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Afternoon in Bloomsbury

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Thoughts on a European Crisis

By RICHARD RYAN, JR.

"La France attend sa Jeunesse" . . .

And Italy hers, and England hers, and America hers, and
Germany hers . . .

And each awaits the Youth of the others, too;
To see whether they will take up the hatred of Age,
The quarrel of the past.

Yet we who are Youth have no quarrel;
We bred no lies, no bigotry;
We had no part in murder . . .
Yet it is our inheritance.

Afternoon in Bloomsbury

By RICHARD RYAN, JR.

Bloomsbury is like a middle-class woman who married well
in her youth

But has now, in middle age,
Become a widow, and is forced into trade
While her former world passes her by.

In her youth, when she was in society
She splurged
And achieved the longest, widest, most monotonously dull
streets in London;
Drab little squares, with a tree or two in the small parks,
And hundreds of deadly respectable houses
One just like another.

Becky Sharp, and her soldier, and their friends
Filled the streets with their carriages and smart footmen,
and stamping, snorting horses;
And aristocracy tramped through drawing rooms
All over Bloomsbury
At tea time.

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But you see, Becky, and the Earls, and Dukes, and other
Peers

Began flirting with that upstart, Mayfair,
And others thought Soho more attractive
While the writers, and artists, and musicians
All preferred Chelsea, and her plebeian personality,
Leaving Bloomsbury to the company of that other old lady
The British Museum.

Her fine, boring old houses soon filled up with second-rate
office clerks, and cheap lodgers for the night,
And now the only noise is the faint sound of buses on distant
Holborn and Greyfriars,
And the clatter of typists going to Lyons on Southampton
Row
For lunch at one and six.

On Growing Old

By LLOYD PATTON

Old age may weaken muscles once so strong,
May sap the strength and vigor from the vine,
The mind will but the stronger grow, for long
Is mellowed thought and the superior wine.

The strongest must in time be weak again
And find the vigor long so prized has fled.
So do the fates spin out the end of men
Who long their prowess sued, and fought, and bled.

When thus the body feels the end of youth
And former vaunts of virile days are past,
Seek then to turn the mind to greater truth,
Broaden anew to greater gains than last.

Old age may weaken muscles once so strong;
The mind can then the youth of life prolong.