard, french novelists whose works he translated, Beatrice Warde (typographer consultant to the Monotype Corporation), Sir Francis Meynell, Henry Moore (who lived nearby at Much Hadham), Nicholas Bentley (illustrator of Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*), Will Carter (calligrapher, printer and designer of lettering, and cousin of Reynolds Stone), Joan Hassall, Sir

Sydney Cockerell, among many. Through Walter I came to know Sylvia Townsend Warner, Valentine Ackland, Reynolds and Janet Stone and their family, and to work in Dorset. As a member of the PEN Club he got to know Nancy Cunard, Cecily Mackworth and Sylvia Townsend Warner, with whom he corresponded from the 1940s onwards. His generosity to the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society included the gift of 25 letters written to him by Sylvia Townsend Warner between 1945 and 1978, the great majority between 1945 and 1949. The letters are typical of S.T.W. – fun to read, elegant, unexpected, helpful and covering an immense range of subjects.

Here are some of them: helping the French as the war ended, liaison with French schools, taking vitamins to the victims of Buchenwald and Belsen, exchanging books and magazines, especially Horizon, school book-bindings, bad Russian translations, Chatto's printing habits, cats, form-filling, politics, The Museum of Cheats, the delivery of a Broadwood grand piano a little before midnight, verse-writing, Black-lists, the Third Programme, 'that appalling Charles Morgan', the army and Tyneham, S.T.W. as librettist, Michelin, 'words are the devil', Norman Lupton's house and water-colour collection at Hyde Crook, Frampton, Julien Green 'limpid and imperturbable', reading Jane Austen, Dublin, Rome, and dried scrambled egg.

Just after S.T.W.'s death, when writing to Walter, I said 'she always put me on my mettle...you could never be slipshod...I came away from visits excited by a very wise person.' Only Connect and The Living Curve, Walter Strachan's two books of reminiscences and letters received, illustrate the genius of S.T.W. and that of a remarkable schoolmaster.

**R.N.R. Peers**

### *A Ghost Was Born*

What was there about the figure of the old lady hurrying across that wet meadow in the twilight? What was there to make anyone walking soberly along the highroad pause, and feel himself perturbed?

Because she was so thin, perhaps? For she was thin, and very small; small, and very old; old but very swift. She moved across the green expanse

towards the lip of the river, erratically, fast and lightly. Even the most casual walker on roads would have stared to see her.

But would these things alone have made him stare? That she was thin, small, old, swift? Or was there a quality about her, formed from all these, with something else? Yes, that is it. That something else will make him stop and make him stare. Without doubt, without doubt it will.

But there was no walker, casual or concerned, on the highroad that evening. It was the time, the hour when grass becomes truly green and white dazzles the eye; when even the modern highroad, conventionally dressed in macadam, looking as uniform and dingy as the men who walk along it, remembers its noble origin and shines out again as bright as chalk; at that time no one walked along the road and no eyes caught the sight of her, going so quickly over the grass to the lip of the river.

The meadows had been half-flooded for a long while; wide lakes of water were lying in their saucer-hollows. White geese from the village float upon these lakes sometimes; white feathers blow along the green grass for many weeks after the floods and the geese have gone.

Who knows, now, what she said to herself as she made her way over the meadow? Very lonely, on ordinary days and evenings, her life must have been. But this was no ordinary evening, and it followed no ordinary day. All through this day, this shining day, it no longer mattered that her husband died; it had not mattered that the girl had been only reared for sorrow; that the boy had never returned since that summer evening she saw him off at the station. No blame to him, either, he lay swinging in gusts of tide and the strange gales that sweep within deep water, long miles down in the dark of the sea.

Her life had been lonely indeed until now, until this day just spent and this evening come, when she crossed the meadow and made her quick way to the lip of the river. How it streamed past! A bright liquid, a flowing metal river in the last light of day.

Lamps smiled out from windows and the safe sounds of evening came, if she had heard them; axe on wood, a door shutting, the chained dog's welcoming bark, and a mother's voice calling the playing children home.

She had reached the place now where land ceased to rule and water was the sole emperor. Into that country she crossed and lay down gladly under that dominion.

Such a peerless estate she found there; no one could think her poor now, nor ever after remember her as she had lived. The shabby family, the dust of death on her love and loss, the shame and pity of her daughter and the vanished son; all those shone and glittered now, dipped in the bright metal.



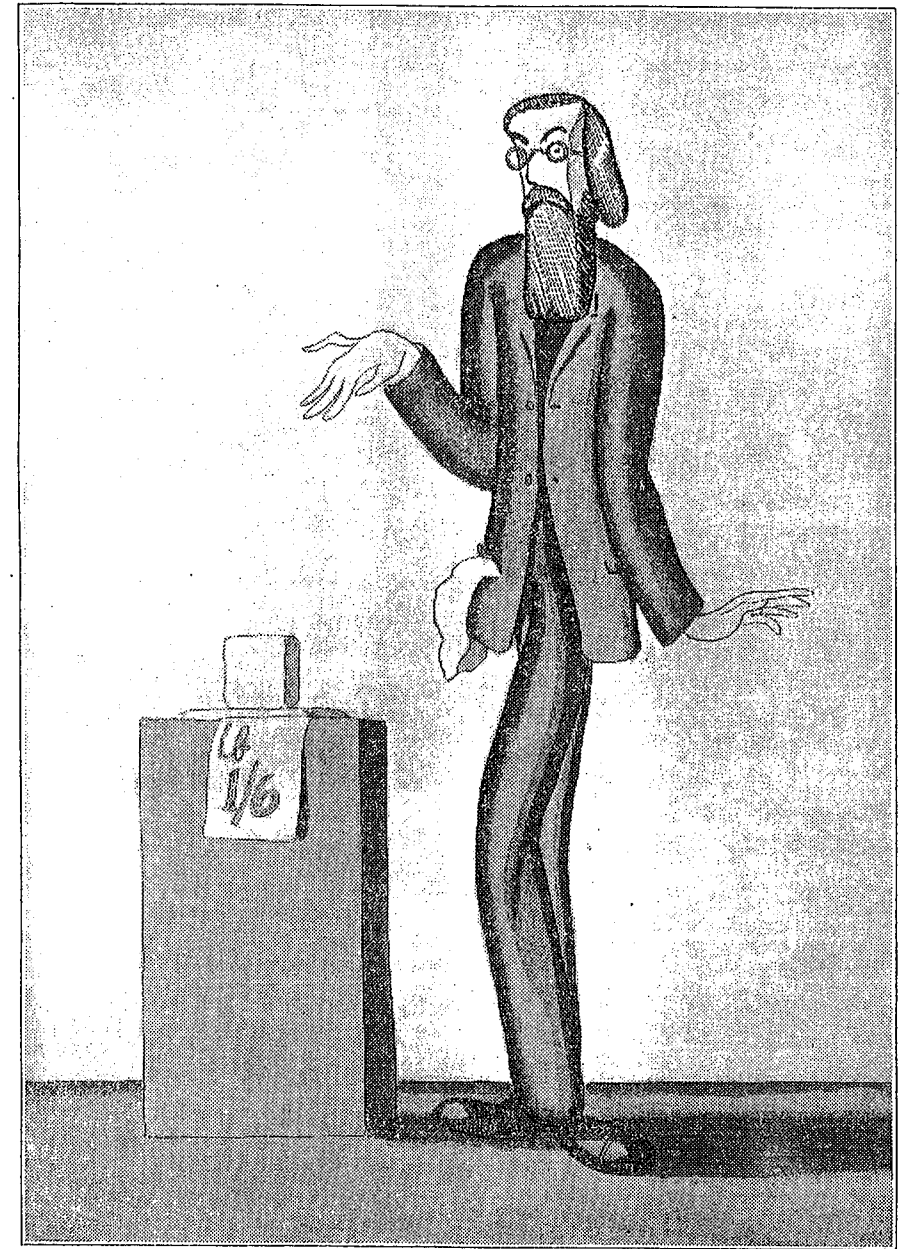
And the days she drew her pension, the weeks that hung so heavily, each week from each pension day; the long ignorant evenings spent in lamplight and silence; all were passed and forgotten, no longer counted against her, from the moment she stepped off the land.

The river, with how much reluctance, laid her by on the bank at last, and went on, reaching the sea at its due time. But she was not recaptured. All that the land got was another body to bury.

What, then, was there about the figure of the old lady, hurrying across that wet meadow in the twilight? What in that to make a traveller pause and feel himself perturbed? For since that evening many passers-by have stopped, have stared and stared again, and at last continued the journey.

There was this, that in a minute after she had reached the river's lip, a ghost was born.

*Valentine Ackland*  
*Lilliput, October 1948*



*Drawing by Paul Bloomfield.*

Mr. Lytton Strachey Lends His Talents to an Advertising Bureau

"Under a show of firmness it is, in reality, plastic; and its colour—an artless yellow—is perhaps none the less pleasing for being entirely artificial."

S.T.W.

'The Flowering Manger'

For two sopranos, contralto and piano

*Seven proud ladies stand within the Queen's chamber:  
And Mary had the seven stars to watch all night with her,  
Firelight and candlelight make the Queen's chamber fair;  
And Joseph kindled a fire of wood in the blue evening air.  
The Queen is hush'd asleep with lullaby and song:  
And Mary heard the oxen Breathe quietly all night long.  
She took her little son and put him in the hay:  
Straight it turn'd green, and smelled as sweet, and smelled as  
sweet as meadows do in May.*

From The Year Book Press Series of Unison and Part-Songs  
H.F.W. Deane & Sons, 1919

Words by Sylvia Townsend Warner.  
Music by Percy Buck